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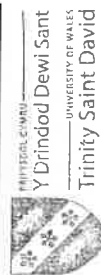
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Contents



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List of Contributors

viii

Preface

x

Part I Theoretical Perspectives in Language Policy

1

Theoretical Perspectives in Language Policy:

3

An Overview

Thomas Ricento

1 Language Policy: Theory and Practice – An Introduction

10

Thomas Ricento

2 Frameworks and Models in Language Policy and Planning

24

Nancy H. Hornberger

3 Critical Theory in Language Policy

42

James W. Tollefson

4 Postmodernism in Language Policy

60

Alastair Pennycook

5 Economic Considerations in Language Policy

77

François Grin

6 Political Theory and Language Policy

95

Ronald Schmidt, Sr

Geolinguistic Analysis in Language Policy

Don Cartwright

Geolinguistics seeks to answer the questions "what, where, when, and why" of language (van der Merwe, 1993, p. 23). Geolinguistic analysis involves the investigation of historical processes that have contributed to the development of current patterns of human contact and interaction between and among different cultural groups. It also involves the investigation of the patterns of movement of people and the concomitant shifts in regional ethnic composition. Field research will be conducted into language use in the local community to uncover and analyze places (domains) where a minority language is used or not used. Geolinguistic analysis operates on the premise that cultural domains are significant to the retention of ethnic identity, and as cultural space between ethnic groups erodes through domain sharing as opposed to domain exclusion, it is possible to anticipate demands for cultural protection. This protection may be sought through ratification of language rights and the expansion of domains for exclusive language use as a means of fortifying one (important) element of the group's eroding cultural identity (Veltman, 1977).

To investigate how a community identified by mother tongue could survive as a viable group, Giles, Bourhis, and Taylor (1977) developed a model that they designated "Structural Analysis of Ethnolinguistic Vitality." *Vitality* was defined as that which makes a group behave as a distinctive and active collective entity in inter-group situations. It was assumed that ethnolinguistic minorities that have little or no group vitality will eventually cease to exist as a distinctive society. The more vitality a linguistic group has, the greater the likelihood it will survive and develop as a collective entity even when it is in contact with a majority that has a different mother tongue. The structural variables that were considered to be most influential in assessing the vitality of ethnolinguistic groups were organized under three main headings:

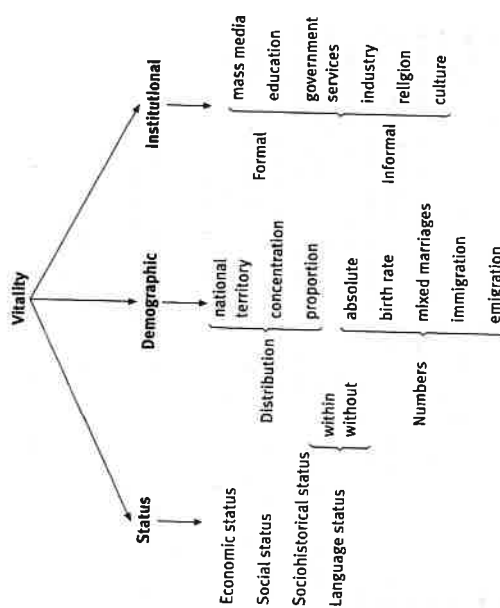


Figure 11.1 A taxonomy of the structural variables affecting ethnolinguistic vitality
Source: Giles et al. (1977, p. 305)

the status, demographic, and institutional factors (see figure 11.1). The authors maintained that the three structural variables interact to provide the context for understanding the vitality of ethnolinguistic groups. Status variables encompass elements of prestige of the minority, and the greater the status a linguistic group has in the context of inter-group interactions the more vitality it will have as a collective entity. The same may be said for a community that has positive demographic variables expressed through their numbers and their contiguous distribution throughout a geographical region. Institutional support for the group within the geographical area refers to the formal and informal areas in which members may use their mother tongue. Thus the vitality of a linguistic minority is assumed to be related directly to the degree that the language is used in various institutions (domains) such as government, church, school, and for services throughout the private sector.

In the field of geography, language studies did not figure prominently until a few scholars in the United States and Europe in the 1970s and 1980s began to collate their interests into the research of geolinguistics. At the outset, they emphasized the relationship between languages and their physical and human contexts by focusing on historical processes that contributed to the development of current patterns of human contact and interaction between and among different culture groups. These scholars focused on the sociospatial context of language use and language choice, measured language distribution and varieties, and identified the demographic characteristics of language groups, particularly on a local scale (Williams, 1984). Others who were interested in this evolving branch of human geography assessed the relative practical importance, usefulness, and availability of different languages from economic, psychological, political, and cultural perspectives (Ambrose & Williams, 1981; Breton, 1991; Williams, 1988). Hence practitioners of geolinguistic research attempt to go beyond the concept of distance, topography, or the built environment in the analysis of social structures and concomitant language use. These practitioners attempt to offer a more positive, practical appreciation of the role of geographic space, territory, and scale of analysis as additional elements that are employed in a more holistic, sociolinguistic approach to language communities (Williams, 1988).¹ An application of geolinguistic research, and its relevance to language policy, can be explored through two general examples: (1) a geographically peripheral and fragmented ethnolinguistic community, and (2) a more extensive and contiguous community.

Geographically Peripheral and Fragmented Communities

Until the end of the nineteenth century, the national space of a country consisted of separate, often isolated communities; hence the impact of a national culture upon these enclaves was limited. This was particularly evident in rural, peripheral societies, those that were geographically remote from the emerging political and economic core area of the nation. Examples can be found among the Celtic-speaking peoples of Britain, the Frisians of the Netherlands, and the Basques in the Iberian peninsula. By the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, however, a political theory emerged in the industrial societies

of Europe that cultural and linguistic diversity threatened the unity of a nation. To counter this diversity, the dominant ethnic group adopted an assimilationist approach to national policy – politically, economically, and linguistically – by applying its resources, rewards, and symbolic power to influence directly the actions and interactions of people.

In the first half of the twentieth century many social scientists believed that diverse ethnic groups in advanced industrial states would, in time, be assimilated by the dominant culture of the state (Deutsch, 1953; Young, 1976). It is now recognized that many such groups have not lost their sense of identity; consequently, cultural pluralism prevails in most of the world. The dynamic of cultural pluralism now challenges the capability of statecraft to provide for all constituents through pluralistic policies and programs that will maximize social harmony. The demands from sub-state nationalities to influence such policy formation, and secure legislated rights and privileges, often reflect the importance of language to a minority, particularly when the language of the majority is dominant and considered to be a potential threat to the identity of that minority (Nelde, 1987). For a minority, language-planning legislation becomes a vital ingredient in the struggle to maintain ethnolinguistic vitality. An example of attempts to influence language policy in a situation of an eroding ethnolinguistic community can be taken from the efforts of Welsh speakers to sustain their heritage.

United Kingdom: the Welsh

Since the geographic situation of Wales is peripheral to the political and economic core area of the United Kingdom, the Welsh language in the nineteenth century enjoyed extensive usage in many domains beyond the home. As the assimilationist policy of the dominant English-speaking culture made inroads into these domains, the use of the Welsh language throughout the community contracted (Williams, 1980). Furthermore, minorities in multilingual states that are peripherally situated often fail to gain territorial control or influence over regional boundaries that have been penetrated by acculturating processes. The Basques and Catalans in Spain and the Bretons in France are similarly situated to the Welsh, and are considered to be territorially unprotected. They have become more accessible to the majority population of their state through the processes associated with time/space convergence (Janelle, 1973). Urbanization, industrialization, mass tourism, easy and rapid communication, and increased population

mobility have developed rapidly since World War II. These processes have reduced the time that it takes to move and to interact over great distances, and increased the migration between the core area and the periphery. Television has also contributed to this by enhancing attraction to the dominant language. Time/space convergence has intensified the processes that are perceived to be culturally erosive to peripheral minorities in Spain, France, and the United Kingdom.

Some Welsh nationalists, who were concerned over the territorial shrinkage of the Welsh heartland, had used aggregate census data on monolingual Welsh speakers to foster a policy of territorial control by establishing formal boundaries, thereby creating a "Fortress Wales" against the encroachment of English. Such control would commence with private and community efforts, to be followed by a formal boundary demarcation. This would create an extensive, contiguous Welsh-speaking zone. Ambrose and Williams (1981) have argued against this policy. Through detailed, local area analysis (large-scale) of later census data, they and other Welsh scholars were able to demonstrate a geographical pattern of decline of a once strong Welsh-speaking heartland into a series of fragmented nuclei of Welsh-language use. Large-scale cartographic analysis identified a "zone of collapse" at the margins of these Welsh-speaking areas where English usage was replacing Welsh in households (Zelinsky & Williams, 1988). In the face of acculturating processes, the Welsh speakers had fewer and fewer institutional support agencies to draw upon for their ethnolinguistic vitality. Williams and his colleagues linked the data on language change with socioeconomic census data by incorporating educational, religious, cultural, and political variables as they related to language use. Later, these researchers were able to demonstrate through this form of analysis that, in districts where the Welsh schools had been established and where new, more positive attitudes to the nourishment of Welsh culture had developed, language decline showed a small but significant reversal. Williams and colleagues believed that the pattern of fragmentation and drift, and the outcome of their socioeconomic analysis, weakened the argument in favor of a uniformly designated territorial language region within which citizen rights and the primacy of Welsh could be specified and sanctioned. To be effective, the researchers argued, language planning must be functional rather than formal (as in "Fortress Wales"), and in concert with other reforms of the socioeconomic conditions that sustain communities. Thus, "planning policies, as well as being variable from one part of the region to another, must be adaptable at short notice in order to

accommodate the suddenly changing fortunes of the language in any locality" (Ambrose & Williams, 1981, p. 6). Institutional support for minority-language use would be fostered in schools, churches, and chapels, and in public services in those areas identified as having a critical mass to justify such policies and programs. When feasible, magazines and newspapers published in Welsh would receive government support.

