

Reading 2:

In F. Coulmas (ed.) *A Language Policy for the European Community*. New York: Mouton de Gruyter, 1991.

Educational Language Planning in England and Wales: Multicultural Rhetoric and Assimilationist Assumptions

Michael Stubbs

Britain is often recognised as a country with profoundly monolingual assumptions and a widespread apathy towards learning other languages. This paper is a case study of some major changes which are currently taking place in the British education system. These changes involve a great deal of discussion of language issues, both in official documents and in the press, and they do have some bright spots, notably:

- for the first time, learning a modern foreign language will be compulsory for all secondary school pupils;
- an element of language studies (language awareness) will be a compulsory component within the English curriculum.

However, despite much government rhetoric about increased opportunities for linguistic diversity, I will conclude pessimistically, that basic attitudes are unchanged, and that there are major attempts to further strengthen the dominant position of Standard English in Britain, rather than to attempt a more balanced relationship between English and other languages. The essential theme of the article is expressed by Williams (1965: 145) in his discussion of the selective tradition in British education:

...the way in which education is organized can be seen to express) consciously and unconsciously, the wider organization of a society, so that what has been thought of as simple distribution is in fact an active shaping to particular social ends.

His comment about distribution is intended to apply to selections of content in the curriculum

and therefore applies equally to the way in which languages are chosen for the educational system.

The essential structure of the argument is provided by a very pointed and aggressive attack in current government language policy, formulated by Rosen (quoted in the *Times Education Supplement*, 24 June 1988): 'liberal words (which are used) to disguise sinister messages of state coercion.'

In this paper, I discuss to what extent such judgements are true, and conclude that they are, to a large extent, justified. There is much talk in government statements about ethnic diversity, and about opportunities for children to study a wider range of languages. But much of this looks like empty rhetoric when seen against the background of

- other statements;
- the lack of resources to implement such policies;
- the complete absence of any overall language planning.

(For other articles with the same basic argument that there is a gap between the rhetoric and the reality, between appealing formulations which give only an illusion of change and social facts, see Skutnabb-Kangas (1989), and several papers in Skutnabb-Kangas & Cummins (1988), especially Tosi (1988), who discusses the 'depressingly vague and ambiguous notion' of multicultural education in the UK.)

The Education Reform Act (ERA) and the 'National' Curriculum

This paper discusses only England and Wales: Scotland and Northern Ireland have different education systems, and the Secretary of State for Education and Science (i.e. the Minister of Education) has responsibility only for England and

Wales. He cedes this responsibility to the Secretary of State for Wales in Welsh matters, including the Welsh language in schools. I will comment further below on this geographical definition of language matters in Britain.

The organization of education in England and Wales has changed very sharply since 1988, when the ERA came into force: this is the largest piece of educational legislation (hundreds of pages in length) since the Education Act of 1944, and makes very large scale changes to the organization of primary, secondary and tertiary education. One of the main planks of current British conservative government policy is the National Curriculum. This is a misnomer, since it applies only to state schools in England and Wales. (Private schools may follow it if they wish.) However, it is within the so-called National Curriculum that a great deal of language planning is taking place, not explicitly and overtly, but in a fragmented and uncoordinated way, so that its effects are more difficult to monitor and predict.

What mainly concerns us here is that previously there was no National Curriculum in schools. Pre-1988, in the years BNC (before the National Curriculum):

- many educational responsibilities were delegated to around 110 Local Education Authorities (LEAs);
- the curriculum in schools was the responsibility of individual schools, departments and teachers (with examination boards effectively controlling the content of the curriculum for upper secondary age pupils).

Whereas now:

- there is enormous centralization of control over the content and assessment of the curriculum: the Act gives the Secretary of State about 400 new powers with which to manage the whole system.

These changes have taken place very fast indeed, with only minimum consultation with teachers and others. Amongst very many other provisions, the ERA established a National Curriculum comprising English, mathematics, science, technology, history, geography, one modern foreign language, music, art and physical education, and, in Wales, Welsh.

I will discuss here the work of various government committees (only some of which were overtly concerned with language), whose work amounts to *de facto* language planning. My main

references will be to the following Reports and Orders:

- 1975 Bullock (DES, 1975)
- 1985 Swann (DES, 1975)
- 1988 Kingman (HMSO, 1988)
- 1989 Cox (DES, 1989a)
- 1989 Orders for Modern Foreign Languages (DES, 1989b)
- 1990 Harris (DES, 1990).

There is no national language planning commission (as there has been, for example, in Australia: Clyne, 1988). CDE (1982) is a very clear Australian statement on the inadequacy of uncoordinated, *ad hoc* responses to language diversity, and on the need for an explicit national language policy, with clear discussion of the different roles of languages in the country, local, nation and international.

It has not been customary for the British government to do any language planning at all. For example, it has collected no statistics of languages spoken in the UK in the 10-yearly censuses (except for Welsh, Scottish Gaelic and Irish). Figures, where they have been collected at all, have been collected at Local Education Authority level (e.g. LMP, 1985; Bourne, 1989a,b; and see Printon, 1986, who gives some basic statistics from various sources.)

However, language planning has suddenly simply started to be done, on a very large scale. But it is not generally presented as such: it is seen merely as a natural concomitant of the National Curriculum, an inevitable effect of the work of various government committees concerned with English and foreign language teaching. Language planning is introduced by the back door. The approach is uncoordinated, perhaps deliberately so: it could be denied that this is language planning at all.¹ It is either a muddle or a conspiracy, depending on your wider view of British history. But certainly, when there is no explicit policy, it is more difficult to monitor the language rights of different groups.

