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Planning Language, Planning Future

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Abstract

Language is planned, and plans themselves are assessed in a multitude of countries in Europe and America, and to a lesser extent in Africa and Asia. In the presentation, the overview of the process of language planning is provided, based on the experience of language planning in various countries.

The very first steps include a general assessment of the current linguistic and sociolinguistic situation, sustainability of the language(-s) concerned, trends, security aspects and various threats (social, regional, virtual), vision or desirable outcome with the description of main goals and sub-goals (with measurable quantitative data), activities and sub-activities with specific indicators measuring outcome, result or activity itself.

The main motor of the whole process is status planning with legal, managerial, and PR-level (language marketing). For this planning to succeed, timely input from other language planning dimensions is necessary, first of all, from the corpus planning (general orthographic and grammatical standardization, geographical, business and personal name policies, terminology development and development of the domain of translation and interpreting, subtitling and dubbing). These standards are implemented in the educational system, providing education through various monolingual or multilingual educational programmes / models. Language technology as a support dimension must be developed in the level of a minimal survival kit, securing competitiveness in this way.

Finally some typical misunderstandings and mistakes, drawbacks and failures are discussed that might help future language planners and thus, foster better results.

Keywords: Language planning, Sociolinguistics, Linguistic Anthropology, Language policy, Language marketing

Introduction

Drafting and implementing language policies, strategies and plans is a common routine of governments in multilingual environments. A free language market and “jungle laws” would otherwise lead to various societal confrontations and conflicts, tensions and low growth in economic markets. The role of language policy and planning (LPP) depends on specific factors of the multilingual environment and needs to be satisfied through the policy implemented.

Language policies may be divided into various types, according to their primary goals and scopes, thus defining these as national, international or supra national (Rannut et al. 2003; Rannut 2004, 2009):

- Minority protection models based on ethnic mobilization, upgrading the native language of the minority concerned an issue of the ultimate importance (securitization; e.g. Graded Intergenerational Dislocation Scale by Fishman 1991, 2001).
- Language ecology models for indigenous peoples (Mühlhäusler 1995; Maffi 2001). Indigenous languages have a limited social scope, as these serve communities of a minor (and often a decreasing) number of speakers, for whom the language is still the essential tool of communication and information in all areas of human experience, however, with no stable foothold in urban and modern virtual culture. Therefore, the challenge lies in the elaboration of the language for new functional domains and implementation of it there, securing simultaneously its social environment sufficiently separated from the rest of languages.
- Nation-building models applied within state framework. Attempts to solve language problems through rational planning, similar to economic models (planning language resources rationally and systematically), producing language strategies, language plans and minor programs for various domains (foreign language teaching, terminological work, language technology, etc.). These models focus on building the state as a sovereign unit (nation-building, strengthening congruence between the state, language and nation). Though usually devised for the advance of the primary /national /official language(-s), this model may be applied also in the case of several languages.
- Language spread models (Ammon 1997), including linguistic imperialism as one of its nasty, but nevertheless popular forms (Phillipson 1992).
- Laissez-faire policy (Phillipson 2003) treating language planning issues as secondary.
- Language policy in international organizations and institutions, prescribing the role, use and interpretation /translation routines for the official languages (e.g. European Union, OSCE, the UN, INTERPOL, etc.).
- There is a multitude of forms and levels at the supranational level, such as functional (the court, police, customs, tourism, etc.) and regional language policies, institutional policies (e.g. language policy documents in educational institutions and in multinational corporations) and grass-root activities (micro level; cf. Tollefson 1991).

At the national level, language has been planned, and plans themselves are assessed in a multitude of countries in Europe and America, and to a lesser extent in Africa and Asia. The value of efficient, fair and extensive language policy has been made explicit by Lo Bianco (1987, modifications by the author) who has listed four social goals where sound language policy makes a difference. His 4epolicy model comprises enrichment (cultural and intellectual issues), equality (human rights issues), economy (vocations and foreign trade; diversified mother tongue and second language learning models and maintenance programs enable reduce costs), external (conflict prevention and resolution, good relations with neighbors). On the other hand, the so-called laissez-faire language policy (Phillipson 2003) is quite common in countries with homogeneous population where language issues are secondary. To be exact, this form of language policy in no way means absence of language policy, but rather its status, as it is usually downgraded to a modest place in planning, and most of the decisions affecting language (situation) are taken without consideration of their linguistic consequences.

While common understanding places language policy among cultural issues, in reality it seems quite to the opposite. As language itself is one of the few instruments of power, it often becomes prevalent in other domains where power and inequality emerge, such as a mobilizing

factor with or against military might or economic domination. Such additional differences / inequalities lead to conflicts affecting language security. Thus, hierarchy of language policy impact on society at large starts with security and economy (working places affiliated with language, language costs as a price component, cultural products, educational costs), with culture (information and entertainment, public environment, media, historical / collective memory) being secondary here.