There have been advances in the revitalization of the Welsh language within the targeted domains; however, vigilance and language planning must be constant in the face of expanded economic opportunities within the European Union. There is a tendency for corporations that wish to exploit this huge market to view "lesser-used languages" as burdensome. This attitude in economic thinking views minority languages as extra costs to, and a drain upon, productivity. As Williams (2000) states, minority languages may be considered "a potentially complicating factor that might dissuade hesitant investors and reluctant relocators from siting any new activities in Wales" (Williams, 2000, p. 362).

In peripheral ethnolinguistic communities, the settlement pattern of population tends to be fragmented; hence, the nationalists' objectives are mainly to reinforce and entrench key domains in which the minority language exists. Language use is also fragmented, as residents frequently face the necessity of using the majority language beyond the home, particularly when the language of the majority is also the language of business and commerce. This can lead to a situation of *subtractive bilingualism*, where the mother tongue of the minority is gradually displaced in an increasing number of domains by the use of the majority language. The minority language becomes less and less significant as the majority language takes over daily patterns of contact and interaction. The younger members of the minority are particularly vulnerable, for they can become more mobile with their language skills and susceptible to exogamy. In a mixed marriage, language usage in the home may switch to the majority tongue, especially if the female spouse – the traditional carrier of the culture in the home – is from that group.

Extensive and Geographically Contiguous Ethnolinguistic Communities

Not all minority groups occupy peripheral locations within multilingual states. There are many examples of linguistic groups that

are surrounded by a majority, as the Québécois in Canada, or in geographical juxtaposition, as the Walloons and Flemish in Belgium. Regardless of geographical location, Lapointe (1987) believes that in a multilingual state a weak language will not enjoy the haven of independent status, and it is, therefore, in a constant struggle against a dominant language that has the erosive role of a *lingua franca* throughout the whole state. Even when granted official status within the multilingual state, it does not attain supremacy in the public administration and the school system, the weak language will become merely symbolic.

To avoid assimilation, members of the minority must assert their ethnicity, an assertion that can manifest in demands for greater control of the ethnic region. This control can involve a partial or total exclusion of the majority language. The more geographically concentrated the minority language becomes, through territorial control behind a protective boundary, the less threatening is the majority language to the ethno-linguistic vitality of the minority community and to one's ethnic identity. The languages that will survive the multilingual environment, therefore, are those that are eventually protected by the state, for they will enjoy pre-eminence in national and international negotiations. Those least able to survive have only local cultural power and are without control of the government of either a state or a territory. To explore these developments, we can turn to the Flemish-Walloon conflict in Belgium.

Belgium: Flemish and Walloons

In Belgium, the Flemish in the north and Walloons in the south are highly homogeneous and regionally unilingual. The former are the majority in the country but struggled for decades to overcome a "minority status" because their language was considered to be culturally inferior to the French spoken by the Walloons. With ascendancy to independence in 1830, Walloons and the Francophones in Brussels controlled the Belgian government and the economy, and dominated cultural life; hence, upward social mobility became associated with the use of the French language even in Flanders. The Walloons also adhered to the theory that cultural and linguistic diversity threatened the unity of the nation. The struggle to achieve parity between the two linguistic groups was long and bitter; rights to use Flemish in secondary and post-secondary education, in administration, and in

the criminal justice system in Flanders were enacted only gradually (Lorwin, 1972). The promotion of bilingual status for the whole of Belgium met with resistance from the Walloons, who resented having Flemish inflicted upon their region. In 1932, the effort was abandoned and unilingual regions were created behind an ethno-linguistic boundary, except for the capital and some small areas along the linguistic frontier that retained bilingual status (Baetens-Beardsmore, 1987).

The territorial limits were to have some flexibility to accommodate ethnic interaction; consequently, the language boundary was relatively permeable. If the population composition of an administrative unit changed from mainly unilingual to a mixture of Flemish and Walloon, an application to alter the unit from unilingual to bilingual would be entertained. Over the next 30 years, relations between the two language groups were tense as the Flemish continued to fear the encroachment of French upon their territory. This tension led to the official demarcation of Flanders and Wallonia in 1963 as permanently unilingual; a citizen's use of language beyond the home for services would be legally determined by his or her place of residence and not by the language spoken in the home or by personal preference. The capital, Brussels, remained an officially bilingual territory.

This legislation was the outcome of intense efforts by the Flemish to create a fully unilingual cultural realm in the north, and was the culmination of social, cultural, economic, and political tensions that had dominated relations between the two groups for over a century (McRae, 1986). Flemish nationalists had become as intransigent as the Walloons, who had traditionally opposed Flemish minority rights in the south. The separation of the two groups was fortified through the development and official sanction of institutional unilingualism. The Belgian government tried to maintain cultural linkages between Flanders and Wallonia, but the linkages have become weaker since the cultural trends of the 1960s and 1970s. Murphy (1993) found that manifestations of this division associated with the language boundary are the paucity of migrations between the two regions, and the few contacts by telephone between Flanders and Wallonia in comparison with intra-regional contacts or between either of the regions and Brussels.

The metropolitan area of Brussels, the capital, has evolved into an interesting geopolitical situation within Belgium. The capital is the only area that may be designated as a cultural transition zone, because of the opportunity for regular contact and interaction between the two major linguistic groups, for both residents and commuters, and

and that of *personality*. The principle of territoriality, under which an individual has the right to receive services in the language of the majority of the population in a given area, was appropriate in Belgium because there are clearly defined unilingual areas. The same applies to Switzerland. This provision of group rights allows a minority to sustain its territorial rights, within which it can continue to protect its language. These rights become anchored in unilingual institutions that are themselves anchored in geographical space (Laponce, 1987). Where the members of two language groups are not so concentrated, the principle of personality, according to which every person is free to obtain services in the language of his or her choice throughout a nation or designated area within a nation, usually prevails. South Africa is a good example of a nation under the principle of personality, though the principle is easily applied here because of the high proportion of the population that is competent in both English and Afrikaans. Brussels is an example of the application of the principle within a state (McRae, 1975).

Conclusion

The two plural societies discussed in this chapter have, at one time, through legislation or economic dominance, coerced the minorities to gradually integrate into the society of the majority. The assimilationist approach, at the outset, was to reduce conflict and competition in the nation and enhance cooperation and national unity. For the minority populations, who are, by definition, in a numerically or politically unbalanced situation, integrative processes were acculturating and inevitably assimilative. The domains in which these populations had cultural exclusiveness eroded, and mother-tongue usage beyond the home, and often within, gave way to the majority language. For Laponce (1987), this was an erosion of territory, for people who speak specific languages are like territories with restricted resources. The minority, through their representatives, had to find ways in which to protect their territories.

Nationalists from the small, fragmented ethnolinguistic communities will, in general, focus on strategic domains for exclusive minority-language usage. Their "resources" are too restricted to go beyond this strategy. Requests, or demands, will be made by a minority for improved language services in their mother tongue, and for exclusivity

because the 19 communes that constitute the metropolitan area are designated as officially bilingual. The city is situated, however, within the unilingual Flemish part of the country, and normal urban expansion into this territory has generated hostility. In spite of legislation in the 1960s that entrenched the limits of the Brussels-capital region, suburban growth has developed, particularly southward toward the linguistic boundary between Flanders and Wallonia. The Francophones of the capital have a preference for this suburban area, but Flemish nationalists fear urban growth in this direction will eventually reach the Wallonian sector. Hence, Brussels, rather than being a bilingual enclave within Flanders, will become a salient of the Wallonian cultural realm. This outcome is considered a potential territorial threat by Flemish nationalists (Witte, 1987). Relations between the two groups who inhabit small municipalities on the linguistic boundary across Belgium have been conditioned by this "battle of Brussels" (Murphy, 1988).

Throughout the 1980s, Brussels gained a regional council with an independent structure similar to those of Flanders and Wallonia. This has contributed to the formation of a distinctive regional context that has set the residents of the city apart, conceptually and functionally, from the inhabitants of the other two administrative units. There is the possibility of a distinct Brussels identity emerging among French and Dutch speakers alike, and this will generate an interactive situation that may contribute to intermarriage between the two groups (Murphy, 1991).

Various institutions have been established that are devoted to matters that concern the capital alone. Also, with the establishment of international bodies in the city, including the European parliament and attendant operations, Brussels has taken on an international aura that does not exist in other Belgian cities. In this environment, those who function in the two official languages may be considered to experience *additive bilingualism*, in which access to the other language brings no threat of replacement to the mother tongue. This is in marked contrast to the experiences of the Flemish in Brussels prior to the 1960s. To an outsider, the fragmented nature of the Belgian state could appear as a precursor to dissolution, but the consensus is that the future existence of Belgium is not threatened. Nevertheless, differences between the Flemish and the Walloons will continue to be a constant source of internal friction.

The development of language regions in Belgium illustrates the application of two principles for policy formation: that of *territoriality*

in domains that are considered vital to cultural survival, particularly in education. The costs of these services, however, must be shared by the whole society. When the members of the majority population fail to perceive the same acculturating and assimilating processes acting upon the smaller society, or if they believe the minority to be overreacting, competition and conflict can develop. How should political leaders, who decide to respond through a pluralist approach to the demands of the minority, proceed? Should they embark upon a program to educate the electorate thoroughly on the needs of the weaker ethnic group and the reasons for the accommodation of policies and programs that are forthcoming? Or should they embrace gradualism, whereby policies are brought forth quietly and step by step, so that once they are fully in place the electorate has never been required to make a decision on whether it is for or against?