Skutnabb-Kangas & Phillipson (1989: 8) point out that countries differ significantly in the degrees of explicitness with which language rights are formulated. Britain is far at the implicit end (see Figure 1). The British government has always avoided any basic policy commitments on languages (except for Welsh). It is, I think, a widespread and justifiable view of the Thatcher government, but also more widely of British

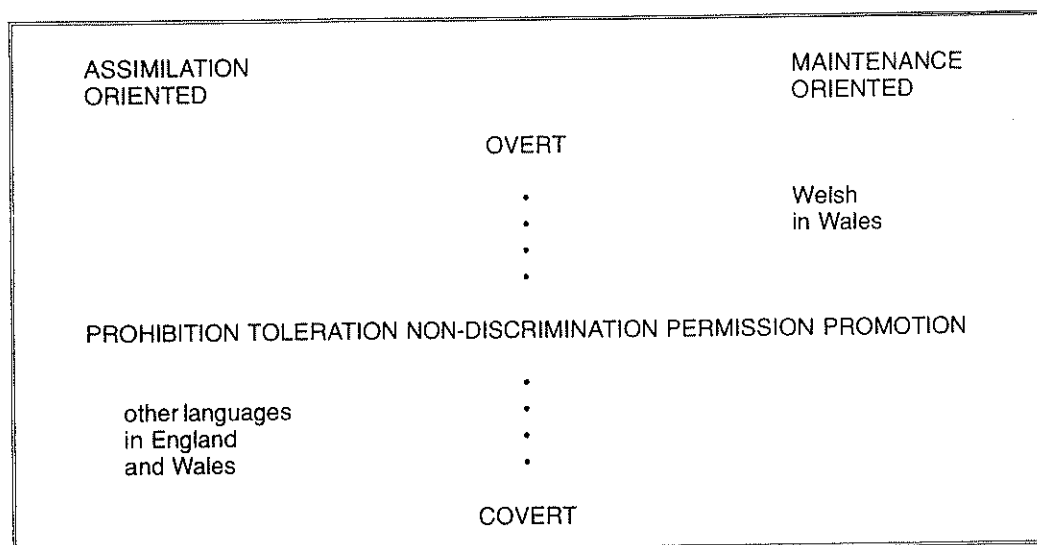


Figure 1 After Skutnabb-Kangas & Phillipson (1989)

politics, that there is a lack of underlying theory: things are done in an *ad hoc*, pragmatic, piecemeal fashion. But an absence of a policy is a policy, whether intended or not. And an indifference to languages is likely to lead to an endorsement of the status quo.

It is doubtful, in fact, if the term *language planning* would mean anything at all to most people (including most politicians and educationalists) in Britain. It might mean 'teaching English to immigrants' or 'choosing which foreign languages to teach in schools'. The majority could probably not conceive what else it might mean, because of the profoundly monolingual assumption which are regarded as natural in Britain.

Language planning of a far-reaching kind has, then, suddenly started to be done, via different committees which are isolated from each other. One effect of the lack of explicit planning is that advice and decision making are all split. The Swann Report (1985) was about the education of minority group children. The Kingman Report (1988) was about English language in the mother tongue curriculum.² The Cox Report (1989) was about teaching English as a mother tongue in the National Curriculum.³ The Harris Report is about modern foreign languages in the National Curriculum. But no committee has had a national language policy *per se* as part of its terms of reference. And there are large areas, obviously

relevant to general policy, which are not covered at all in the present reforms: e.g. adult literacy; the education of the deaf; language disabilities; translation and interpretation services, in the courts or social services.

Consultation is also muddled and split. Therefore groups of subject teachers or bilingual speakers have to make the same points over and over again to different committees. They have no participation rights, and the process of divide and rule leads to exhaustion and demoralization.

The Swann Report (DES, 1985)

The Swann Committee was set up to advise not on language planning, but on the role of education in race relations and equal opportunities. The concern was with social cohesion, in a situation where the government was deeply worried about possible race riots in an ethnically divided country. The Committee recommended a policy of mainstreaming: i.e. of giving bilingual children better access to the curriculum, by having them taught, with support, alongside their peers, rather than being withdrawn to separate remedial language classes or special language centres (as had been the strategy to deal with large waves of immigrant children into Britain from the 1960s). The policy of mainstreaming is now widely accepted.

But this change is, by definition, limited to schools with multilingual populations. Swann's

general recommendations about the need for all children, in whatever area, to learn about the multilingual nature of Britain, have hardly been put into effect, and have had little effect on the dominant culture (Verma, 1989). The Cox Report (DES, 1989a: 2.8) recommends that the curriculum for all pupils should include informed discussion of the multi-cultural nature of British society, whether or not the individual school is culturally mixed. This may be a pious hope. It may also be phrased too vaguely in terms of multilingualism with no specific demands about languages.

The Kingman Report (DES, 1988)

In the immediate run up to the National Curriculum, the Kingman Committee was set up to recommend on English language teaching. This was widely perceived as having to do with grammar teaching, though the Kingman Report itself interprets the issue more widely, as indeed its terms of reference required it to do.

The Report proposes a model of language comprising: the forms of the English language (essentially phonology, graphology, syntax and discourse), communication and comprehension, acquisition and development, and variation. This is a standard type of model, very familiar to linguists. Much of it is, however, almost incomprehensible to many English teachers, who have received little or no training in English language or linguistics.

In addition, the model has come under heavy attack. It provides an extraordinary description of language variation, which is seen as historical and geographical, but not social. No social class or ethnic divisions are mentioned, although social class is obviously a major concomitant of language diversity in Britain. (The Cox Report also avoids the term 'social class', and talks coyly of 'social groups'.) The implicit denial of social class differences in the Kingman Report is clearly politically loaded; it is also simply false. The language of a particular class is passed off as the language of the nation.

