Language Planning and Policy

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Every planned intervention by a subnational, national, or supranational political organization which is directed toward the otherwise unregulated development of a language or any of its varieties can be regarded as an act of language planning and language policy. The choice, for example, of one particular language or one particular variety of a language as the official national medium of communication is one such measure at the national level, as is the development of a writing system for a particular variety or its standardization and codification or, indeed, its mandatory use in national institutions such as schools, the media, and public service facilities.

Subnational measures include the development of a regionally or ethnically restricted variety, its expansion for communication in various functions and domains, or the spread of its use in speech and writing, to name just a few. Supranational measures include, for example, the UNESCO decision that every child has the right to achieve literacy in his or her mother tongue. However, the protection of minority languages against the danger of extinction or marginalization under the pressure of a nationally dominant language is also a further measure, just as is the decision to adopt certain languages for negotiation in supranational institutions and for employment in economic, scientific, or cultural networks on an international level. In other words, language planning and language policy comprise a multitude of activities on every conceivable level from individual localities and regions all the way to global networks.

1. Types of language planning and policy

It is possible to divide these activities up, somewhat generously, into measures on behalf of languages and language varieties (status planning), on the one hand, and structural linguistic activities (corpus planning), on the other. Questions of status include political decisions about the 'rights and duties" which individual languages or varieties have in diverse institutional areas. Examples include the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages (1992) or agreements about the use of immigrant languages in schools and state institutions.

1.1 Consequences of policy changes

In this context we should not forget that multilinguality is the normal condition within national states and that every policy decision in regard to a language or variety has systematic consequences for all the other language in the same state. A previously unwritten language which is provided with an orthography and hence becomes a written language will have a changed relationship to the other written languages and changed communicative functions in relation to other as yet unwritten languages and their more limited functions. Or: a variety which has up to now been purely regional may be raised to the level of a language of national communication in a process of standardization and now stand in contrast to the other varieties of the language. This

devalues the other varieties and restricts them to a regional role. In much the same way the choice of one particular language as a language of international communication in institutional contexts puts this language at an advantage and enhances its prestige in comparison to its competitors. Such measures, which affect the status and prestige of a language, can be a confirmation of trends already present, independent of any policy action. Or they can run counter to such trends and establish political goals which can only be achieved later by means of further steps. Of course, there is always the danger—as with political decisions of all sorts —that these measures will not be sufficient or that they will not be implemented in a consequent way.

Case studies 1 and 2: India and Singapore. Both of these countries have instituted policy measures to insure communication within the country and to support a greater national feeling and unity.

India has a three-language formula which is aimed at language learning in secondary education: It provides for the local language, Hindi, and English. If Hindi is the local language, a further Indian or European language is supposed to be learned in its place. This balance, and in particular the inclusion of English in the formula, is necessary because Hindi, though the language with the largest number of speakers (approx. 40% of the population have some form of Hindi as their mother tongue), is the official language of India, but not its national language. Indeed, it is viewed with jealousy and suspicion by speakers of the other languages (over 400 languages are currently in use), especially in southern India, because high proficiency in Hindi is likely to give Hindi speakers unfair advantages over speakers of other languages.

Singapore has practiced a language policy since 1956 which has effectively made English into the shared language of national identity by instituting a policy of dual medium schools, which always means one of the native languages, Chinese (Mandarin, even though the home Chinese languages are more likely to be Hokkien, Teochew, or Cantonese) (77% of the population), Malay (14%), or Tamil (7%), plus, in all cases, English. This policy establishes a broadly based inter-ethnic lingua franca but protects and furthers the major home languages by insuring literacy in them. All four languages are used in the media, but English is used in government and is the exclusive language of the courts. In everyday life a diglossically Low form of English, sometimes called Singlish, is widely used.

1.2 Language status

One problem involving questions of language status is the question about where the political authority for language policy decisions is located and what forms of cooperation are available between the various relevant authorities in these matters. Such questions are usually clear within a national framework while a multitude of problems remain unresolved on the supranational level. One example is the cooperation between national institutions in the steps to be taken toward structural unification of pluricentric languages such as the recent spelling reforms in the German-speaking countries.