Within the larger, more contiguous ethnolinguistic communities, nationalists go beyond the entrenchment of minority-language domains alone, but seek to entrench their territorial boundaries as a form of fortification against invading majority languages. Language becomes the boundary, for it will re-establish the distance between minority and majority, or dominator and dominated in the case of Belgium. The exclusive use of the mother tongue throughout the society is the objective, thereby binding the members of the smaller or formerly dominated group more securely to the culture. Members of the once dominant group must now be prepared to alter the pattern of their language use in that society. They must be prepared to function under the principle of territoriality or change location. In Belgium, the decline in interaction across the linguistic boundary is symbolic of the distance that has emerged between the two ethnolinguistic communities in that country. The reduction in contact and interaction between ethnolinguistic groups in a plural society produces social distance that is considered a form of security by the leaders of a minority or linguistically weaker group. This in turn can reduce the knowledge and/or understanding of the "other" in society, since the loss of interaction curtails the opportunities to get to know members of the opposing community; a lack of empathy prevails. This is often referred to as *cognitive distance* between ethnic constituents in a plural society. Hence, reduced contact and interaction between the constituent societies also create a new demand on policy-makers to generate an acceptable form of national integration, to avoid a debilitating division in the country.

Annotated Bibliography

Breton, R.-L. (1991). *Geolinguistics: Language dynamics and ethnolinguistic geography*. Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press.

Languages are seldom static. Over time they evolve, and within the same language some forms evolve more quickly than others. Each form has its history and its geography. The geography of language forms has a well-established scientific tradition dating from the turn of the nineteenth century. The geography of language functions, however, is a developing study, and one to which this volume is a valuable contribution. The author develops a distinction between form and function at the outset, and follows with analysis of the various bondings a language can have to types of human groups – the ethnic nature of a language. He also presents the theme that it is the society – the users of a language – that ultimately determines its dynamics. To study the dynamics, one must have recourse to some form of quantification, and this is developed as an important technical aspect of geolinguistics.

Gardner, N., Puigdevall i Serralvo, M., & Williams, C. H. (2000). Language revitalization in comparative context: Ireland, the Basque Country, and Catalonia. In C. H. Williams (ed.), *Language revitalization, policy and planning in Wales* (pp. 311–62). Cardiff: University of Wales Press. Language planners have become more conscious of the value of drawing upon wide experience for policy and program development. The authors explain that most comparative studies that involved policy for the Welsh language were made with other Celtic lands, particularly Ireland and Brittany. This chapter is representative of the attempts by language-policy experts to draw from the wider experience of European nations, particularly Spain, in the field of language revitalization. The authors use this study to argue that the framers of Welsh language policy should rely less on the cliché of Celtic solidarity and turn, instead, to several of the proactive policies and programs that have developed in the Basque Country (Euskadi) and Catalonia. These proactive features demonstrate the value of a positive political element to language planning: the indispensable nature of institutional support systems, particularly in education; the need to integrate language planning with other forms of planning, particularly regional economic development; and the need for a thorough understanding of the economic imperative that structures language choice individually and collectively.

Laponce, J. A. (1987). *Languages and their territories*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

This book is rather dated, but it continues to set the standard for the exploration of bilingualism and the political issues that are generated by this phenomenon. The author begins with a study of how one learns a language and follows with a demonstration of the manner in which the brain resists bilingualism. He explores the theme that the impulse for unilingualism is related to the tendency to create unilingual territorial niches. Each language group, therefore, will strive to develop its exclusive territory. In opposition, the dominant language group in a plural society will attempt to force the minority into fewer and fewer minority-language domains. Laponce applies his theory to a number of multilingual societies and draws provocative conclusions.

Peeters, Y. J. D., & Williams, C. H. (eds.) (1993). *The cartographic representation of linguistic data* (Discussion Papers in Geolinguistics, Nos. 19-21). Stoke on Trent: Staffordshire University.

This publication is part of a series on geolinguistics that is produced at Staffordshire University in England. This issue contains nine selected presentations that were made at the Scientific Workshop in the Cartographic Representation of Linguistic Data sponsored by the European Centre of Ethnolinguistic Cartography in Brussels, Belgium. Through their contributions at the workshop, the authors seek to advance the conceptual and methodological development of geolinguistics. In addition to the conceptual and methodological themes, the authors apply geolinguistic analysis to South Africa, Hungary, Wales, and parts of Central Africa. The latter demonstrate the importance of providing accurate data in map form, and the related imperative that the evaluation and implications of these data must be fully understood by both map producers and map users.

Williams, C. H. (1993). *Called unto liberty: On language and nationalism*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.

The author has focused on the implications of language-related conflict and nationalist mobilization as expanding global issues. Interest groups are challenging the established state as they seek greater representation in international affairs and a diminution in threats to their cultural survival. These tensions are examined in this volume, and the appeals of national liberty are analyzed for those whose culture is challenged by structural and political changes in the global economy. Williams evaluates various themes of nationalism and cultural

identity, and then examines the manner in which language and nationalist political activity have interrelated in Wales and Quebec. He offers a set of scenarios as to how such interests are to be satisfied through applied public policy and social planning.

Discussion Questions

- 1 Discuss the queries presented in the conclusion of the chapter. When political leaders decide on a plural approach to the demands of a minority, should they:
 - (a) embark on a program to inform the population on the needs of the minority and the reasons for the accommodating policies and programs;
 - or
 - (b) operate under a plan of gradualism, whereby policies and programs are activated piece by piece without publicity or fanfare?
- 2 The lobby group U.S.English has endorsed an assimilationist policy for the plural society of the United States, and has started by promoting a change to the Constitution that would make English the official language of the country. Investigate the activities of this group. What successes have they had to date? Do they have a hidden agenda? Do they also operate at the state level of government, and if so with what success?
- 3 Assume you are a member of the municipal government of a small city in the southern United States near the international border. You are about to develop an annual budget on the basis of the size of the city's population and anticipated demands for services. There is a large Hispanic American portion of your population, and you know that many unilingual undocumented aliens could be attracted to your city to be near kin and kind. List the municipal services that could be affected by this unexpected increase in your population. What programs can you put in place to accommodate these demands? Are these programs likely to cause a backlash of annoyance among the permanent residents of your city?
- 4 The size of the Hispanic American population in California is increasing annually. With more representatives of that population being elected to the state legislature, it is reasonable to assume that a bill will be forthcoming to make Spanish and English official languages of California for all services, departments, and agencies

of the state government. What is your reaction to this potential legislation? What is the current size of the Hispanic American population in California?

NOTE

- 1 Space does not permit a detailed treatment of the growth and development of geolinguistics, but readers who wish to explore the evolution of research that has led to greater recognition of the contextual element of language and territory should consult the work of Colin Williams, a geographer at the University of Cardiff (Williams, 1980, 1984, 1988).

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acquires sovereignty, it seems to acquire the label of "nation-state." This label, then, suggests that the "state" – a formal system of institutions – is also a "nation" – the result of *nationalism*, a very specific political and ideological process. Though at first glance commonsensical, the collocation is by no means warranted as a default description of states. Empirically, there are a good number of states where a true nationalist project (as defined, e.g., by Hobsbawm, 1990) does not exist, or where, in fact, the "nation" is organized around *coercion* rather than around ideological *consent* and where, consequently, a term such as "statism" would be more appropriate. There is abundant evidence for this in my own field of study, Africa, and no doubt elsewhere as well. Second, nationalism does not require a state. Very often it emerges as a *reaction* *against* the state, and a good number of successful nationalisms were in fact anti-state nationalisms (as in Flanders-Belgium, Catalonia-Spain, Québec-Canada). The success of these nationalisms generated new state structures at the regional level, and thus transformed the nationalist project into a statist one. So for sound analytic reasons, it is advisable to separate "nation" and "state," and consider the "nation-state" as one specific combination of the two, the existence of which needs to be empirically established, not posited *a priori*.

In the era of globalization, one also frequently encounters statements about the demise of the nation-state. It is argued, then, that contemporary social processes, notably in the fields of labor and culture (including identity processes), develop in "transnational" networks no longer responding to "national" dynamics of labor division and identity categorization (see, e.g., Castells, 1998, for a discussion). This is partly true, but again we need to differentiate between the nation and the state. It may well be that a classic, modernist project of nationalism becomes far more difficult to accomplish under conditions of globalization, and that consequently, the traditional nation is on its way out. But that does not entail that the state is on its way out. If we follow Immanuel Wallerstein (1983, 2000), the contemporary (globalized) capitalist World System hinges on a complex of *inter-state* relations in which macro-scale labor divisions and value-allocations are organized unequally. We need not go into Wallerstein's argument in detail here, but we should note the way in which he emphasizes the active role of states in shaping and defining processes we now call globalization.¹ So under globalization the nation may be under pressure, but the state appears to do well.

But of course, the state does not remain untouched by globalization, and the notion of "state" itself suggests not only the internationally

Language Policy and National Identity

Jan Blommaert

It is an unfortunate situation for social scientists, but the world is not neatly divided into monolingual states. Consequently, official administrative belonging – being a citizen of a state – is a poor indicator of sociolinguistic belonging, let alone of language behavior in general. The relationship between national *identity* and the language-oriented activities of the state is even less straightforward, if for nothing else because of the elusiveness of "identity." Whenever we talk about identity, we need to differentiate between "achieved" or "inhabited" identity, we need to differentiate between "achieved" or "inhabited" identity – the identity people themselves articulate or claim – and "ascribed" or "attributed" identity – the identity given to someone by someone else. The two do not necessarily coincide, as will become clear further on, and matters are considerably complicated by this. This chapter will consequently have two aims: to clarify the general issues involved in the relationship between language policy and national identity, and to illustrate this relationship by means of an example.

The title "Language Policy and National Identity" presupposes the existence of each of the constituent terms and their collocations: "language," "policy" (language policy), and "national," "identity" (national identity). The overall collocation suggests that there is an effective relationship between language policy and national identity. I shall propose that there is one, but that it must be seen as an *ideological* relationship and as a *specific* one. I must start with basics, though: a reflection on the nation and the state.