Language Security

While the first two models strive for societal (group) security – maintenance of the basic identity of the group under the changing conditions and threats (sustainable development of language, culture, religious, ethnic identity) – the third one, nation-building regards as its main task national security (state's capacity to manage and eliminate threats). Language component in the current security thinking belongs to the domain of soft security. Ager (1999) has divided linguistic insecurity into three:

- Territorial insecurity as a fear of regional (minority) languages, based on the threats of disintegration, regionalism and fragmentation. Policy in this case is based on linguistic integrity and primacy of official/national languages in high-status functional domains (administration, court, education, army, public media, etc.). Officially various integration models based on additive bilingualism are encouraged.
- Social insecurity as a threat of a social outsider group (class, social layer, e.g. immigrants, poor, younger generation). Policy instruments here are equal access, participation and cooperation, promoting social inclusion. Main emphasis here is on assimilation, though partial native language support is sometimes available.
- Virtual insecurity as a new domain in language conflict (modification of Ager 1999 by Rannut 2003), leading to the status decrease and gradual loss of functional domains (IT, science, higher (and consequently, secondary) education, media and entertainment), due to the ever-increasing impact of technology upon language environment. In this case the physical presence of the ousting speech community is not necessary as the battleground is the virtual space together with the languages used there, taking over communication and business, while introducing values, beliefs and attitudes that might be harmful for the status of one's native language.

Language Planning

In order to eliminate and defend from various linguistic threats competitive, efficient language policy must be built on scientific expertise. This language planning process itself might be continuous, with updated documents produced or new designed for a certain period. For long-term policies, drafting a master plan comprising fundamental principles, various language-related trends and processes as well as domains and structures engaged, based on societal values of the language(-s) concerned would be highly recommendable. Usually this consists of a vision of language environment achieved by the end of the strategic plan, short description of goals and sub-goals, trends, phenomena and processes within language environment (including various threats), list of principles to be followed and language policy management model. In some cases, the description of the current situation is added. Such value-based language document is often adopted by legislative bodies of states (or autonomous provinces) in order to make it more

durable and resistant to political whirlwinds.

On this foundation more practical, short-term or domain-focused “roadmaps” may be drafted on ministerial or provincial level. Such documents are designed for implementation and therefore, financial resources, activities, indicators, measures, managerial and control mechanisms are fixed there. The very first steps include here general assessment of the current linguistic and sociolinguistic situation, sustainability of the language(-s) concerned, trends, security aspects and various threats (social, regional, virtual), vision or desirable outcome with the description of main goals and sub-goals (with measurable quantitative data), activities and sub-activities with specific indicators measuring outcome, result or activity itself.

Besides language plans and strategies, one has to take into account various forms of language cultivation as constant fostering and advancement of the language on a daily basis: the work of educators, teachers, editors and journalists, various grassroots activities (NGO level) and activities of national language institutions: academies, institutes and boards.

Language planning dimensions and domains

Language planning covers all legitimate and proficient actions in the whole language environment. Usually distinction is made between the 4 autonomous dimensions of language planning:

- Status planning (Kloss 1969) is concerned with policies attributing a recognized status and functions in national, regional and even institutional life of a language. Planning activities are carried out in the domains of legislation, management and marketing (or prestige planning, Haarmann 1990).
- Corpus planning (Haugen 1983; Maurais 1993) is concerned with the quality of language concerning its structure and lexicon, establishing the literary norm, corresponding to the referential and non-referential potential of the language and its capability for translation. Codification planning, terminological planning, name planning and translation (plus interpretation, adaptation, etc.) planning are the domains involved in this language planning dimension.
- Acquisition planning (Cooper 1989) or language planning-in-education (Baldauf, Kaplan 2003) is concerned with teaching and acquiring languages and their literary norm as a necessary skill and basis for success in one’s education and further career. This dimension deals with literacy, various educational programs in multilingual environment (second language and native language planning, linguistic accommodation of immigrant pupils, etc.) or for multilingual aims (foreign language planning), teacher training and development of educational materials for language purposes.
- Technological planning is concerned with providing technological support to language, be it either in oral or in written form. This is usually divided into speech technology and text processing or alternatively, to language resources (incl. corpora) and language software. Some authors have regarded this dimension under corpus planning, however, the quality of language seems secondary in this dimension, as technological advances take precedence.

The main motor of the whole process, *primus inter pares*, is status planning with its legal, managerial, and PR (language marketing) domains. In order to succeed here, extensive support from other language planning dimensions is necessary, first of all, from the corpus planning (general orthographic and grammatical standardization, geographical, business and personal

name policies, terminology development and development of the domain of translation and interpreting, subtitling and dubbing). These standards are implemented in the educational system, providing education through various monolingual or multilingual educational programs /models. Language technology as a support dimension must be developed up to the level, securing competitiveness on a par with other languages.

Thus, in conclusion: sustainable development of the language may be secured through competitive functioning and application of it in all language planning dimensions. Formula of success is based on the principle of conformity: language use must be provided through language as an instrument of communication, management and business (language corpora and technology), regulated by law, allocated to high-status functions and sustained through intergenerational transmission.

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