Case study 3: German spelling reform. German is the everyday language for most people in Austria, Germany, Liechtenstein, and a large part of Switzerland[1]. The standard language is

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[1] Also spoken in parts of Belgium, Denmark, France (Alsace), Italy (Tirol), and Luxembourg.

relatively similar in all of these countries, but is not the everyday language of millions of German speakers. Hence in an effort to give High German more unity and system and to make the job of learning German spelling in school easier a multinational commission on spelling reform adopted a set of recommendations in 1996. The results did not meet with complete agreement; for example, the letter <ß> was partially replaced by <ss> after short vowels; however, Switzerland continues — as before the reform — to use only <ss> and no <ß> at all.

The degree of dissent has been enormous and often very passionate, which shows that a policy is, as case studies 1 and 2 also made clear, driven by interests of both a rational and an emotional nature.

Another example is agreement concerning languages of negotiation or of documentation in transnational institutions, as has become necessary within the European Union. The EU has adopted — at great financial cost, but with important positive identity-political consequences — twenty-three official languages[2], and it uses three working languages within the Commission, viz. English, French, and German. A final example is the implementation — or not — of UNESCO decisions in the individual member states (esp. the above-mentioned right to literacy for every child in his or her native language).

1.3 Functional development

A further policy problem involving the status of a language is the acceptance of a functional profile for individual languages or varieties. Such a profile depends on the natural processes of development; however, countervailing, and often artificial political decisions and measures also influence the direction of change. The spectrum of functions of a language or variety must do justice to cases ranging from the threat of its dying out or undergoing (massive) language change to the development of the language into a multifunctional international means of communication. Some of the important divisions on this spectrum lie in (1) the use or not of a language or variety as a written medium, (2) the development or not of a language or variety for domains in the modern world, (3) the institutional and medial use and spread of a language.

In this process the functional profile of a language or variety can only be approached in connection with contact phenomena which describe the relationship it stands in with respect to other languages or varieties. Such contact phenomena can be of a looser or tighter nature, as in the case polyglot speech communities. Furthermore, either they can stand in a stable relationship or they can be highly dynamic and subject to constant change. Language policy measures may be directed toward maintaining stability while allowing dynamic situations to develop in their own ways or, indeed, support change in process. Of course, such measures can disturb a stable equilibrium or counter dynamic processes of change.

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[2] Bulgarian, Czech, Danish, Dutch, English, Estonian, Finnish, French, German, Greek, Hungarian, Irish, Italian, Latvian, Lithuanian, Maltese, Polish, Portuguese, Romanian, Slovak, Slovene, Spanish, and Swedish

Case studies 4 and 5: Functional change in French in Canada and Louisiana. The function domains of French in North America has moved in two very different directions as we can see from the way French has developed in Canada and in Louisiana.

In Canada (Nouvelle France) French was a settler language from the earlier times of exploration (Jacques Cartier in 1534). Today French is the mother tongue of just under a quarter of all Canadians, but the majority language in Québec (over 80%) and the language of sizable minorities in New Brunswick, Ontario, and Manitoba. It and English, the latter the native language of about two-thirds of the Canadian population, are the official languages of Canada.

Despite official linguistic parity the economic dominance of anglophone Canada and the United States meant that the retention rate (between generations) for French was under 100% in much of the 20th century. In the long term this would have meant that ever fewer people would have been native speakers of French. As a result a whole series of initiatives in Québec led to the stabilization of French. Legal regulation is under the oversight of the Office québécois de la langue française (1961) and is formalized the Charter of the French Language (1977).

French has become the exclusive official language of Québec, and its use in schools, businesses, and public domains is strictly mandated while high restrictions have been laid on English-medium schools and the public use of English. Furthermore, the language has profited from the development of French-language terminology. Clearly language policy and planning have played a central role in maintaining the enhancing the status of French.