Nation (and) State

It is a common feature of much academic writing in this field to use "nation" and "state" as near-synonymous terms. As soon as a state

but not exclusive to, national governments. "National" language policies can be imposed by super-state forces, or these policies can be an effect of national governments seeking new international alliances with certain partners. The EU has a self-image of multilingualism, which it enforces through nationally ratified educational policies. The growing emphasis on the use of English in education in the peripheries of the World System, articulated in national language and educational policies in several countries, is based on an image of globalization as monocentric, with an English-dominant economic, financial, and political center. And the promotion of English in countries such as Congo and Mozambique, where English used to be a marginal linguistic commodity, is motivated by a desire of national governments to align themselves with the United States and international organizations such as the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank.

Finally, it also means that *national identity* seen in relation to *language* becomes a very problematic category. To this issue I now turn.

Language, Policy, and Identity

Let us recall some of the theses articulated in classic studies on nationalism: Anderson (1983), Gellner (1983), Greenfield (1992), and Hobsbawm (1990). Interestingly, all these authors emphasize the importance of language in the process of nation-building. But it is a specific kind of language: the printed word circulating in mass quantities and stimulating the growth and dissemination of "standard national languages." In fact, print capitalism was central to the becoming of modernity – the historical phase in which the nation-state as we now know it was created (Bauman, 1991; Habermas, 1984, 1987; Latour, 1993). But print capitalism also became the instrument for the massification of specific *language ideologies*, and at this point I should introduce my main argument.

The notion of language ideologies grew out of Sapirian and Whorfian linguistic anthropology, and it stands for socially and culturally embedded *metalinguistic* conceptualizations of language and its forms of usage (Kroskrity, 2001; Silverstein, 1979; see the essays in Schieffelin, Woolard, & Kroskrity, 1998). Language users have conceptions of language and language use: conceptions of "quality," value, status, norms, functions, ownership, and so forth. These conceptions guide the communicative behavior of language users; they use language

acknowledged existence of a "state" – like, for example, Somalia, Congo, or Sierra Leone – but also the effectiveness and autonomy of this state as a system of organizational and administrative apparatuses. This can by no means be taken for granted, and it is again a matter for investigation and not for posing. The examples given above – Somalia, Congo, and Sierra Leone – are "states" in the first sense of the term, but not in the second sense. Governments of these countries have hardly any effective control over their territories, and their capacity to enforce measures taken by the "state" over the totality of their territory is non-existent. All kinds of core "state" functions, ranging from organized (military and police) violence to education and medical services, are in effect performed by "non-state" agents such as rebel movements, international NGOs or international organizations such as UNHCR and UNICEF, local sub-state organizations, international businesses, and so on (Ferguson & Gupta, 2002). This is true not only for clear cases such as the ones given, but also for contemporary states in the center of the World System. Governments now share "state" power (e.g., in the fields of defense, economic, and monetary affairs) with international business, international organizations such as the European Union, the World Bank, NATO, regional or local autonomous governments (e.g., the states in the United States), and "civil society" organizations such as trade unions. The term "state" as a descriptor for "state activities" can thus technically pertain both to "sub-state" institutions, ranging from civil society organizations to regional and local governments, and to "super-state" institutions, such as business and other networks, the EU, NATO or the United Nations.

What does all this mean for our discussion here? It means that our object of investigation is in effect a rather narrow and highly specific category of cases: those countries where an effective state system manages to conduct nationalist policies through language policy. It also means that we should be careful with the term *national*: a national language policy may only seemingly be "national," that is, confined and specific to the territory of a single state, and effected exclusively by state actors. Actors and influences in the field of language policy can be manifold and involve both sub-state, state, and super-state actors in processes of considerable complexity (see the essays in Blommaert, 1999a).

In fact, one of the challenging new areas of research into language policies could precisely address the way in which language policies emerge out of an interplay of actors at very different levels, including

on the basis of the conceptions they have and so reproduce these conceptions. These are ideological constructs, and they are sites of power and authority. Language use is ideologically stratified and regimented, and the "best" language/language variety is distinguished from "less adequate" varieties in every instance of use (Gal & Woolard, 2001; see the essays in Kroskrity, 2000). Thus, written language would be valued more highly than spoken language; standard more highly than dialect, specific expert registers more highly than general lay registers, and so forth.

The advent of print capitalism offered an instrument for the dissemination of language ideologies that attributed the highest prestige to an autonomous, structured, semantically transparent (written) language variety – an elite variety over which the educated (upper) middle classes had control, but which was now imposed on the whole of society as *the* (only) Language and opposed to the "jargons," "speech," "dialects," and other forms of "imprecise," "vulgar," or "confused" (oral) language of the less educated masses. It was the sort of Language that would be laid out in grammars and dictionaries and then offered normatively, as a collection of strict rules, in the emerging national education systems.

Bauman and Briggs (2003) trace this language ideology to Bacon and, more prominently, Locke. Locke developed a highly elitist view on language as something that needed to be decontextualized and "purified" as part of the program of rationalist and detached individualism, central to modernity. Language, in this sense, became detached from (oral folk) "tradition" – the vernacular stories and anecdotes told by the common people and perceived by Locke as anti-rational, emotional, chaotic. It became the "standard" language of modernity. But before that could happen, a second intervention was required, according to Bauman and Briggs (2003). The oral and folk tradition, rejected by Locke, was rescued by Herder and the Grimm brothers and elevated to the level of "national character." But "tradition" had been *rationalized*, so to speak: the tradition needed to become modulated by the kind of transparent, standard language promulgated by Locke. And it is the combination of tradition seen as national identity and rationalist perceptions of standard speech that offered the launching platform for national (standard) languages as we now know them: linguistic items with a name ("English," "German," "Zulu"), defined as a set of decontextualized rules and norms, and confined to *national* spaces within which they could become the emblems of national identity.²

Important is the way in which both the emergence and dissemination of "the language" as well as its relation to the state (i.e., a relation that is seen as symbolizing the state as a "nation") are *ideological* processes, that is, processes that need not in any significant way reflect what people in the nation actually use in the way of language. It is a sociolinguistic truism that societies are almost by necessity *multilingual*, in the sense that many varieties, genres, styles, and codes occur, despite self-perceptions of societal monolingualism. Societies do reflect and sustain the *sociolinguistic regime* in a country, that is, the relative hierarchies normatively maintained and the dominant ideas surrounding them. Such ideas would include ownership, membership, and authority: "this is *our* language," "we are Americans and speak English," "this language doesn't belong here," "he doesn't speak the language well."

Consequently, and following Silverstein (1998), we should distinguish between "linguistic communities" and "speech communities," where the former are groups professing adherence to the normatively constructed, ideologically articulated "standard" Language ("we speak English") and the latter are groups characterized by the actual use of specific speech forms (e.g., professional jargons, but also dialects and even "standard" varieties of languages). The two, as said earlier, are not isomorphic, and the distance between the sociolinguistically definable community and the linguistic-ideologically definable community reveals the degree of hegemony of the language ideologies, often resulting in blind spots for sociolinguistic phenomena. In my own case, Belgian-Flemish language laws compel me to deliver my academic courses monolingually "in Dutch," and Flanders is a region characterized by unshakable perceptions of Dutch monolingualism in public life (seen as a Flemish-nationalist victory over Belgian-Francophone imperialism). I do teach in Dutch – at least if "teaching" is reduced to my oral contribution to class performances. The bulk of my course materials, however, are in English and French, and my research output is likewise multilingual. So students who wish to take my courses are, in actual fact, subjected to a *multilingual* complex of communicative practices, despite a strong feeling that they study "in Dutch" and despite my university's (and my regional government's) emphasizing the Dutch-speaking character of academic life in Flanders.

Silverstein (1996) calls this phenomenon a "monoglot" ideology. It rests on an ideologically configured belief that a society is *in effect* monolingual – that monolingualism is a fact and not an ideological perception – coupled with a denial of practices that point toward factual

multilingualism and linguistic diversity (Blommaert & Verschueren, 1998). The phenomenon rests on associations between "pure," standard language, membership of an ethnolinguistically defined "people," and a particular region occupied by these (ethnolinguistically homogeneous) people. This ideology has effects, and I shall discuss three crucial ones:

- 1 It informs *practical language regimes* in education and other crucial spheres of public life. Language policy is invariably based on linguistic ideologies, on images of "societally desirable" forms of language use and of the "ideal" linguistic landscape of society, in turn often derived from larger sociopolitical ideologies. Thus, a monoglot ideology may not only deny the existence of linguistic diversity, it may also sustain practices that actually and effectively prohibit linguistic diversity in the public domain. Examples abound, and recently some scholars have qualified such practices as "linguicide" (Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000). In effect, much linguistically articulated nationalism constructs language policies aimed at *reducing* linguistic diversity in society, sometimes even while explicitly advocating societal multilingualism (see the essays in Blommaert, 1999a).
- 2 It also *produces and regulates identities*. The state often appears as the guardian of the monoglot idealization of the link "language-people-country," and thus offers (and often imposes by coercion) particular ascriptive ethnolinguistic identities for its citizens. This is a very widespread phenomenon: since this is Indonesia, people speak Bahasa Indonesia; since this is Tanzania, people speak Swahili; since this is Flanders, people speak Dutch, and so on. The processes by means of which this happens are intricate, manifold, and often also "automatic," that is, implicit and not spectacular, assuming the shape of what Foucault called "governmentality" (the network of measures aimed at regulating people's lives) and leading to what Bourdieu called "habitus," a set of naturalized predispositions that "automatically" guide our behavior and can thus be converted into "inhabited" identities. The most common and powerful ethnolinguistic identity promulgated by the state is that of "monolingual speaker of (one of) the national language(s)," assuming that people are intrinsically monolingual and that such monolingualism is an organic feature of being a citizen of that country. The state is thus very often the actor that sustains and elaborates the belief in the existence and value of "a Language" in the sense of language

names – Dutch, English, Chinese, Zulu. Initially, "national identity" is therefore almost invariably an *ascriptive* identity attributed by the state or state-affiliated institutions such as education systems, and it most often revolves around a monolingually imagined one-to-one relation between national-administrative belonging and language use. This may then lead to an *inhabited* identity in which people effectively adopt the ethnolinguistic-national identity as part of a broader repertoire of identities.