But there is considerable confusion in the Kingman Report over whether the Committee are talking of the English language or of language in general. For example, consider these paragraphs (p. 33, paras 1 and 2):

It is the purpose of this chapter to illustrate the relevance of the language model to English teaching... Children arrive at their

first school able to use at least their own spoken language.

For many children in Britain, this will be a language other than or in addition to English, but there is no unambiguous statement that English can be better understood in relation to other languages. (Contrast Cox, 2. 7-17.) Since the educational recommendations are not clearly focused on language learning needs in general, the effect is to give more weight, yet again, to English.

On the surface, the Kingman Report appears moderate and liberal, though many analyses (e.g. Cameron & Bourne, 1989: 12-13) see it as authoritarian. It recommends social cohesion around one variety of English. It uses a rhetoric of language entitlement and language rights, and of freedom and democracy (e.g. pp. 2, 3, 4, 7, 10, 11), which gives the Report its superficially liberal pluralist tone. (In other areas of education, the government stresses parents' rights.) Talk of individual language rights makes the correct moral noises, but it has no legislative basis, and is therefore empty. There is talk of entitlement, but not of the discrimination which many children face; and talk of equality of opportunity, but not equality of outcome. (Cf. Rampton, 1989 on the 'entitlement' rhetoric; Skutnabb-Kangas & Phillipson, 1989 on the myth that language rights are a reality in many countries.)

Language and Nationality

In the debate over language and nation, the Kingman Report is a key ideological text (Cameron & Bourne, 1989). The focus was on a claimed crisis of falling standards. 'Grammar' carried an enormous symbolic weight of authority, hierarchy, order, tradition, and elitism. The Report has been widely interpreted as taking an authoritarian, national unity position, ethnocentric and nostalgic, with the covert function of strengthening and protecting English.

A characteristic of the current debate in Britain about language, especially English in the National Curriculum, is the enormous press coverage which the Kingman and Cox Reports have had, and essential to an understanding of the debate is the nature of the rhetoric which is used. For example, *The Times* leading article (30 April 1988), when Kingman was published, wrote:

English ought to be the queen of the curriculum for any British child. It is one of the things that define his or her nationality.

This claimed relationship between language and nationality, which has very little basis in British law, occurs very frequently. Marenbon (1987) is published by the Centre for Policy Studies, a right-wing think tank set up by Margaret Thatcher and Keith Joseph in 1974. Marenbon ends his attack on current trends in English teaching in this way:

...in the future of its language there lies the future of a nation.

The Kingman Report itself uses a general formulation (p 43, para 32):

...language above all else is the defining characteristic of an individual, a community, a nation.

There are certainly many cases in the world where language has been the focus of separatist, nationalist demands. But the Kingman Report is presenting as the only, obvious, 'natural' view, what is, in fact, a particular 19th century European Romantic view (Leith, 1989), that a language expresses individual, creative, poetic genius (there is a lot of literary criticism in the Report on biblical translations, Shakespeare and Dickens), and the *Volksgeist*, the genius of a people.

The Cox Report (DES, 1989a)

The main job of the Cox Committee was to recommend programmes of study and attainment targets for English mother tongue teaching from 5 to 16. Its recommendations have been amended, after limited consultation, by the National Curriculum Council, and turned into law. The Report also contains other chapters on Standard English, linguistic terminology, knowledge about language, equal opportunities, bilingual children, and Wales: these chapters have no statutory force.

There is no space here for a detailed account of the very substantial debates around teaching English as a mother tongue. (For more detailed analysis of the Cox Report see Stubbs, 1989.) The Report is discussed elsewhere in this article for its relevance to the other languages of England.

The essential general point is that the ERA defines separate subjects on the school curriculum: 'English' is different from 'Modern Foreign Languages'. Different Committees are responsible for the curriculum, with only poorly defined requirements of 'cross curricular themes'

between subjects. It has been pointed out that the list of subjects in the National Curriculum is almost identical to the list of subjects for grammar schools proposed in the early 1900s.

Modern Foreign Languages in the National Curriculum: Statutory Orders

In connection with the ERA, the government has published Statutory Orders (DES, 1989b), which came into effect in August 1989, specifying which languages may be taught in the National Curriculum. Nineteen languages are listed as possible foundation subjects, to be taught between 11 and 16 years (probably for 4 periods per week).

The positive aspect is that, for the first time, a modern foreign language will be compulsory for all secondary age pupils, whereas previously a foreign language has been seen as a subject for the academic elite. This new 'languages for all' policy is a major step forward, in the context of facilitating communication between citizens of EC countries. However, there are several aspects of the policy which are disappointing.

The permitted languages are in two schedules. Schedule 1 contains the working languages of the EC (minus English). These are unconditionally specified as foundation subjects, and schools must offer at least one:

Danish, Dutch, French, German, Modern Greek, Italian, Portuguese, Spanish.

Schedule 2 contains 11 languages, which are a mixture of international languages and languages of major linguistic minorities in Britain. As long as they offer an EC language, schools may in addition offer one or more of:

Arabic, Bengali, Chinese (Cantonese or Mandarin), Gujarati, Modern Hebrew, Hindi, Japanese, Panjabi, Russian, Turkish, Urdu.