Louisiana. When New France came to an end in the peace treaty signed terminating the Seven Years' War (known as the French and Indian War in America), France lost to Britain its North American possessions (Canada and the Mississippi Valley) in the Treaty of Paris (1763). Many of the French settlers in Acadia (now Nova Scotia) left Canada, a part of them settling in Louisiana, where they (and their music and their cuisine and their language) became known as Cajun (< Acadie). In contrast to the French in Québec the Cajuns were a minority with little economic power or prestige. Consequently, the domains in which French was used grew ever more restricted. Today in individual parishes (counties) in Louisiana as many as a quarter or more of the population may speak French, but exclusively as a home language. Here we have functional atrophy.

Quite a large number of multilingual countries support a dynamic process leading to a reduction in the functional viability of minority languages. These languages are the losers in the process of modernization and are falling constantly farther behind in comparison to their rivals due to a lack institutional or state support. This process can be accelerated politically in order to help to establish a particular language as the official medium of national communication. Or a country can opt for policy of stabilization and expansion of minority languages. The latter policy will only then be successful when the functional profile of the minority language is extended and meets with acceptance; for otherwise the momentum of movement toward the (new) national language cannot be withstood despite policy decisions.

1.4 Structural development

Language policy measures which have an effect on the structure of the language (corpus planning) comprise processes of selection and standardization of variants on the linguistic levels of grammar and lexicon, as well as their institutional codification and procedures

for dealing with language contact phenomena. If, for example, a language is to be established as the written medium, it is necessary to make a wise choice from among the phonemes or morpho-phonemes which are available within the larger framework of the variety. The final result should preferably be a system containing variants which are made up of a suitable choice for a clear attribution to the graphemes of the orthographic system. The phonemes chosen can either come from one single variety or can consist of a combination which stems from several varieties. It is possible to devise a system consisting of one-to-one phoneme-grapheme correspondences. But often the system is less stringent, relying on already familiar spelling systems whose influence can hardly be ignored. Frequently there is rivalry between several available orthographic systems, whereby the relative prestige of the one or the other is often the decisive factor when a final choice is made, itself a highly political matter.

Case Study 6: Tok Pisin. The development of Melanesian Pidgin English, now known as Tok Pisin [literally 'talk pidgin'], to one of the official languages of Papua-New Guinea has brought with it a considerable amount of standardization. Although the language has its own grammar (which shows little direct influence from English), English was and continues to be its chief lexifier language, i.e. the source language of much of its vocabulary. This is possible because English continues to be an important presence in the country.

   As social mobility has grown, contact with English in the cities, at school, at work, etc. has led to a growing gap between the rural and the urban areas and to mixing, borrowing, and the Anglicization of words. Under the influence of English, words are borrowed which contain sounds not strictly native to Tok Pisin. In its 'most native' form Tok Pisin has /p/ but not /f/, /s/ but not /ʃ/, /dʒ/, or /z/. Nor does it distinguish /iː/ from /ɪ/. This means that pis can be, among other things, either "piss" or "fish," but also "beach," "peach," or "feast."

   Urban speakers marginally adopt /f/ (as well as further distinctions which are native to English) and so elaborate the phonological system of Tok Pisin. Indeed, depending on locality speakers may say (and write) either <pisin> or <pijin>. And we find an advertisement for *Debol Sais Foam Materes* (double sized foam mattress), where <foam> fits neither the expected phonology (no /f/) nor the spelling (/oʊ/ would be <o> and not <oa>). Clearly standardization in Tok Pisin is still not fixed in either spelling or pronunciation.

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2. Standardization

Processes of standardization come about whenever a number of variants are available, one of which has to be selected, leaving the others in a subordinate position. Standardization requires political authorization and can only be achieved by means of institutional support. Often linguistic experts are called upon to make the necessary selection and to decide on the standardized forms. The enforcement of the resulting standard is, then, a matter for the politically responsible bodies.

    The results of the process of standardization are most often codified in grammars and dictionaries. The suggestions made by the experts can, of course, remain suggestions not acted upon, and differing suggestions may stand in stark contrast to each other. In such cases the various proposals remain under discussion; or an authoritative body, usually a state institution, adopts one of the codified norms, which may then be invested with the force of law —at least with regard to its institutional employment.

