

MODERNIZATION AND LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT:
PLANNING COOPERATIVE RESEARCH

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An interpretative summary from the perspective of GROUP ONE'S work was presented immediately following the work meeting by Richard Baldauf and Bob Kaplan. This is their statement:

Questions pertaining to practice

I. Both discussion groups clearly agreed on the importance of literacy as an issue, and both spent a substantial amount of their time on that issue. There is considerable consensus between the two discussions. This concern seems to center entirely on the movement of individuals/groups from pre- to post-graphization in language modernization.

A. The questions—leading to specific research formulations—involve at least the following:

1. Who is moving?
 - a. from oracy in what to literacy in what?
 - b. what societal function is such literacy expected to serve?
 - c. what societal function does it actually serve?
 - d. to what extent does it stick?
 - e. what groups, mechanisms, organizations are involved in facilitating the movement?
 - (i) What are the implications for academic administration?
 - (ii) What are the implications for teachers/teacher trainers?
 - (iii) What are the implications with respect to materials and programs?
2. What is meant by literacy?
 - a. How much literacy is required for what individuals with respect to what domains?
 - b. How is it possible to devise flexible systems so the amount of literacy can be added to?
 - c. How does one measure degrees of literacy?
 - d. What is the relationship among definitions/measures by linguists, planners, users (employers)?
3. What are the effects of literacy?
 - a. on those who acquire it?
 - b. on their immediate groups? (e.g., family, clan, church, etc.)?
 - c. on larger societal groups/organizations?
 - d. on the polity as a whole?
 - e. on the language itself?
4. Who makes decisions about literacy?
 - a. at the policy level? (legislatures/ministries)
 - b. at the implementation level (education administrators, curriculum makers)?

- c. at the user level (courts, employers, health delivery bureaucracies, agricultural agents)?
- d. at the individual level (issues of language identity symbolic function)?

5. What additional issues are raised by literacy/biliteracy/multiliteracy?

B. Both groups have, in slightly different ways, called for an ethnography of literacy—one which goes well beyond the terminological problem raised in III—left column. This is not to minimize the importance of various prior work (e.g., taxonomies of writing; cf., Kinneavy, Kaplan, etc.); rather, we note that many of these prior efforts, as well as some extant work in literacy, is based on an analysis of product whereas what we understand to be the focus of an ethnography would involve both process and product (without at this point necessarily involving the learning/acquisition debate).

II. The concern in both groups with literacy led naturally to a concern with biliteracy in a variety of situations:

- (i) in a world language
- (ii) in a regional language
- (iii) in a minority language
- (iv) in a minor language
- (v) in a foreign (educational language)
- (vi) in a classical language
- (vii) in a "second" language (where "second" needs to be defined)

III. As a subset of the larger question of biliteracy is the problem of "technological" literacy.

The problem is both of a different order and on a different scale of significance than the other issues pertaining to biliteracy and on those grounds deserves separate treatment.

A. Who learns a "technological" language?

- 1. What is a technological language?
- 2. How are such individuals selected?
- 3. How are they trained?
- 4. By whom are they trained?
- 5. Who decides?

B. What does it mean to "know" a "technological language"?

- 1. Problems of access
 - a. descriptor codes
 - b. information scanning
 - c. information selection

2. Problems of information management/treatment
 - a. translation
 - b. summarization/abstracting
 - c. adaptation for appropriateness to the user
3. Problems of information process for (re-) entry into storage
 - a. abstracting
 - b. translating
 - c. coding

C. How does the need for/use of "technological" languages impact on any other language modernization project/processes in progress?

IV. The discussion implied that literacy, biliteracy, technical literacy can proceed only from a standardized language base. Group discussion on the issue of standardization broke into two concerns though there may be others which didn't come up:

A. Script standardization

1. orthographic reform
2. spelling reform
3. script adaptation (including special purposes--e.g., technology--adaptation)

B. Lexical elaboration as it may be influenced by a variety of levels (i.e., national, supranational (e.g., Arab world), international regional) and a variety of practitioners

V. There was also a concern about what could be learned by looking at what the historical context of language tell us about language modernization.

GROUP TWO (Monsur Musa, group secretary)

The following were determined to be critical research issues:

1. To determine an empirical basis for language planning, i.e. to validate what are actual rather than merely speculative language problems.
2. To demonstrate how all language problems ultimately are individual and based in interpersonal interaction.
3. To emphasize the relationships between socioeconomic problems and language problems.
4. To describe nongrammatical communication problems in the context of micro-modernization.
5. To demonstrate relationships between identity and language choice in times of socio-political change.
6. The basic questions of literacy: definition and measurement.
7. Second language planning as an area of research.
8. To describe the symbolic functions of language in the processes of group mobilization.

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