- 3 Finally, it also has had a tremendous *impact on scholarship*. The reified and stratified, monoglot image of "a language" has informed language description – the image of ethnolinguistically bounded and internally homogeneous communities characterized by a (pure, decontextualized, normative) language was projected onto languages spoken elsewhere in the world (Fabian, 1986; Irvine & Gal, 2000), and was later adopted by postcolonial governments as the model of "good" language (e.g., Blommaert, 1999b). Similarly, this same ideology informed much of linguistics and sociolinguistics, in which authors even today assume the existence of bounded, rule-governed, and reified "languages" as their units of study (see Blommaert, 1996; Hymes, 1996, for a critique).

All of this has a profound impact on our thinking on identity, of course. We have failed to see the fine shades of identity often articulated not by one monoglot "language," but by delicate and moment-to-moment evolving variation between *varieties* of language, including accents, registers, styles, and genres. As mentioned above, identity is best seen not as one item, but as a repertoire of different possible identities, each of which has a particular range or scope and function. In that sense, a term such as "national identity" is, as said above, best seen as a *specific* ascriptive label attached to people. In the best of cases it can occasionally be an "achieved," adopted identity of people, but always with restricted sociolinguistic functions, often related to interactions between individuals and the state (filling in administrative forms, responding to survey questions and opinion polls, or in my case, accounting for my teaching practices in my university). If taken as the dominant, overwhelming (single) identity of people, it does not help us much in understanding the multiple, often unpredictable and volatile identity work we effectively perform when we communicate.³ In scholarly traditions based on such notions, it has led to rather simplistic associations between "a language" and "an identity," which

political-ideological and linguistic terms, not in ethnic or other cultural terms.

In terms of what has been discussed in the previous sections, a few qualifications are in order here. First, the ideal situation envisaged by the architects of the nation-building campaign was monoglot. The campaign would be a success when the population would use *one language imbued with one set of ideological loads*: those of *Ujamaa*. "Homogeneity" was the target (Blommaert & Verschueren, 1998), and the spread of Swahili-and-*Ujamaa* would have to go hand in hand with the *disappearance* of other languages-and-ideologies. The first target, obviously, was English – the language of imperialism, capitalism, and oppression; but the same went for the local languages, which were seen as vehicles for traditional, pre-colonial cultures, as well as for "non-standard" varieties of Swahili (e.g., code-switching, urban varieties), which were sensed to indicate the incompleteness of the process of hegemony. The "better" and "purer" one's Swahili would be, the better a socialist Tanzanian patriot one would be. We have here a typical Herderian cocktail of one language-one culture-one territory as an ideal organization for society. Recall also Herder's adoption of the Lockean emphasis on "purified" language as the vehicle of true authenticity: African socialists would be authentic if and when their African language – the vehicle of their "values" – would be purified and standardized.

Second, not only was the conception of language as a vehicle for a specified (politically defined) set of ideological values a typical case of Herderian imagination (and thus an inherited ideology from colonial language descriptions), but the whole *operational* conception of language was that inherited from colonial predecessor regimes as well (in ways similar to those described by Irvine & Gal, 2000; cf. Blommaert, 1994). Swahili was standardized by academic experts and its main vehicle was (normative) literacy produced through formal education systems. Scholarly and political efforts concentrated on standardization, language "development and modernization," purism, and so forth; in short, on the construction of Swahili as a purified (Lockean) artifact of normativity focused on referential functions.

There was a model for such a degree of "full languageness": English. Throughout the history of postcolonial linguistics in Tanzania, scholars kept referring to English whenever they discussed the kind of level of "development and modernization" that needed to be attained for Swahili. English was perceived as the language of a leading world

again overlook (and render invisible) the multiplicity and complexity of identity-work on the ground (see, e.g., Myers-Scotton, 1993).

The Ideological Process Illustrated

I will now turn to an illustration of the processes discussed in the previous sections and provide an account of language policy in Tanzania (East Africa). My focus will be on demonstrating how the language-political process was primarily an ideological process. Space restrictions prevent me from engaging with the details of the sociolinguistic situation and the history of language policy; I will have to refer readers to Blommaert (1999b and references therein) for more detailed information and discussion. Tanzania, I should emphasize, qualifies as a state where language policy and national identity effectively occur as an issue: it was a nationalist state (at least during one phase of its existence) and language was explicitly thematized in this context.

The postcolonial Tanzanian (then still Tanganyikan) state was one of the first to declare an indigenous language, Swahili, the national language of the country. It also became an official language alongside the former colonial language, English. Despite the absence of any formal language planning, a lot of language-policy measures ensued from this. Swahili was immediately introduced as the medium of instruction in primary education, alongside English as the (inherited) medium of instruction in post-primary education. Swahili also instantaneously became the language of political life (Tanzanian leaders systematically used Swahili when addressing their constituencies, and the language of parliamentary proceedings was Swahili) and of the majority of the mass media, both radio and printed press. Literature in Swahili was actively encouraged.

The real boost for Swahili came when the state embarked on a massive campaign of nation-building in the mid-1960s. This nation-building campaign was an attempt toward establishing socialist hegemony, and Swahili was given a crucial role in this. The language was defined as the language of African-socialist ("*Ujamaa*") ideas and values, and the generalized spread of Swahili would be a measurable index of the spread of socialism across the population. In terms of national identity, the *muamanchi* ("citizen") of *Ujamaa*-Tanzania would be a socialist and an African, and a monolingual, Swahili-speaking individual. National identity in Tanzania was defined in

power with a flourishing economy, a fabulous cultural history, and world-wide prestige, and this was what a "real" language should stand for.⁴ Pending the accomplishment of such "full languageness" for Swahili, English would have to be used in higher education in order to produce a class of top-notch intellectuals needed for specialized service to the country. Thus, while Swahili was spread to all corners of the country and was used in almost every aspect of everyday life, post-primary education remained (and still is) a domain where English was hegemonic.

Thirty years of concentrated efforts toward the goal set forth in the 1960s resulted in the generalized spread of Swahili. Sociolinguistically, Swahili and its varieties have become the identifying code of public activities throughout Tanzania. The campaign in that sense was exceptionally successful. But what did not happen was the ideological homogenization of the country. While Swahilization was manifestly a success, the monoglot ideal in which language, political ideology, and identity would be coterminous was a failure. Neither English nor local languages and "impure" varieties of Swahili disappeared, and in the eyes of the language planners, this meant that Tanzanians had still not fully become *Ujamaa*-socialists but still displayed adherences to bourgeois values (through English) and to pre-socialist modes of life (through local languages). And the spread of Swahili did not galvanize the hegemony of *Ujamaa*: the one-party system collapsed in the late 1980s and was replaced by a multiparty, liberal capitalist state-organization, which, ironically, adopted Swahili as its vehicle for nationwide communication.

What does this mean? It means, first, that there was a widening gap between the intended ascriptive identity constructed by language planners – the monolingual, Swahili-speaking, socialist Tanzanian – and the inhabited identities of the people. Swahili, as mentioned, was spread to almost every corner of the country, where it was adopted as part of the speech repertoires of the local people. They used it for specific purposes: interaction across ethnolinguistic boundaries, administrative contacts, and primary education. When doing so, they articulated an inhabited identity which aligned them with the projected ideal *muamanchi*. But they did more than that, of course. The language planners had been wrong in their totalizing conception of socialist hegemony and the use of Swahili. Politics, in reality, was one domain of language usage, and Swahili was absolutely dominant in that domain. But it was *only* one domain, and for other domains, people continued to use local languages or other newly emerged forms

of communication (Msanjila, 1999). So to the extent that only *one* identity was envisaged, the campaign was a failure. Adopting a more realistic perspective in which people are seen as having a repertoire of (domain-bound) identities, the campaign was a success. The momentous sociolinguistic change induced by the generalized spread of Swahili offered people a collection of new opportunities for "inhabited," achieved identities, a richer and more diversified repertoire of identities. But only one ascribed identity was used to cover this repertoire: that of the *muamanchi*. It was hopelessly inadequate; the monoglot, Herderian ideology adopted in language policy created huge blind spots in assessing the true impact of the Swahilization campaign.

The Tanzanian state was, and is, part of the world. It was encapsulated in a dynamics from below – the persistent usage of local languages, the genesis of Swahili-based new urban varieties, accents in Swahili, and subcultural jargons and slangs – and one from above – the historical and world-wide dominance of monoglot ideologies and ideologies of linguistic purification, the market pressures for English, and so on. In its role as a switchboard between these different levels, it adopted perhaps the worst possible language-political instrument, one that denied its insertion in the dynamics from below and above and stressed the autonomy of a particular space, that of the state. Its projected "ideal" identity for citizens could never work in terms of the ideology that guided the process.

Conclusion

The case of Tanzania may offer a lesson which other nation-building states may want to pay attention to. Singular projections of language onto national identity do not work any more. In a mature sociolinguistics, the state and its operations should be seen as part of what goes on in the sociopolitical and cultural field in a country. It results in *specific* domains, activities, and relationships, not (unless, perhaps, in totalitarian systems) in *general* ones. Apart from these specific domains, activities, and relationships, several others exist and will continue to exist, and they will respond to (sometimes very) different sets of norms and rules of language and communication produced by actors operating at different levels and scales. Language policy, consequently, should best be seen as a *niche* activity, and the same goes for its desired

product, national identity. We can now identify it as a niched ideological activity, necessarily encapsulated in and interacting with many others, regardless of how dominant it may seem at first sight.

