

LIGN177: Multilingualism

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Language planning

Language planning

- Language planning is government authorized legislation of a language's function within a society
- Part of modern nation-building

Two forms

- *Status planning* - changes the function of a language
 - Minority language
 - Official languages
- *Corpus planning* - develop a language variety to standardize it
 - Orthography, literature, dictionaries
 - New uses for language (trade, technology)

4 ideologies in language planning

- Assimilation
- Linguistic pluralism
- Vernacularization
- Internationalization

Cobarrubias, J. 1983. Ethical issues in status planning. In J. Cobarrubias & J. Fishman (eds), *Progress in Language Planning: International Perspectives*. The Hague: Mouton

Assimilation

- Everyone must learn the dominant language of the society, often suppressing others
- Examples: France, Spain (under Franco), Soviet Union, Algeria, United States, Greece, Australia

Assimilationist Policy - Australia

- Australia Aboriginals – the 'Stolen Generation' in 1880s-1950s, thousands of children were removed from their homes and placed in institutions and then foster care, often never seeing their families again



Assimilationist Policy - Australia

- Based on assumption of European cultural superiority – Aboriginals should conform to White, English, Christian society – they had no rights, and could be dispossessed of land and property
- Caused demise of Aboriginal culture and language
- Current Australian policy is one of multiculturalism or linguistic pluralism

Linguistic pluralism

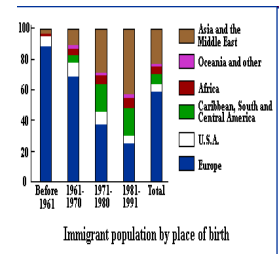
- recognition of more than one language
- Examples: Canada, Belgium, Singapore, Switzerland, South Africa

Linguistic pluralism - Canada

- Canada also practiced an assimilationist policy against Native Canadians and encouraged immigrants to assimilate to French or English
- Current policy recognizes two official languages (English and French), but since 1971 has policy of multiculturalism

Linguistic pluralism - Canada

- Federal government provides funding to provinces for language instruction
- Provinces select official languages and some support heritage language bilingual immersion programs



Vernacularization

- Restoration or elaboration of an indigenous language
- Examples: Tok Pisin, Hebrew, Maori, Tagalog, Quechua (in Peru, Bolivia)

Vernacularization - Phillipines

- 1521-1898: Spanish rule until Spanish-American war when Philippines, Guam, Cuba, Puerto Rico ceded to the U.S.
- 1899-1901: Philippine-American War
- 1935: Commonwealth of the Philippines
- 1941-1942: Japan invades during WWII
- 1944-1945: Liberation of the Philippines
- 1946: Independence granted (on July 4).
- → heavy English influence, some Spanish remnants

10 big languages of Philippines

- Tagalog 29.29%
- Cebuano 21.17%
- Ilokano 9.31%
- Hiligaynon 9.11%
- Bikol 5.69%
- Waray 3.81%
- Kapampangan 2.98%
- Pangasinense 1.81%
- Maranao 1.27%
- Maguindanao 1.24%



Filipino as national language

- 1971-1973, a new Constitution drafted — “a ‘universalist’ approach to the national language, to be called Filipino ...
- Filipino is Tagalog with features from other Philippine languages and from Spanish and English

- Filipino is the *national language*, but both English and Filipino are *official languages*.
- Math, science, and technology education, and higher education, is primarily in English
- Other languages are used in early levels of education

Polyglossia

- the vernacular (= local language) for the language of the home and the neighborhood
- English for the language of academic discourse especially for business, science, and diplomacy and as a language of wider communication
- Filipino as the national language, a symbol of unity and linguistic identity

Commission on the Filipino Language

- Mission: to develop Filipino as a language of academic work, disseminate it further, conduct linguistic and sociolinguistic research on it
- Corpus planning!

Internationalization

- Adoption of a non-indigenous language of wider communication
- Example: English in Singapore, India, Phillipines, Papua New Guinea, Kenya, Malawi, French in former colonies

Africa - Legacy of colonialism

- During colonial period, language of colonial powers was imposed – assimilationist policy, particularly from French, Portuguese
- Following independence, African leaders were faced with a choice – continue to use the colonial language or use a native African language

Legacy of colonialism – factors in favor of African languages

- Rejection of oppression of the European powers and unite citizens of new countries
- Encourage educational development and literacy, particularly in rural areas
- African languages were already spoken by large segments of the population
- Some *lingua francas* were already de facto national languages – Swahili in East Africa, Wolof in Senegal, Arabic in Maghreb

Legacy of colonialism – factors in favor of colonial languages

- African intellectuals spoke colonial languages well, and were educated in European tradition - *many were reluctant to reject colonial languages outright and sever ties with former colonial powers*
- Colonial boundaries created countries that divided ethnic groups and united ethnic groups that had little in common (i.e. Dinka vs. Arabs in Sudan) - *fear of ethnic tension favored maintenance of colonial language*

Legacy of colonialism - factors in favor of colonial languages

- High degree of multilingualism - *difficult to select one language as a national language*
- Education system was created under colonialism - *would require massive overhaul to convert to African languages*
- Financial ties to colonial powers – British Commonwealth, La Francophonie; CFA franc guaranteed by the French treasury and was tied to the French franc, now euro

Official languages in Africa

- Almost all African countries have a European language as an official language
- Exceptions:
North Africa (Egypt, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Sudan): **Arabic**
Somalia: **Somali**
Ethiopia: **Amharic** (but was not a colony)

Official languages in Africa

- Many countries have an African official or national language in addition:
- Botswana, Burundi, Central African Republic, Comoros, Chad, Djibouti, Eritrea, Kenya, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Rwanda, South Africa, Swaziland, Tanzania
- Most of these are either not heavily multilingual or they have a widespread lingua franca (Swahili, Sango, Arabic)

Multilingualism in Africa

- Three tier model of language use:
 1. Small multilingual elite using colonial language
 2. Large multilingual group using native language plus regional language
 3. Monolingual or multilingual group using languages of small local importance

Education and development

- As communication and literacy are important for national development, **language** is central to the issue
- **Literacy** in indigenous, local languages → better knowledge gain
- **Mass communication** → better flow of information in indigenous languages

Education - hurdles

- Education → development → national unity
- Standardization – which dialect?
- Orthography – which script, what about tone?

Media

- Print - newspapers are still largely in European languages. Exceptions are Somali, Swahili (Kenya, Tanzania), Arabic, Amharic (Ethiopia), which all have a long written tradition dating back centuries
- Directly correlated with education system

Media

- Radio - employs greater use of African languages as they are spoken rather than written and can reach larger audience, especially in rural areas, but not always open market access
- Television – use of African languages growing -

Future of African languages

- African languages are being declared national languages, and educational materials are being developed
- Role of European languages is still strong, particularly given globalization