The schedules do explicitly give legal status to a relatively wide range of languages, and one must welcome the formal recognition of non-European languages. This enhancement of their status may look very progressive in a European context, where non-European languages are often totally unrecognised except in low status 'migrant worker programmes'. But it has been quickly pointed out that the schedules also establish a caste system of grade 1 and grade 2 languages. (See also below on some of the impli-

cations of territorial descriptions such as 'non-European'.) Again, we have a proposal which appears superficially to encourage language diversity. However, there are problems:

- Children are obliged to study only one language in the National Curriculum: they may study second and subsequent languages, but outside the National Curriculum, and very little time is available outside the compulsory subjects. In practice, the opportunity to study a second language will seldom be available.
- The publication of such lists creates the expectation of adequate resourcing, but, in fact, no resourcing is available for the wider range of languages proposed. There are no teachers of Danish or Dutch, for example. Nor are there any incentives to offer schedule 2 languages. French will therefore continue to be taught because there are teachers of French. The government has published schedules of languages, to which it can rhetorically refer in talking of opportunities for pupils, but it has shown no commitment to turning the schedules into reality.
- In practice, there are few resources to teach much apart from French. But there is actually a current shortage even of French teachers, and this is when over 60 per cent of pupils now drop French at age 14. Under the National Curriculum, they will be obliged to continue with a language until 16, and the teacher shortage will therefore be more acute.
- Although 19 languages are listed, others are thereby excluded: schools need special permission to teach them. The central specification of particular languages is inevitably a partial and arbitrary estimation of future needs, but no mechanisms are proposed whereby the schedules might be changed. In general, the Orders fossilize provision. The schedules embody a superficial and mechanical definition of Europe: simply 1992 as visualized in 1989. If Turkey or Sweden join the EC, for example, does the government have to change the law? After the events of summer and autumn 1989, this view of Europe looks very dated indeed.

The Orders are accompanied by a non-statutory Circular (DES 9/89) which contains a brief discussion of which languages are of relevance to Britain. There is a weak classification into: working languages of the EC, major trading languages, and languages used by ethnic communities in

Britain. But there is no real theory of such language types or functions. (Again, contrast CDE, 1982.)

Watertight categories are clearly useless, and any theory would have to allow multiple categorization (Clyne, 1988). Starting categories might be:

- traditional foreign languages, i.e. languages for which teachers are available;
- community/heritage languages;
- languages of neighboring countries and/or trading partners;
- EC languages;
- world/international languages, e.g. languages used for scientific communication;
- classical languages (which are completely omitted from the National Curriculum);
- 'easy' versus 'difficult' languages, e.g. languages with a non-Roman writing system (though such a description may be very ethno- or Eurocentric).

It would not be possible to define such categories in more than a common sense way. In fact, it is evident that the categories above are not neutral, since they signal the status of languages: *international language* sounds important, *community language* less so. But planners and decision makers need such categories because they imply policies and actions.

The Circular attempts no basic justifications for language education (Clyne, 1988: 278), in terms, for example, of social justice, enrichment for all British citizens, or the maintenance of languages already spoken in Britain. Even on cost-benefit grounds, the economic arguments look very shortsighted: there is likely to be an enormous waste, allowing languages already spoken in the home and community to be eroded, whilst starting from scratch to teach other languages in schools and colleges. Only a narrow version of economic strategies in relation to Britain's external relations is clearly spelled out.

This will need careful analysis of the implications of some very simple facts. For example, in Europe, German is the first language in terms of numbers of speakers, and of the number of different countries in which it is the main language (Germany, Austria and Switzerland, with sizeable numbers of speakers in other countries. In the world, in terms of numbers of speakers, German ranks below English, Spanish and Portuguese (and many other languages) (Ammon, 1991).

The Circular gives only a very sketchy rationale, based on personal motivations (practical

skills, understanding of other cultures), and national motivations (economic and cultural, trade, tourism and international relations). This needs to be substantially developed by an analysis of increased personal mobility, of increased opportunities to meet migrants and tourists, of the increasing importance of languages in international life, including increased access to radio, television and films in other languages, etc. Nor is there anything but the vaguest discussion of the internationalization of business and commercial life in which an adult is very likely to have to use a foreign language, but probably not the one s/he learned at school (Trim, 1989). The implications of the global village are hardly recognised.

In a word, there is still great confusion over what modern foreign languages are *for* in British schools. The range of political, social and historical factors which lead to lists of languages such as those in the schedules must be publicly debated and justified. Language planning depends on a problem being defined, alternative solutions being formulated so that they can be evaluated, and so that one can then be chosen and implemented, and its implementation in turn evaluated (O Riagáin, 1991).

In addition, the rationale for teaching heritage/community languages is very different from teaching traditional modern foreign languages (in practice, French and German), and very different programmes of study are needed. Expectations of linguistic competence could be much higher than with *ab initio* teaching of a foreign language. The main motivations may be cultural and/or religious, and the maintenance of a language spoken in the local community.

In summary, the overt ideology has changed in favour of widening the available languages. But when this rhetoric is translated into concrete actions in institutions, little will change. If anything, the present status quo could be even more rigid than at present, because some aspects of it are now enshrined in law. English exists in a web of institutions, woven even tighter in England and Wales by the National Curriculum.

In a review of language planning in the USA from the 1960s to the 1980s, Fishman (1981: 516, 522) reaches pessimistic conclusions, very similar to this article:

plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose. On the surface a great deal has changed...but basically ours is not a society whose peculiar genius is along the lines of linguistic sophis-

tication, sensitivity or concern. ...the exasperated know-nothingism of 'this is, after all, an English-speaking country' ...Language maintenance...is not part of public policy because it is rarely recognised as being in the public interest.

Modern Foreign Languages in the National Curriculum: The Harris Committee

The National Curriculum Modern Foreign Languages Working Group was set up in September 1989, to design the programmes of study and attainment targets which will come into force from autumn 1992.