Language contact phenomena lie on a political scale which runs from complete absence of any regulation of spontaneous and uncontrolled contact processes, on the one hand, to vigorous interference in these processes, on the other. Examples of political support for language contact phenomena include expansion of the language / variety by means of the adoption of grammatical and lexical properties of one of the contact language in order to develop important communicative functions in particular domains. This may take place by borrowing the means of expression or by finding way to express the concept with the help of native word formation processes.

Case study 7: The rise of Standard English. At the center of the process of standardization lies power, be it military, economic, social, or cultural power. People accommodate to those groups in society which are the most powerful (richest, most successful, most popular, most intelligent, best looking, etc.) because: 'Power attracts.'' In the history of English, standardization began at the same time economic and political power was being amassed in the London area. It required:

(a) Selection, in which a dominant variety came to serve as the base dialect. This was the somewhat leveled (or koinázed) variety coming into use in London. The Court had moved from Winchester to London by the end of the 13th century. Gradually the London dialect (more precisely: that of the 'East Midlands triangle': London, Oxford, Cambridge) was becoming the one preferred by the educated. This was supported by the establishment of printing in England in 1476 by William Caxton, which also had an Eastern Midlands regional base. Furthermore, this was a wealthy agricultural area and a center of the woolens trade. With its commercial significance London was becoming more densely populated, thus gaining in demographic weight. It was therefore inevitable that its English would become a model with a wider geographic spread and eventually be carried overseas.

(b) Acceptance, in which the dominant status of the emerging standard was due to its use by the powerful and educated classes
. The royal court, the new translations of the Bible, Caxton's press, and especially the London Chancery used and popularized the new standard, which was the sociolect of the upper classes (Shaklee 1980: 53). This was made possible by the extremely fluid social situation in the 14th century, which started out with a rigidly structured society, but was changed by the population losses of the Black Death (30-40% of the English population) and the Hundred Years' War, which cost the lives of much of the old nobility. Henry VII sought to fill offices increasingly often with people from the middle classes.

Leith credits the acceptance of the Eastern Midland variety not so much to its use by the London merchant class as by its adoption by students from all over England who studied at Cambridge or Oxford and gave the emerging standard an important degree of social and geographical mobility. In addition, there was 'its usefulness in communicating with people who spoke another dialect,''especially among the lower classes (1983: 40-44).

Chief among the reasons for its adoption was its political usefulness as an instrument and expression of the growing feeling of English nationalism. And finally, its use by influential and respected authors, starting with Chaucer and continuing with early modern writers like Spenser, Sydney, and then Shakespeare (cf. ibid.: 36-44).

(c) Elaboration, in which this variety became functional in ever more domains, as already indicated: government, church, scholarship, printing, and administration, where it began to displace French and/or Latin. In 1362 Parliament was opened for the first time with an address held in English (instead of French), and in the same year English was adopted as a language of the courts. The translation of the Bible into English (Wyclif(fe) in 1382-84) and, a

century later, the establishment of Caxton's press continued the functional spread of the language. Parallel to its expanded functions there was an expansion in the linguistic means to carry this out. Most obviously the vocabulary necessary for this grew. The classical languages were the chief sources of the new words and provided English with the means for stylistic differentiation — as between the more common everyday words of Germanic (Anglo-Saxon) origin and those from Greek, Latin, and French.

(d) Codification in which grammars, dictionaries, and manuals of style appeared to define it. At the beginning of the 17th century grammarians were still relatively open to regional forms, but by the end of the century regionalisms were seen as "incorrect." Now grammarians "were prescribing the correct language for getting ahead in London society, and standard English had risen to consciousness" (Shaklee 1980: 60). As the language grew more complex and the possibilities for making stylistic distinctions increased, the number of people who aspired to use this new standard grew as well, and there was an enormous need to know just what it consisted of, hence the advent of dictionaries, grammars, and books on orthoepy (the study of correct pronunciation)[3].

The best known of the early dictionaries was Samuel Johnson's monumental *Dictionary of the English Language* (1755), which stands at the beginning of a long tradition of lexicography that would include the incomparable twelve-volume historical *Oxford English Dictionary* (1928; plus supplements; now in an Internet edition) as well as hundreds and hundreds of further general and specialized dictionaries.