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A standard reference for "World Systems analysis," with its emphasis on scales and processes of inequality in the interstate capitalist system of division of labor.

forth (Rampton, 1995). This volatility – and the problematic nature of such volatility – are also manifest in cases where people become “deterioralized.” Asylum seekers, for instance, perform intricate identity-work through complex shifts in speech styles and varieties. The gaps are dramatic between people who by definition do not belong to any “national” sociolinguistic regime but whose life is spent migrating, and the “national” codes of official services in charge of refugees (Maryns & Blommaert, 2001).

4 Irvine and Gal (2000) call this process “iconization”: the suggestion that qualities of language mirror qualities of societies.

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Discussion Questions

- 1 Given the niched activity of the state, are there any other “niches” that can be identified, in which other actors impose language-ideologically informed norms and rules and thus call for very different forms of sociolinguistic behavior?
- 2 Can you identify such other sociolinguistic regimes as “oppositional,” that is, acting against state-imposed or state-oriented practices?
- 3 Try to describe the kind of state-organized or state-oriented practices you find yourself in, and describe the linguistic norms and codes valid there.
- 4 Could you reflect on globalization processes (e.g., the world-wide spread of internet literacy) in terms of “niched” sociolinguistic activity?
- 5 Could you reflect on election campaigns in the same terms?

NOTES

- 1 This, one could note, invalidates the “TINA” argument (There Is No Alternative) about globalization, often used by politicians. Globalization is presented as a massive and impersonal force on which national governments have hardly any impact. See Giddens (1998) for an example.
- 2 This, then, became the classic “Herderian” triad *people-language-territory*. A “people” (Volk) is characterized by a “language” which is spread over a “territory.” This Herderian image of ethnolinguistic-national community became one of the dominant language ideologies in the field of language policy. Note that Herder systematically used “Volk” in two ways: as the “ethnic” or ethnolinguistically defined people and as the “common” people, the plebeian section of society (Bauman & Briggs, 2003, p. 183). The site of national authenticity, consequently, was not among the intellectuals or the upper classes (often characterized by multilingual repertoires), but among the “common people,” imagined by Herder as being monolingual. Note also that often, the territorial dimension is overlooked in commentaries on Herder, despite the fact that the nation-state as imagined by Herder was clearly a territorially bounded unit – the territory populated by the ethnolinguistically homogeneous Volk.
- 3 Ben Rampton’s work is exemplary in this respect. Rampton provides an analysis of the various ways in which ethnically mixed groups of young adolescents in Britain articulate identities, using each other’s accents, elements from subcultural jargons such as that of reggae, imitations of teachers’ speech styles, references to class-based codes, and so

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Language Policy and Minority Rights

Stephen May

This chapter explores the interconnections between language policy (LP) and minority rights (MR). Minority rights may be described as the cultural, linguistic, and wider social and political rights attributable to minority-group members, usually, but not exclusively, within the context of nation-states. This definition is, in turn, based on the usual distinction between so-called minority and majority groups employed in the sociological and political literature; a distinction that is based not on numerical size, but on clearly observable differences among groups in relation to power, status, and entitlement.

The focus of the chapter is on the often complex and contested history surrounding the individual trajectories of LP and MR, with particular reference to the interconnections between LP and minority language rights. This focus will also highlight the importance of adopting a wider sociohistorical, sociocultural, and sociopolitical analysis of LP. In particular, ongoing questions surrounding the status, use, and power of minority languages in the modern world will be explored, along with the material implications of these questions for those minority-group members who continue to speak such languages.

A key reason why such a broader sociohistorical, sociopolitical research approach is necessary is because for much of its history, linguistics as an academic discipline has been preoccupied with idealist, abstracted approaches to the study of language. In short, language has too often been examined in isolation from the social and political conditions in which it is used (for useful critiques of linguistics along these lines, see Bourdieu, 1991; Mey, 1985). This ahistorical, apolitical approach to language has also been a feature of sociolinguistics, despite its emphasis on the social, and of many discussions of LP as well. The last is particularly surprising exactly because one might have reasonably expected any analysis of language policies and practices to engage

critically with the wider social and political conditions – and, crucially, their historical antecedents – that have shaped them.

Early Language Policy

The tendency toward this “presentist” approach (May, 2003a) to LP was most evident in the early stages of formal LP development, in the 1960s–1970s. During this period, LP was seen by its proponents as a non-political, non-ideological, pragmatic, even technicist paradigm (for a useful overview, see Ricento, 2000). Its apparently simple and straightforward aim was to solve the immediate language problems of newly emergent postcolonial states in Africa, Asia, and the Middle East. Status language concerns at this time thus focused in particular on establishing stable diglossic language contexts in which majority languages (usually, ex-colonial languages, and most often English and French) were promoted as public languages of wider communication. If promoted at all, local languages – minority languages, in effect – were seen as being limited to private, familial language domains. While concern was often expressed for the ongoing maintenance of minority languages, the principal emphasis of LP at this time was on the establishment and promotion of “unifying” national languages in postcolonial contexts, along the lines of those in Western, developed contexts (see, e.g., Fishman, 1968; Rubin & Jernudd, 1971). What was not addressed by these early efforts at LP was the wider historical, social, and political issues attendant upon these processes, and the particular ideologies underpinning them. As Luke, McHoul, and Mey observe, while maintaining a “veneer of scientific objectivity” (something of great concern to early language planners), LP “tended to avoid directly addressing social and political matters within which language change, use and development, and indeed language planning itself, are embedded” (1990, pp. 26–7).

This omission was problematic for a number of reasons. First, it did not question or critique the very specific historical processes that had led to the hierarchizing of majority and minority languages, along with their speakers, in the first place. These processes are deeply imbricated with the politics of modern nationalism, and its emphasis on the establishment of national languages and public linguistic homogeneity as central, even essential, tenets of both modernization and Westernization (see below). Consequently, the normative

ascendancy of national languages was simply assumed, even championed, by early advocates of LP, and all other languages were compared in relation to them.

Second, the notion of linguistic complementarity, so central to early language-planning attempts at establishing “stable diglossia,” was itself highly problematic. Linguistic complementarity, as understood by early language planners, implied at least some degree of mutuality and reciprocity, along with a certain demarcation and boundedness between the majority and minority languages involved. Situations of so-called stable diglossia, however, are precisely *not* complementary in these respects. Rather, the normative ascendancy of national languages – and by extension, international languages such as English – specifically *militates against* the ongoing use, and even existence, of minority languages.

In other words, if majority languages are consistently constructed as languages of “wider communication” while minority languages are viewed as (merely) carriers of “tradition” or “historical identity,” as was the case in early LP, it is not hard to see what might become of the latter. Minority languages will inevitably come to be viewed as delimited, perhaps even actively unhelpful languages – not only by others, but also often by the speakers of minority languages themselves. This helps to explain why speakers of minority languages have increasingly dispensed with their first language(s) in favor of speaking a majority language – a process of language shift or replacement that is a prominent concern of current sociolinguistic analysis. It is these wider concerns with the pejorative “positioning” of minority languages, and their speakers, that have led to the subsequent advocacy and development of minority language rights (MLR).

Language Shift and Loss

Advocacy of MLR arises out of four principal concerns. The first has to do with the consequent exponential decline and loss of many of the world's languages. Indeed, of the estimated 6,800 languages spoken in the world today (Grimes, 2000), it is predicted on present trends that between 20 percent and 50 percent will “die” by the end of the twenty-first century (Krauss, 1992, 1995). Language decline and loss occur most often in bilingual or multilingual contexts in which a majority language – that is, a language with greater political power,

These figures graphically reinforce an earlier suggestion made by Michael Krauss (1992, 1995) that, in addition to the 50 percent of languages that may die within the next century, a further 40 percent of languages are "threatened" or "endangered." Given the processes of language shift and decline just outlined, and the current parlous state of many minority languages, it is not hard to see why. Even some majority languages are no longer immune to such processes, not least because of the rise of English as a global language (Crystal, 1997a, 1997b). Thus, if Krauss is to be believed, as few as 600 languages (10 percent) will survive in the longer term; perhaps, he suggests, even as few as 300.

Where these concerns about language loss relate to MLR more broadly is with respect to the social, economic, and political consequences for minority-language speakers of such shift and loss. Language loss – or linguistic genocide, as Skutnabb-Kangas (2000, chapter 15 in this volume) would have it – almost always forms part of a wider pattern of social, cultural, and political displacement. We can see this clearly if we consider which groups are most affected by language loss – almost always minority groups which are (already) socially and politically marginalized and/or subordinated. These groups have been variously estimated at between 5,000 and 8,000 (Stavert, 1992) and include within them the 250 million to 300 million members of the world's indigenous peoples (Tully, 1995), perhaps the most marginalized of all people groups. As Crawford (1994) notes, language death seldom occurs in communities of wealth and privilege, but rather to the dispossessed and disempowered. Moreover, linguistic dislocation for a particular community of speakers seldom, if ever, occurs in isolation from sociocultural and socioeconomic dislocation as well (Fishman, 1995).

Nationalism, Politics, and the Minoritization of Languages

And this brings us to the second principal concern that underlies the advocacy of MLR – why certain languages, and their speakers, have come to be "minoritized" in the first place. Advocates of MLR argue that the establishment of majority-minority language hierarchies is neither a natural process nor primarily even a linguistic one. Rather, it is a historically, socially, and politically constructed process (Hamel,

privilege, and social prestige – comes to replace the range and functions of a minority language. The inevitable result is that speakers of the minority language "shift" over time to speaking the majority language.

The process of language shift described here usually involves three broad stages. The first stage sees increasing pressure on minority-language speakers to speak the majority language, particularly in formal language domains, as seen most commonly in the "diglossic" language contexts discussed earlier. This stage is often precipitated and facilitated by the introduction of education in the majority language. It leads to the eventual decrease in the functions of the minority language, to the public or official functions of that language being the first to be replaced by the majority language. The second stage sees a period of bilingualism, in which both languages continue to be spoken concurrently. However, this stage is usually characterized by a decreasing number of minority-language speakers, especially among the younger generation, along with a decrease in the fluency of speakers as the minority language is spoken less, and employed in fewer and fewer language domains. The third and final stage – which may occur over the course of two or three generations, and sometimes less – sees the replacement of the minority language with the majority language. The minority language may be "remembered" by a residual group of language speakers, but it is no longer spoken as a wider language of communication (Baker & Prys Jones, 1998).