The press statement, from the Education Minister at the DES who introduced the Committee, emphasised, in a narrow way, the 'challenge of 1992' and the need for languages in 'today's increasingly competitive world'. The Committee's terms of reference were, however, wider than many people had predicted: the group was asked both to reconsider the two schedules of languages and also whether only one language in secondary education is appropriate. At the time of writing (March 1990), the Committee has produced an interim report, which does not significantly change the terms of the debate.

Welsh

The Welsh Act of 1967 asserted the 'equal validity' of English and Welsh, and gave both languages equal status in legal proceedings. However, when the effects of the Act were reviewed 10 years later, it was concluded that such legislation had not strengthened Welsh. This required active promotion in all domains. The National Curriculum Welsh Working Group envisages a variety of different kinds of provision: Welsh medium education, Welsh mother tongue teaching, and Welsh as a second language within English medium education. In 1988, only 13 per cent of young primary age Welsh children were fluent in Welsh. The proportion of bilinguals does not therefore look very different in Wales and in England.

But the legal situation of Welsh in Wales is very different from the situation of other languages in England or Wales. A particular form of territoriality principle, with unfortunate consequences, is used for Welsh in Wales (Cameron & Bourne, 1989; Bourne, 1989a,b). Geography is used to define provision and rights. Welsh has legal status only in Wales, so that as soon as a Welsh speaker crosses the border into England those

rights vanish for that individual. This territorial conception of language rights is not only enshrined in law: it is the conception which has been acceptable to Welsh language activists themselves. (The territorial view is, of course, found widely elsewhere under very different political circumstances: many separatist political demands are based on a language-territory claim; even in Switzerland, despite the notion of a multilingual federation, languages are linked to territory (Nelde, 1991; Watts, 1991)).

The Welsh Act is the only explicit legislation in the UK concerning language rights, and is therefore significant for its covert implications for other languages. And this discourse of national boundaries has dangerous implications. The territorial conception may well have benefited Welsh itself, but have created unfortunate precedents for other languages. If Welsh is the natural language of Wales, then it seems to follow that English is the natural language of England, and that languages in general belong to territories not to speakers. Since the languages of England (e.g. Asian languages, Chinese, etc.) have geographical homes elsewhere, then they have no natural home in Britain. Their speakers belong elsewhere, and should presumably forget their languages or return to where they came from. They certainly cannot expect any language rights in Britain. This seems to be the unacceptable logic of this way of thinking.

It is such assumptions which have to be extracted from covert statement. The Kingman Report (e.g. p. 30) also sees languages as things which spread over territories:

As populations are dispersed and separated, they typically develop regular regional changes in their language forms. These changes may mark different dialects (or eventually different languages).

This expresses a strange model of populations 'dispersing', independently of other populations who might be making them disperse: agency is strangely missing. Further, there is no notion that, having dispersed, the populations might come into contact with other populations who speak different languages. Language contact often leads to language convergence.

The Other Languages of England and Wales

Bhatt & Martin-Jones (1989) summarize the changing policies concerning minority languages

in Britain. The major waves of immigration into Britain in the 1960s were accompanied by firmly assimilationist assumptions: Britain should respect, but could not be expected to perpetuate, different cultural values. Groups were seen as a problem needing compensatory English teaching: bilingualism was seen as bewildering for the individuals involved (DES, 1971: 9). The Bullock Report (1975) took a liberal pluralist view that minority languages are a resource and a right: in a famous statement (quoted by Cox, DES, 1989a: 2.7.), they asserted that children should not be expected to cast off the language and culture of the home as they cross the school threshold. The EC Directive (EC, 1977) on the education of the children of migrant workers was interpreted by the DES (1981) as requiring an exploration of how minority languages might be taught inside or outside school, but not as the right of children to have such tuition. In the 1980s, there was discussion of the possibility of minority languages in three places in the curriculum: as examination subjects in secondary schooling; as bilingual support in the classroom, especially for young children in reception classes and as a resource in language awareness courses. (Tosi (1988) provides a comparable analysis, of a rhetoric which shifts from 'assimilation' to 'integration', with little changing but the words.)

Surveys of minority languages spoken in Britain tend to stress their diversity. For example, the Cox Report (10.3) emphasises that:

The 1987 Language Survey conducted by ILEA (Inner London Education Authority) found 23 per cent of the Authority's school population using a language other than or in addition to English at home, with 170 different languages spoken by its pupils.

This argument is probably a strategic blunder, because it makes planned provision seem impossible (Bourne, 1989a,b). In fact, of the 170 languages spoken by London school children, 37 languages were spoken only by one child, and the overall distribution of the languages was very uneven. For example, Bengali accounted for over 20 per cent of bilingual children (some 12,600 pupils), who were concentrated in certain areas. There were large numbers of speakers of Bengali, Gujarati, Panjabi and Urdu, and substantial numbers of Turkish, Greek and Chinese speaking children. In England some 5 per cent of children are bilingual, but in many schools over 60 per cent

of the children speak the same language other than English, and in some schools it is over 90 per cent. Such a presentation of the figures makes planned provision seem much more realistic.

It is important, in a wider European context, to stress that such children are not from migrant worker or immigrant families. They are not *Gastarbeiter* or *Wanderarbeiter*. They are second or third generation British citizens.

Pupils who have recently arrived in the UK may be exempted for only 6 months from the National Curriculum, but the DES (Circular 15/89) expects such exemptions to be very rare. Even if exempted, they are still entitled to a 'broad and balanced' curriculum: i.e. there are no explicit language recommendations even here (that they should receive special English language teaching help, for example.) Otherwise, bilingual children are subject to the same programmes of study and attainment targets as any other pupils. This might seem, on the face of it, like equality of treatment. But again, the point is that there are no general principles for language education, only specific programmes of study which pupils have to follow. The *ad hoc* language planning is hidden. Furthermore bilingual children do not anywhere get credit for their knowledge of two (or more) languages.