The question of how to pronounce words "properly" was approached by the numerous orthoepists, such as John Walker, whose *Critical Pronouncing Dictionary* (1791) lent weight to the tendency to pronounce words in accordance with the way they were spelled, so-called "spelling pronunciations." Today we find both pronouncing dictionaries, now generally including the two major standard pronunciations, Received Pronunciation (RP) of England and General American (GenAm) of North America, and linguistic descriptions such as those in the tradition of Daniel Jones and A.C. Gimson (cf. the latter's *Introduction to the Pronunciation of English*).

Grammar and usage were approached in grammar books by such venerable, though also prescriptive, grammarians as Bishop Lowth (1762) and Lindley Murray (1795). The grammar book tradition includes such momentous works as Otto Jespersen's seven-volume *Modern English Grammar on Historical Principles* (1909-1949) or the *Comprehensive Grammar of the English Language* by R. Quirk et al. (1985) or more recently, the *Longman Grammar of Spoken and Written English* by Douglas Biber et al. (1999), which is based on an extensive corpus of written and spoken usage in a variety of registers and usage drawn from BrE, AmE, and other varieties.

Interference may take the form of promotion of language contact and the structural hybridization of languages or varieties that sometimes results from this. Or it may show up as a movement to preserve and purify the language by holding or pushing back the front of language contact invasions, of which there are numerous historical and present-day examples.

Case study 8: English Only. The previous case study demonstrated a move toward corpus planning (standardization, regularization, and codification) which resulted from numerous

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[3] See S. Gramley on learning aids in this volume.

independent forces. The other major type of planning, viz. status planning, has, in the English-speaking world, done largely without state supported academies or the kind of regulation involved in case study 3 on German spelling. Rather this has been carried out largely unofficially by the example of popular and prestigious authors and publishers'manuals of style. This does not mean, of course, that laissez faire attitudes have prevailed. The codification process just outlined in case study 7 was often highly prescriptive, and this has continued up to the present.

In the last few decades a remarkably strong movement has grow up to enlist the state in this process. With increasing immigration to the United States from Latin America and the concomitant growth in the use of Spanish in the US voices have grown louder which would raise English beyond its current de facto status to that of the official language of the US.

In the 1980s a movement called English Only began to campaign for the enactment of laws in the individual states to make English the official language. In the meantime well over half the states have passed such legislation,[4] but Congress has not passed similar federal legislation. Perhaps the greatest damage done by this Nativist movement has been to bilingual education, which has suffered most recently at the hands of the No Child Left Behind Act (2002), which has instituted the Office of English Language Acquisition to administer its language provisions[5].

3. The role of language planning

Ever since all of the approximately 6,000 extant languages have been catalogued and, in part, at least, undergone scholarly research and description, language planning has counted as necessary for every language. The failure to undertake concrete language policy measures is tantamount to assenting to spontaneous, unplanned processes of language development and is, in effect, a political measure of great purport in regard to language status. Even the grammatical and lexical description of a language or variety is a language policy measure since such a description records the linguistic resources of the language or variety as a synchronic system. Such a record of resources makes it possible to predict the probable direction of change of the language and to exert influence on it with suitable measures of language policy or, in contrast, to decide against such steps.

Language policy measures may be employed in a one-off manner or be used for short-term solutions to problems; or they adopt long-term goals which they pursue with persistence. It is the latter cases which are genuine instances of language planning. Its goals include, for example,

- the development of a language or variety as a regional, national, or supranational medium of communication or, at the other extreme,
- the replacement of one such medium by a new one, or
- its establishment as an additional medium of communication alongside the first, or

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[4] A few states have recognized other languages beside English, e.g. Louisiana (English and French); Hawaii (English and Hawaiian); Puerto Rico has English and Spanish; Guam has English and Chamorro; the Northern Mariana Islands, English and Samoan.

[5] See S. Gramley on code-switching in this volume.

- the extension of the communicative profile of a language / variety, for example as a language for specific purposes[6] in whatever domains, or
- the standardization and codification of languages.