Of course, such language loss and language shift have always occurred; languages have risen and fallen, become obsolete, died, or adapted to changing circumstances in order to survive, throughout the course of human history, but never to this extent, and never before at such an exponential rate. Some sociolinguistic commentators have even described it as a form of "linguistic genocide" (Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000, and see chapter 15 in this volume). Such claims may seem overwrought and/or alarmist but they are supported by hard data. For example, a survey by the US-based Summer Institute of Linguistics, published in 1999, found that there were 51 languages with only one speaker left, 500 languages with fewer than 100 speakers, 1,500 languages with fewer than 1,000 speakers, and more than 3,000 languages with fewer than 10,000 speakers. The survey went on to reveal that as many as 5,000 of the world's 6,800 languages were spoken by fewer than 100,000 speakers each. It concluded, even more starkly, that 96 percent of the world's languages were spoken by only 4 percent of its people (Crystal, 1999).

1997a, 1997b; May, 2000a, 2001, 2002, 2003a), and one that is deeply imbued in wider (unequal) power relations. Following from this, if languages, and the status attached to them, are the product of wider historical, social, and political forces, there is, in turn, nothing "natural" about the status and prestige attributed to particular majority languages and, conversely, the stigma that is often attached to minority languages, or to dialects.

There are two specific points at issue here. The first concerns what actually distinguishes a majority language from a minority language or a dialect. This distinction is not as straightforward as many assume. For example, the same language may be regarded as both a majority and a minority language, depending on the context. Thus Spanish is a majority language in Spain and many Latin American states, but a minority language in the United States. Even the term "language" itself indicates this process of construction, since what actually constitutes a language, as opposed to a dialect, for example, remains controversial (see Mühlfäusler, 1996; Romaine, 2000). Certainly, we cannot always distinguish easily between a language and a dialect on linguistic grounds, since some languages are mutually intelligible, while some dialects of the same language are not. The example often employed here is that of Norwegian, since it was regarded as a dialect of Danish until the end of Danish rule in 1814. However, it was only with the advent of Norwegian independence from Sweden in 1905 that Norwegian actually acquired the status of a separate language, albeit one that has since remained mutually intelligible with both Danish and Swedish. Contemporary examples can be seen in the former Czechoslovakia, with the (re)emergence in the early 1990s of distinct Czech and Slovak varieties in place of a previously common state language. In the former Yugoslavia, we are currently seeing a comparable (re)development of separate Serbian, Croatian, and Bosnian language varieties in place of Serbo-Croat, itself the artificial language product of the post-World War II Yugoslav Communist Federation.

What these examples clearly demonstrate is that languages are "created" out of the politics of state-making, not – as we often assume – the other way around (Billig, 1995). Independence for Norway and the break-up of the former Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia have precipitated linguistic change, creating separate languages where previously none existed. The pivotal role of political context, particularly as it is worked out at the level of the nation-state, might also help to explain the scale of the projected language loss discussed earlier. One only has to look at the number of nation-states in the world

today, at approximately 200, and the perhaps 300 or so languages that are projected to survive long-term, to make the connection.

And this brings us to the second key point at issue here: the central and ongoing influence of nation-state organization, and the politics of nationalism, to processes of national (and international) language formation and validation, along with the linguistic hierarchies attendant upon them. In this respect, the model of the linguistically homogeneous nation-state – the "ideal" linguistic model adopted in early LP efforts – is actually only a relatively recent historical phenomenon, arising from the French Revolution of 1789 and the subsequent development of European nationalism. Previous forms of political organization had not required this degree of linguistic uniformity. For example, empires were quite happy for the most part to leave unmolested the plethora of cultures and languages subsumed within them – as long as taxes were paid, all was well. Nonetheless, in the subsequent politics of European nationalism – which, of course, was also to spread throughout the world – the idea of a single, common "national" language (sometimes, albeit rarely, a number of national languages) quickly became the leitmotif of modern social and political organization.

How was this accomplished? Principally via the political machinery of these newly emergent European states, with mass education playing a central role (Anderson, 1991; Gellner, 1983). The process of selecting and establishing a common national language usually involved two key aspects: *legitimation* and *institutionalization* (May, 2001; Nelde, Strubell, & Williams, 1996). Legitimation is understood to mean here the formal recognition accorded to the language by the nation-state – usually, via "official" language status. Institutionalization, perhaps the more important dimension, refers to the process by which the language comes to be accepted, or "taken for granted," in a wide range of social, cultural, and linguistic domains or contexts, both formal and informal. Both elements, in combination, achieved not only the central requirement of nation-states – cultural and linguistic homogeneity – but also the allied and, seemingly, necessary banishment of "minority" languages and dialects to the private domain.

If the establishment, often retrospectively, of chosen "national" languages was therefore a deliberate and deliberative political act, it follows that so too was the process by which other language varieties were subsequently "minoritized" or "dialectalized" by and within these same nation-states. These latter language varieties were, in

Language Replacement and Social Mobility

A third principal concern of MLR is to critique the principle of "language replacement" that centrally underlies the social and political processes just outlined – that one should/must learn these languages *at the expense of one's first language*. Consequently, the promotion of cultural and linguistic homogeneity at the collective/public level has come to be associated with, and expressed by, individual monolingualism (see also Skutnabb-Kangas, chapter 15 in this volume). This amounts to a form of linguistic social Darwinism and also helps to explain why language shift, loss, or decline has become so prominent.

Central to these language replacement arguments is the idea that the individual social mobility of minority-language speakers will be enhanced as a result. Relatedly, minority-language advocates are consistently criticized for ghettoizing minority language communities within the confines of a language that does not have a wider use, thus actively constraining their social mobility (e.g., Barry, 2000; Brutt-Griffler, 2002; Schlesinger, 1992). Little wonder, such critics observe, that many within the linguistic minority itself choose to ignore the pleas of minority-language activists and instead "exit" the linguistic group by learning another (invariably, more dominant) language. We can broadly summarize the logic of this argument as follows (see May 2003b, 2004 for a fuller discussion.):

- 1 Majority languages are lauded for their "instrumental" value, while minority languages are accorded "sentimental" value, but are broadly constructed as obstacles to social mobility and progress.
- 2 Learning a majority language will thus provide individuals with greater economic and social mobility.
- 3 Learning a minority language, while (possibly) important for reasons of cultural continuity, delimits an individual's mobility; in its strongest terms, this might amount to actual "ghettoization."
- 4 If minority-language speakers are "sensible" they will opt for mobility and modernity via the majority language.
- 5 Whatever decision is made, the choice between opting for a majority or minority language is constructed as oppositional, even mutually exclusive.

These arguments appear to be highly persuasive. In response, however, MLR proponents argue that the presumptions and assumptions

effect, *positioned* by these newly formed states as languages of lesser political worth and value. Consequently, national languages came to be associated with modernity and progress, while their less fortunate counterparts were associated (conveniently) with tradition and obsolescence. More often than not, the latter were also specifically constructed as obstacles to the political project of nation-building – as threats to the "unity" of the state – thus providing the *raison d'être* for the consistent derogation, diminution, and proscription of minority languages that have characterized the last three centuries of nationalism (see May, 2001, for a full overview). As Dorian summarizes it: "it is the concept of the nation-state coupled with its official standard language... that has in modern times posed the keenest threat to both the identities and the languages of small [minority] communities" (1998, p. 18). Coulmas observes, even more succinctly, that "the nation-state as it has evolved since the French Revolution is the natural enemy of minorities" (1998, p. 67).

Proponents of MLR argue that the emphasis on cultural and linguistic homogeneity within nation-states, and the attendant hierarchizing of languages, are thus neither inevitable nor inviolate – particularly in light of the historical recency of nation-states, and the related, often arbitrary and contrived, processes by which particular languages have been accorded "national" or "minority" status respectively. These arguments about the historical and geopolitical situatedness of national languages also apply at the supranational level. In particular, a number of prominent sociolinguistic commentators have argued that the burgeoning reach and influence of English as the current world language, or *lingua mundi*, is the result of equally constructed historical and political processes, most notably via the initial geopolitical influence of Britain and, subsequently, the United States (e.g., Pennycook, 1994, 1998; Phillipson, 1992, 2003).

As with the construction of national languages, the current ascendancy of English is also invariably linked with modernity and modernization, and the associated benefits which accrue to those who speak it. The result, MLR proponents argue, is to position other languages as having less "value" and "use" and, by extension, and more problematically, to delimit and delegitimize the social, cultural, and linguistic capital ascribed to "non-English speakers" – the phrase itself reflecting the normative ascendancy of English. The usual corollary to this position is that the social mobility of the minority-language speaker will be further enhanced if they dispense with any other (minority) languages.

that equate linguistic mobility solely with majority languages are themselves extremely problematic. For a start, this position separates the instrumental and identity aspects of language. On this view, minority languages may be important for identity but have no instrumental value, while majority languages are construed as primarily instrumental with little or no identity value. We see this in the allied notions, evident in early LP attempts, of majority languages as "vehicles" of modernity, and minority languages as (merely) "carriers" of identity. However, it is clear that *all* language(s) embody and accomplish both identity and instrumental functions for those who speak them. Where particular languages – especially majority/minority languages – differ is in the degree to which they can accomplish each of these functions, and this in turn is dependent on the social and political (not linguistic) constraints within which they operate (Carens, 2000). Thus, in the case of minority languages, their instrumental value is often constrained by wider social and political processes that have resulted in the privileging of other language varieties in the public realm. Meanwhile, for majority languages, the identity characteristics of the language are clearly important for their speakers, but often become subsumed within and normalized by the instrumental functions that these languages fulfill. This is particularly apparent with respect to monolingual speakers of English, given the position of English as the current world language.