The Kingman Report (p. 58, para 17) dismisses bilingual children in a single paragraph, saying simply that the Report is concerned with English as L1, and that English as L2 is outside their terms of reference. This is all extremely weak and arguably quite false. The Committee's terms of reference asked them to advise on a model of the English languages which could inform 'all aspects of English teaching', but the committee narrowed its own terms of reference quite sharply.

The Cox Committee, in contrast, was given much more sharply defined guidance by the Secretary of State, and contested it by trying to find a better formulation. However, the formulations which it did find stand only as an assertion of principle, with no financial backing or legislative force. They amount only to recommendations that other languages should be valued and respected.

In a statement (in the Notes of further guidance to the Chair of the Committee) the Secretary of State said this, in an extraordinary paragraph on equal opportunities:

The group should take account of the ethnic diversity of the school population and soci-

ety at large, bearing in mind the cardinal point that English should be the first language and medium of instruction for all pupils in England.

In this unprecedentedly explicit statement, English is given priority, and the assumption appears to be that bilingual education is ruled out in Britain: only English-medium education is assumed (except for bilingual schools in Wales). Furthermore, the assumption appears to be that English should become (?) the 'first language' of children themselves: the monolingual assumptions underlying this statement are quite extraordinary. Language loss appears to be recommended. Given that the paragraph is about 'equal opportunities', it is just double speak.

The statement is contested in the Cox Report itself, but only weakly. The Report points out that English is not the first language of all children. But it admits that English is the 'first language' of the education system. Overall, the rhetoric is one of rights and entitlements. It appears tolerance- and promotion-oriented: and some of the minority languages are explicitly listed in the schedules. But there is no actual promotion or financial support. Such languages may be a subject on the curriculum, but not a language of instruction. There is no explicit right even to use such languages in education (or any other institution). There is only weakly supported co-existence in very narrow domains

Assimilationist Assumptions

Researchers (e.g. LMP, 1985) have struggled to have linguistic diversity accepted as the norm, on a continuum from dialects of English to languages other than English. And some of these ways of talking have been picked up in government reports. The overt rhetoric is often of ethnic diversity and multiculturalism but always held in check by ethnocentric and assimilationist assumptions.

Schools have always been the most powerful mechanism in assimilating minority children into mainstream cultures. Skutnabb-Kangas & Philipson (1989) discuss the symbolic violence involved in a shift from physical to psychological control over groups of people. This is a new and more sophisticated control, which recognises ethnic diversity, but confines it to the home, which pays lip service to multilingualism, but is empty liberal rhetoric. They argue that declarations of language rights must be explicit. Even

overt permission does not protect languages: compare the lack of effect of the Welsh Language Act cited above. Languages are oppressed, not by active opposition, but by lack of resources (also Phillipson, 1989).

There are no social justice arguments used in favour of minority languages. There is no thought of whose interests are served, or of what policy for language provision would be formulated by a speaker of one of the minority languages, from the point of view of the bilingual him or herself. (See Rawls, 1972).

There is an unstated premise: that the situation of the monolingual majority should be altered as little as possible. Language planning (such as it is) avoids any challenge to the practice of the currently privileged. The policies operate systematically and consistently to the advantage of speakers of Standard English. But this is nowhere stated: this is the advantage of *not* having a language policy. Implicit ideologies are used to legitimate unequal resources. The discourse of multiculturalism excludes questions of social, economic and political power.

In a swingeing attack on such situations in different countries, Skutnabb-Kangas & Phillipson (1989) talk of the implicit paranoia ideology of a country which is monolingual in an international language. Multilingualism is thought to be inevitably negative, and one widely held, but seldom explicitly expressed, myth or assumption, is that many languages divide a nation (Skutnabb-Kangas & Phillipson, 1989: 55). There is an implicit assumption that societal monolingualism is the norm and that language diversity means conflict. Behind the rhetoric, *bilingual* is often a euphemism for 'Black' and 'poor'.

Educational statements often refer to societal multilingualism as a fact. For example, the Secretary of State's notes of guidance to the Cox Committee refer to:

the ethnic diversity of the school population and society at large.

But they tend not to refer to individual bilingualism as a goal. In the present context, this goal is formulated only with reference to Welsh in Wales.

Knowledge About Language

One bright spot on the horizon is the explicit requirement that language study itself, or language awareness, become an explicit part of

English teaching. A prerequisite of successful foreign language learning is a positive attitude towards multilingualism. The monolingual ideology must be contested if the aim is to be a more linguistically aware nation.

Widdowson (1989) discusses Britain as a profoundly monolingual nation which has no concept of multilingualism as an asset. The pervasive attitude is of cultural and linguistic self-sufficiency, and of a contempt of anything foreign which does not contribute to material well-being. As an example of ethnocentric complacency and prejudice, he quotes an article in *The Sun* with the headline *Di foxed by Frog Lingo*. The article reported Princess Diana sympathising with children at the British school in Paris because of their difficulties in learning French: i.e. the language of the country they were living in... This was reported with indulgent tolerance and approval. Widdowson makes the point that simply putting an obligatory language in the National Curriculum will not magically improve the image of modern languages: it might just provoke mass disaffection. (Esarte-Sarries (1989) reports research on primary age children's stereotypes of France and the French: onion sellers in stripy shirts. At the end of a depressing article, she makes the point that 'the continuation of negative attitudes amongst secondary boys was disquieting').