Just what long-term perspectives for success language planning measures may have can only be confirmed by a detailed examination of successful and less successful developmental programs. In a global perspective there are a large number of cases of language planning in which languages / varieties have been established or expanded successfully, but likewise a large number of unsuccessful language planning measures or ones which did not have the success hoped for.

Case studies 9 and 10: Irish and Ivrit.

  Irish. Under the massive pressure of British domination the Irish language (Irish Gaelic) began a retreat in the face of English. Loss of the Irish-speaking elite in 1601 (Battle of Kinsale) initiated a move toward English in law, government, and among the social elite with English-speakers dominating militarily, politically, economically and, eventually, socially as well. By 1800 English was necessary for economic or social position.

  Between 1800 and 1850 the number of Gaelic speakers dropped dramatically due to emigration and the catastrophe of the potato famine, which together led to a decrease in the Irish population of about two million (down from approx. eight million in 1800). In this period many parents began using English in order to prepare the children for an immigrant life, above all, in England or America.

  Parallel to this came the Celtic revival (from the 1760s on). At first this was only scholarly, but it soon became a symbol of Irish unity and Irish difference from Britain. Groups such as the Gaelic League (1880s to 1921) pursued a program of political and cultural nationalism with the Irish language as a key symbol.

  Following the partition of Ireland different strategies were pursued north and south of the border. In the Republic Irish was the "national" language though English remained an official language, and official policy set out to insure
    - maintenance of Gaelic where still spoken
    - revival of it elsewhere (through the schools)
    - the use of Irish in the public service
    - modernization and standardization of the language (O'Reilly 2001: 81)

  Irish has remained a consistent a symbol of Irish nationalism even though it is not widely spoken. And it has been so unsuccessful perhaps most of all because Gaelic is perceived as having little economic advantage and public policy in support of Irish has little popular backing. By 1970-71 only 24 (of a one-time high of 255) Irish-medium schools remained (but have increased again since then). Public scepticism toward Irish nationalism is growing (ibid.: 82). In Northern Ireland Irish is a cause taken up chiefly by Catholic-nationalists (ibid.: 83).

  Overall three arguments dominate in the North: (1) Decolonization is an important theme to which the revival of Gaelic can contribute, but (2) the language is also seen as a valuable good in and of itself, which is something (3) to which a minority is entitled as a civil right. In the Republic four positions are advanced: (1) Irish is the national language, which (2) is valuable as such and which (3) deserves support from the European Union as a "lesser-used

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[6] See S. Gramley on English for Specific Purposes in this volume.

language.''But (4) Gaelic is viewed as a dead or doomed language with no economic advantage (ibid.: 88-95).

Ivrit. Where Irish has been largely unsuccessful despite the planning and policy supporting its revival, Modern Hebrew (Ivrit) has been successful and moving from the written language of an ancient religion to a modern language of everyday speech. This transition was powered by the relatively rapid constitution of a country of people from a great diversity of countries speaking a large number of languages but united by a strong feeling of a shared past and a common mission for the future symbolized by Jewish traditions and the Hebrew language.

The revival movement has its roots in the late 19th century and in Zionism. In order to be successful the steps of selection, acceptance, elaboration, and codification had to be carried out much more rapidly than was the case with the standardization of English, for in this the Zionist project and the State of Israel were dependent on a modern language of communication (with massive borrowing from Russian, Arabic, English, French, German, and Yiddish) and a national one which could engender emotional loyalties.

In an increasingly globalized world, i.e. a world in which global and local identities coexist simultaneously, there are no panaceas for the problems of language policy and language planning. What is needed is worldwide cooperation between all sorts of institutions and experts who have the experience required in language policy and planning and can exchange information and experience within the framework of supranational political institutions. One such frame is supplied by UNESCO. Above all, public awareness of the significance of processes of language planning and policy and of international conventions is extremely important for the renewed initiation of international cooperation and research.

4. Useful literature for further reading

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5. Exercises

Explore this topic further by finding out about the language policy in one of the following countries: South Africa, Nigeria, Jamaica, or Canada.