On this basis, MLR advocates argue that the limited instrumentality of particular minority languages at any given time need not always remain so. Indeed, if the minority position of a language is the specific product of wider historical and contemporary social and political relationships, changing these wider relationships positively with respect to a minority language should bring about both enhanced instrumentality for the language in question, and increased mobility for its speakers. We can see this occurring currently, for example, in Wales and Catalonia, with the emergence of these formerly subjugated languages into the public domain – particularly via, but by no means limited to, education (May, 2000b, 2002, 2003b).

Likewise, when majority-language speakers are made to realize that their own languages fulfil important identity functions for them, both as individuals and as a group, they may be slightly more reluctant to require minority-language speakers to dispense with theirs. Or to put it another way, if majority languages do provide their speakers with particular and often significant individual and collective forms of linguistic identity, as they clearly do, it seems

unjust to deny these same benefits, out of court, to minority-language speakers.

And this brings us to the final principal concern of MLR – the legal protections that can potentially be developed in order to enhance the mobility of minority-language speakers while at the same time protecting their right to continue to speak a minority language, *if they so choose*. It is here that the influence of the linguistic human rights (LHR) paradigm is most prominent (see also Skutnabb-Kangas, chapter 15 in this volume).

Linguistic Human Rights

The LHR research paradigm argues that minority languages, and their speakers, should be accorded at least some of the protections and institutional support that majority languages already enjoy (e.g., Kontra, Skutnabb-Kangas, Phillipson, & Várdy, 1999; Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000, 2002; Skutnabb-Kangas & Phillipson, 1994). These arguments are also echoed in much of the academic legal discourse that has developed in recent years with respect to minority group rights more broadly (see Capotorti, 1979; de Varennes, 1996; Henrard, 2000; Thornberry, 1991, 2002). A central distinction in both discourses is one made between national minority groups and indigenous peoples on the one hand, and ethnic minority groups on the other. The former may be regarded as groups which are historically associated with a particular territory (i.e., they have not migrated to the territory from elsewhere) but because of conquest, confederation, or colonization are now regarded as minorities within that territory. The latter may be regarded as voluntary migrants and (involuntary) refugees living in a new national context (see Kymlicka, 1995; May, 2001; for further discussion).

Three key tenets of international law can be applied to the further development of LHR in relation to these two broad minority groupings. The first principle, which is widely accepted, is that it is not unreasonable to expect from national members some knowledge of the common public language(s) of the state. This is, of course, the central tenet underpinning the current public linguistic homogeneity of modern nation-states. However, LHR advocates assert that it is also possible to argue, on this basis, for the legitimization and institutionalization of the languages of national minorities within nation-states,

according to them at least some of the benefits that national languages currently enjoy. LHR proponents qualify this by making it clear that the advocacy of such MLR is *not* the language replacement ideology in reverse – of replacing a majority language with a minority one. Rather, it is about questioning and contesting why the promotion of a majority (national) language should necessarily be at the expense of all others. By this, they argue, the linguistic exclusivity attendant upon the nationalist principle of cultural and linguistic homogeneity can be effectively challenged and contested.

A second principle is that in order to avoid language discrimination, it is important that where there is a sufficient number of other-language speakers, these speakers should be allowed to use that language as part of the exercise of their individual rights as citizens. That is, they should have the opportunity to use their first language if they so choose. As de Varennes argues, "the respect of the language principles of individuals, *where appropriate and reasonable*, flows from a fundamental right and is not some special concession or privileged treatment. Simply put, it is the right to be treated equally without discrimination, to which everyone is entitled" (1996, p. 117; my emphasis). Again, this principle can clearly be applied to minority-language speakers within particular nation-states.

The third principle arises directly from the previous one – how to determine exactly what is "appropriate and reasonable" with regard to individual language preferences. Following the prominent political theorist Will Kymlicka (1995), May (2001) has argued that only national minorities can demand as of right formal inclusion of their languages and cultures in the civic realm. However, this need not and should not preclude other ethnic minorities from being allowed at the very least to cultivate and pursue unhindered their own historic cultural and linguistic practices in the private domain. In other words, distinguishing between the rights of national and ethnic minorities still affords the latter far greater linguistic protection than many such groups currently enjoy – that is, active linguistic protection by the state for the unhindered maintenance of their first languages. This protection is applicable at the very least in the private domain and, "where numbers warrant," a principle again drawn from international law, potentially in the public domain as well.²

Extending greater ethnolinguistic *democracy* to minority-language groups, via LHR, does not thus amount to an argument for greater linguistic *equality* for all such groups. Similarly, a call for greater ethnolinguistic democracy clearly does not amount to asserting linguistic

equivalence, in all domains, with dominant, majority languages. Majority languages will continue to dominate in most if not all language domains, since, as should be clear by now, that is the nature of their privileged sociohistorical, sociopolitical positioning. Conversely, arguing that only national minorities can claim MLR, as of right, is not an argument for simply ignoring the claims of other ethnic groups (see May, 2001, for an extended discussion).

Conclusion and Caveats

These theoretical, policy, and legislative developments with respect to MLR have brought us a considerable way from early debates surrounding the formulation and implementation of LP. The subsequent development of the LHR paradigm has redirected attention to the underlying, often highly discriminatory processes that stigmatize and undermine minority languages and their speakers – not only linguistically, but also culturally, socially, economically, and politically. Accordingly, even when language rights are not the principal focus of attention, more recent research and policy in LP are increasingly having to address these concerns. Certainly, as Ricento (2000) observes, much of the "cutting edge research" in LP now deals directly with its limitations (May, 2001; Schiffman, 1996), as well as its potential for promoting social change (Freeman, 1998; Hornberger, 1998; May, 2001).

In both instances, the nationalist principle of cultural and linguistic homogeneity, and the language replacement ideology invariably attendant upon it, have been brought increasingly into question. The principal challenge that emerges from this critique is the need to rethink nation-states in more linguistically plural and inclusive ways. Such a process allows for the prospect of more representational multinational and multilingual states by directly contesting the historical inequalities that have seen minority languages, and their speakers, relegated to the social and political margins. For advocates of MLR, changing the language preferences of the state and civil society, or at least broadening them, would better reflect the cultural and linguistic demographics of most of today's multi-national and multilingual states. Not only this, it could significantly improve the life chances of those minority language individuals and groups who are presently disadvantaged in their access to and participation in public services, employment, and education, since linguistic consequences cannot be separated from socioeconomic and

Discussion Questions

- 1 What are the language varieties that are spoken within the borders of your own nation-state, and with which groups are they associated?
- 2 How are these language varieties, and their speakers, situated in relation to current emphases in language planning and policy (LPP)?
- 3 What is the balance among regional, national, and international languages in your LPP context? What arguments are used in relation to each and to what extent do you regard these arguments as valid?
- 4 Examine the history of LPP in your national context. What were its origins, and how has it changed over time?
- 5 In what ways, if at all, have the principles of MLR influenced discussions of LPP in your own context? How might they potentially do so?

NOTES

- 1 The term "linguistic genocide" is often viewed as highly problematic by skeptics of MLR – as too emotive and conspiratorial. Skutnabb-Kangas argues, in response that terms such as "language death" and "language loss," which many of these skeptics prefer, have significant problems of their own – not least the notable absence of agency or responsibility. Language "loss" or "death" does not just happen, nor is it natural and/or inevitable. Rather, it is always socially, culturally, and politically situated within a wider nexus of (often highly unequal) power relations between, and within, language groups (see below).
- 2 Skutnabb-Kangas is generally more skeptical of the national-ethnic minority distinction, particularly given its potential to delimit the language entitlements of the latter. See Skutnabb-Kangas (2000).

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sociopolitical consequences, and vice versa. Likewise, changing "the rules of the game" that automatically presume an exclusive relationship between dominant languages, modernity, and mobility should make the process of maintaining minority languages a little easier.

Even so, it should also be clear that achieving a greater recognition and acceptance of minority languages, and their speakers, remains a formidable task, not least because of the extent of minority-language shift and loss already in train. The challenge for LP, and its academic analysis, is accordingly to dispense with the largely ahistorical, apolitical, and presentist approach that so dominated its origins in order to engage directly and critically with the wider social and political conditions – and, crucially, their historical antecedents – that have invariably framed and shaped such policies.

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Blommaert, J. (ed.) (1990). *Language ideological debates*. Berlin: Mouton. This edited collection explores, via a range of widely different national contexts, the historical interconnections between language, political ideology, nationalism, and the subsequent influence on the implementation (and contestation) of LP and planning.

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Language Policy and Linguistic Human Rights

Tove Skutnabb-Kangas

Language policy can be defined in dozens of ways, as the introduction and several other chapters in this book show. Linguistic human rights (LHRs) combine language rights (LRs) with human rights (HRs). LHRs are those (and only those) LRs that, first, are necessary to fulfill people's basic needs and for them to live a dignified life, and, second, that therefore are so basic, so fundamental, that no state (or individual or group) is supposed to violate them. There are many LRs which are not LHRs. It would, for instance, be nice if everybody could, even in civil court cases, have a judge and witnesses who speak (or sign) this person's language, regardless of how few users this language has. Today it is in most cases only a linguistic *human* right to be informed of the charge against oneself in criminal cases in a language one understands (i.e., not necessarily the mother tongue); everything else may be a *language* right that people may or may not have, depending on the country and language; in the best cases, interpreters paid for by the state are used. Likewise, it would be nice if the following demands were to be met:

All language communities are entitled to have at their disposal all the human and material resources necessary to ensure that their language is present to the extent they desire at all levels of education within their territory: properly trained teachers, appropriate teaching methods, text books, finance, buildings and equipment, traditional and innovative technology.

(*Universal Declaration of Linguistic Rights (draft), 1996*)

But these demands are completely unrealistic and cannot be considered part of LHRs.¹ At the moment, only a few dozen language communities in the world have these kinds of rights; consider that there are some