Along with supporting chapters on Standard English and Linguistic Terminology, the Cox Report has a complete chapter on knowledge about language. This will become an obligatory part of programmes of study in Speaking and Listening, Writing and Reading from ages 11 to 16, covering forms of language, language variation and language in social institutions.

A major problem, however, will be teachers' own lack of knowledge and confidence in this area. The Bullock, Kingman and Cox Reports all point out that almost 30 per cent of teachers of English as a mother tongue have no qualifications in English past their own schooling, and that such teachers are responsible for about 15 per cent of all English teaching. Bourne (1989b) points out that many teachers of English as a second language have come from other subjects, and are not much better qualified. And Kingman and Cox both point to the huge teacher training programme which is necessary if teachers themselves are to know enough about language to teach about it coherently. A £15 million training programme is now underway: possibly a

drop in the ocean of prejudice and stereotypes, but at least a start. Even this programme is being developed by and for English teachers themselves. Modern language and community language teachers are certainly not systematically involved. Again, there is monolingual vision.

Conclusions

Language planning is, by definition, interventionist, goal-oriented, and institutional. It ought to be explicit and, ideally, systematic (Christian, 1988: 197). The British government now has a highly interventionist policy in the state education system: but the nature of their intervention in language planning is not explicit, even if it is conscious and deliberate. It is goal-oriented, but its goals are often unclear. It is pervasive, but it is neither systematic nor rational. It is not based on any careful analysis of the range of relevant factors and of the desired outcomes. The alternatives are not clearly laid out: there are, for example, no genuine consultations between central government, local authorities and smaller groups with different language interests. And I see little possibility of the present British government, in the current political climate, setting up the national language commission which would be necessary to move beyond the *ad hoc* uncoordinated and disguised language planning which is taking place.

Nevertheless, ideologies are never static. Hegemonies are constantly adjusted and renegotiated. Although little is likely to change in the profoundly monolingual assumptions in Britain, the ways in which the linguistic domination is maintained have changed rapidly and significantly. These mechanisms therefore require analysis, to discover where they might be challenged.

Rational argument is clearly not enough on its own. Linguists have been exposing linguistic myths for years, with some genuine effects, but only in restricted domains, such as initial teacher training. What is required may include a range of small-scale strategies and publicity campaigns aimed at changing people's attitudes. Over time, modest changes in the image of other languages might affect people's assumptions about languages and their speakers. For example, British television is gradually using more sub-titles in place of voiceovers when speakers of languages other than English are broadcast. In this small way, other languages gain a higher profile in a natural way, people get used to hearing them,

and sometimes understanding them, if only a little. Such initiatives should be encouraged. In addition, languages need institutional support: for example, university chairs in minority languages are a concrete sign that they are valued in British society. British academics, as a whole, have done little to encourage such developments, or even to prevent cuts in the few such chairs which have existed.

Concessions have been made, in British law, to Welsh in Wales, and this could support movements for change elsewhere, if alliances could be forged. The ideology of multilingualism is strong at local levels, where approaches to language diversity are unavoidable, but it is hampered by lack of central resourcing. Relations with the European Community have had some effect: witness the schedules of languages in the National Curriculum. The British government has previously used the decentralized education system as an excuse for not acting (e.g. on the EC Directive on the education of the children of migrant workers), but with a highly centralized system, it no longer has this excuse.

When the possibilities for rational and systematic planning are so restricted, then perhaps small, *ad hoc* strategies are the best hope. In general, more linguists should be encouraged to get involved with the policy making and to influence decisions where they are made.

Summary

This article has discussed the failure of current British government policies to address the dilemma of pluralism: how can a country both sustain cultural differences and also promote national unity? (Widdowson, 1989). The symbolic functions of language as both a separatist and a unifying force are evident from the media hype and hysteria which accompanied the publication of the Kingman and Cox Reports (Stubbs, 1989). But there is no planning for the possible co-existence of the lower order bonds of community and of the higher order bonds of national unity: no discussion of pluralist *Gemeinschaft* and national *Gesellschaft* (Fishman, 1981).

A great deal of language policy is currently being formulated in England and Wales, but, due to a lack of an explicit general statement, and the (deliberate?) fragmentation of the consultation process, it is difficult to see its implications. The present article is a very partial study of some of the mechanisms which legitimate the dominance of one language over others. The partial nature of

the analysis is partly due to the very speed at which the legislative changes are taking place in the British education system.

Skutnabb-Kangas & Phillipson (1989) have provided a way of charting the positions on language rights adopted in different countries. For example, Phillipson (1988) points out that discrimination against languages may be *overt* (e.g. a language may be prohibited in schools), or *covert* (e.g. certain languages are simply not used in schools or teacher training), or *conscious* (e.g. teachers tell their pupils not to use their home languages in case this interferes with their learning of another language), or *unconscious* (e.g. English is just assumed to be the 'natural' language for education or whatever). They also provide a way of mapping the positions adopted by different countries in their language planning provisions: Figure 1 provides a brief summary of my argument.

Acknowledgements

I have learned a great deal about the topics

discussed here from Jill Bourne, both from her published work and from her detailed-critical comments on an earlier draft of this paper. I have also drawn on papers by Ben Rampton and Ros Mitchell submitted as evidence to the DES on language issues. I am grateful to Gabi Keck, Robert Phillipson and Tove Skutnabb-Kangas for critical comments on an earlier draft. Many points made in discussions at the conference in Bad Homburg have also been integrated into the argument.

Notes

1. The term *language planning* is used explicitly by Peter Gannon HMI, Secretary of the Kingman Committee (Gannon, 1988).
2. I will use the term *English mother tongue* in places in this article. But the term is misleading, since many English teachers teach children who have mother tongues other than English.
3. I was a member of the Cox Committee.

References

- Ammon, U. (1991) The status of German and other languages in the European Community. In F. Coulmas (ed.) *A Language Policy for the European Community*. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.
- Bhatt, A. and Martin-Jones, M. (1989) Bilingualism, inequality and the language curriculum. Paper read at British Association for Applied Linguistics Meeting. University of Lancaster, September 1989.
- Bourne, J. (1989a) The teaching of language in the English school system. Paper read to European Colloquium on Language Planning Policies in a Context of Cultural Pluralism. Brussels, May 1989.
- (1989b) *Moving into the Mainstream: LEA Provision for Bilingual Pupils*. London: NFER-Nelson.
- Bourne, J. and Bloor, T. (eds) (1989) *Kingman and the linguists*. Committee for Linguistics in Education (mimeo).
- Cameron, D. and Bourne, J. (1989) Grammar, nation and citizenship: Kingman in linguistic and historical perspective. *Language and Education* 2 (3), 147–60.
- CDE (Commonwealth Department of Education) (1982) *Towards a Language Policy*. Canberra.
- Christian, D. (1988) Language planning: The view from linguists. In F. J. Newmeyer (ed.) *Language: The Socio-Cultural Context*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Clyne, M. (1988) Australia's national policy on language and its implications. *Journal of Educational Policy* 3 (3), 237–80.
- DES (Department of Education and Science) (1971) *The Education of Immigrants*. Education survey 13. London: HMSO.
- (1975) *A Language for Life*. (Bullock Report). London: HMSO.
- (1981) *Directive of the Council of the European Community on the Education of the Children of Migrant Workers*. Circular 5/18. London: DES.
- (1985) *Education for All*. (Swann Report). London: HMSO.
- (1988) *Report of the Committee of Inquiry into the Teaching of English Language*. (Kingman Report). London: HMSO.
- (1989) *English for Ages 5 to 16*. (Cox Report). London: DES and Welsh Office.
- (1989b) *The Education (National Curriculum) (Modern Foreign Languages) Order 1989*. Statutory Instruments, 825. London: HMSO.
- (1990) *National Curriculum Modern Foreign Languages Working Group. Initial Advice*. London: DES and Welsh Office.
- European Community (1977) *Council Directive on the Education of the Children of Migrant Workers*. 77/486/EEC. Brussels: EC.
- Esarte-Sarries, V. (1989) 'Onions and stripey tee-shirts' or how do primary pupils learn about

- France? *British Journal of Language Teaching* 27 (2), 65-71.
- Fishman, J. (1981) Language policy: Past, present and future. In C.A. Ferguson and S. Brice Heath (eds) *Language in the USA*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Gannon, P. (1988) Kingman: Setting the scene. In E. Ashworth and L. Masterman (eds) *Responding to Kingman*. University of Nottingham (mimeo).
- Lawlor, S. (1988) *Correct Core*. London: Centre for Policy Studies.
- Leith, D. (1989) Three criticisms. In Bourne and Bloor (eds).
- Letwin, O. (1988) *Aims of Schooling*. London: Centre for Policy Studies.
- LMP (Linguistic Minorities Project) (1985) *The Other Languages of England*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.
- Marenbon, J. (1987) *English our English*. London: Centre for Policy Studies.
- Nelde, P. H. (1991) Language conflicts in multilingual Europe: Prospects for 1993. In F. Coulmas (ed.) *A Language Policy for the European Community*. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.
- O Riagáin, P. (1991) National and international dimensions of language policy when the minority language is a national language: The case of Irish in Ireland. In F. Coulmas (ed.) *A Language Policy for the European Community*. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.
- Phillipson, R. (1988) Linguicism: Structures and ideologies in linguistic imperialism. In Skutnabb-Kangas and Cummins (eds).
- (1989) Human rights and the delegitimation of dominant languages. Paper presented at Fourth International Conference on Minority Languages. Ljouwert/Leeuwarden, June 1989.
- Printon, V. (ed.) (1986) *Facts and Figures: Languages in Education*. London: Centre for Information on Language Teaching and Research.
- Rampton, B. (1989) Almost passionate in its advocacy: Kingman on entitlement. In Bourne and Bloor (eds).
- Rawls, J. (1972) *A Theory of Justice*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Skutnabb-Kangas, T. (1989) Legitimizing or delegitimizing new forms of racism: The role of researchers. Paper presented at Fourth International Conference on Minority Languages, Ljouwert/Leeuwarden, June 1989.
- Skutnabb-Kangas, T. and Cummins, J. (eds) (1988) *Minority Education: From Shame to Struggle*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.
- Skutnabb-Kangas, T. and Phillipson, R. (1989) Wanted! Linguistic human rights. Rolig-Papir, 44, University of Roskilde (mimeo).
- Stubbs, M. (1989) The state of English in the English state: Reflection on the Cox Report. *Language and Education* 3 (4), 235-50.
- Tosi, A. (1988) The jewel in the crown of the modern prince. In Skutnabb-Kangas and Cummins (eds).
- Trim, J.L.M. (1989) Language Teaching in the perspective of the predictable requirements of the twenty-first century. Prepared for AILA for submission to UNESCO.
- Verma, G. (ed.) (1989) *Education for All: A Landmark in Pluralism*. London: Falmer.
- Watts, R.J. (1991) Linguistic minorities and language conflict in Europe: Learning from the Swiss experience. In F. Coulmas (ed.) *A Language Policy for the European Community*. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.
- Widdowson, H.G. (1989) Language in the National Curriculum (Unpublished lecture). Institute of Education: University of London.
- Williams, R. (1965) *The Long Revolution*. Harmondsworth: Penguin.