

TWO APPROACHES TO LANGUAGE PLANNING

Björn H. Jernudd

The social science approach to language planning

In a recent state-of-the-art paper, Joshua Fishman (1987) gives clear direction to the social science approach to language planning. He offers definitions, outlines substantive issues and questions for research, and situates language planning in social science theory.

One of his definitions opposes a societal direction of study to a linguistic one, status to language corpus goals, and exercise of authority to its absence:

For me, language planning remains the authoritative allocation of resources to the attainment of language status and language corpus goals, whether in connection with new functions that are aspired to, or in connection with old functions that need to be discharged more adequately. This definition [...] leads in societal directions more than it does in linguistic ones. (409)

status planning is the real engine of the language planning train. Only when status planning is seriously enforced does corpus planning really take root [...] the products of corpus planning [...] have no dynamic of their own. Many languages will never get much corpus planning codification or elaboration, and even less implementation [...] (423)

He directs language planning work at one particular set of issues, a theme that recurs in this article as in much of Fishman's other work:

it [language planning] is primarily the means whereby less fortunate language communities (i.e., those less powerful in their particular confrontation with another ethno-linguistic aggregate) organize their self-defense, as well as their inter-translatability-at-least-to-some-extent-and-in-some-functions vis-à-vis one or another 'international language'. (411)

They [language planners] are (or should be) issue definers and consciousness raisers vis-à-vis the goal of ethno-cultural pluralism and ethnocultural democracy. (413)

Fishman constructs language planning around such issues as ethnic identity, nationism and nationalism, functional inequality and undercut pluralism. He regards the study of language planning as one area of study to contribute to theory of social change, social planning, even sociological theory in general.

One disciplinary-organizational problem and one set of research questions, in particular, stand out in my reading of his state-of-the-art assessment:

(*first*) the relative immaturity of the social sciences themselves in connection with involved issues of the type that language status planning must cope with (419), and,

(second) what kinds of populations are more likely, and what kinds are less likely, to adopt the status planning and corpus planning products of language planning authorities and why [...] (426)

In his paper, as a comment on the definition quoted first above, Fishman notes that his definition 'depart[s]' most obviously from the 'correction' model and the management-planning distinction previously espoused by Neustupný and Jernudd (409) and calls for exploration of the differences between the two approaches. Fishman asks if this latter approach is more linguistically oriented?

The answer is yes because the new approach deliberately places language in the focus of study: what does it mean to claim that 'status' issues are fundamental in language planning? what gives some people 'authority' over other peoples' discourse? where is the language problem? what's the problem in discourse? whose is the problem?

People can claim allegiance to languages as symbols of the nation, they may fear the loss of pride, alienation from their true origins, indeed cessation as a separate and distinct community because of loss of a ('their') language as their emotional and cultural ballast. These very real claims are typically produced by and evaluated in terms of goals and ideologies that are not rooted in problems of communication in the use of these languages. Rather, group interests for reasons of control of institutions, and management of identity, prescribe the endorsement of a particular language when expressed in such terms as the immediately preceding ones. The ideological, symbolic-idiomatic, and other interest-forming bases for these claims and ensuing problems are best studied according to the rules of the mostly social science disciplines that are equipped to dissect relationships of ideology, ideological rhetoric, power, authority, and identity.

To the extent that problems of communication do arise and are noted by participants, I suggest that one of several fruitful theoretical foundations for the study of language planning can be based on discourse. The discourse-based approach will be referred to as (the study of) language management, and language planning will be modelled as a type of language management.

The language management approach to language planning¹

In language management, a first assumption is that students in this field of enquiry shall have to demonstrate how an individual notes an actual or potential *inadequacy* in own or other's language use. Inadequacies may be adjusted in the flow of speaking and writing. They may however also become subject to overt management. When language inadequacies become subject to conscious (deliberate) discourse and people jointly search for a solution or at least agreed evaluation, then these are named *language problems*.

¹ This section relies on the fifth and sixth lectures in a little book which will be published in 1990 by Bahri Publishers, New Delhi, title *Lectures on language planning*.

In a management approach to people's behavior toward language, and therefore to the study of language planning as well as to the study of other language management systems such as language cultivation, term standardization, and language teaching, the scholar constructs his disciplinary discourse from an assumption that individuals note and evaluate features of generated (produced) utterances as inadequate. In the interest of disciplinary unification, and in the absence of contrary arguments, the entire discipline may simply continue to be called *linguistics*. Linguistics as it is presently practiced normally contributes a knowledge base either about particular languages or about language in general. Linguistics that deals with particular languages contributes a necessary component of description and analysis of languages, and universalistic linguistics contributes theory and models of language production. Together with *language management* which attends to individual and group noting, evaluating and adjusting of language, linguistics becomes enabled as a discipline to explain both production and reproduction of language; and its practitioners can break out of the constraint that dealing only with the immediately uttered output imposes on them by now being obliged to take into account people's corrections (repair), people's overt behavior toward this output, and people's systematic (organized) management of their languages as well.

Language management assumes that each speaker possesses rules and norms of language use, in the sense of ability to generate expressions and the knowledge and ability to use expressions appropriately in different communicative contexts:

- (1) The individual produces utterances.

In this regard, it is the same as linguistics. But this use could not be cooperatively productive in interaction unless one also assumes that speakers have available to themselves the ability to:

- (2) monitor the language that constitutes these messages and compare it with norms, thus noting deviations,
- (3) evaluate these deviations, thus defining inadequacies,
- (4) decide on means of adjustment, and,
- (5) implement adjustments.

The first ability (1) may be referred to as the individual's generative competency, in generative linguistics, and the latter (2-5) as the individual's corrective competency, in language management.² The former cannot be consummated without the latter and the latter lacks meaning without the former. The two together define human communication and the individual's communicative competency, and therefore our self-study through the discipline of linguistics.³

² For a recent presentation of this model, see Neustupný 1985.

³ I am ignoring unfortunate aspects of the separation of study of the language system from the study of communication. This problem however is very much on the contemporary agenda of reconstruction of disciplines.

Adult individuals are normally able to speak with apparent ease because interaction follows protocols that shield the speaker so as to allow her the opportunity to use her corrective resources. Both production and correction rules are conventional and therefore reduce the risk of conflict as well as facilitate the developing course of interaction. Some communicative situations involve a greater risk than others and in such situations the risk is alleviated by codification and even automation of the expression and of the structure of interaction (such as, e.g., in the established forms of a lecture). Other resources available to the speaker lie within the generative system: at more than one point within this system, structures appear to be unitized, thus reducing the labor of utterance formulation.

⁴ The expectations, furthermore, of certain kinds of speaking and writing and the regularity of speaking and writing have created effective interrelationships between the potentially inexhaustible combinations of linguistic units of syntax and discourse with considerable predictability and stability. This characteristic of language is strikingly demonstrated by the naming of objects which creates stability by convention because words on the whole mean what people agree they mean. The demonstration of the validity of this point lies in the fact that sometimes even greater predictability is required and when that is so people get together to standardize vocabulary, turning words into technical terms for the specific group of users who had noted inadequacies of vocabulary use or who want to prevent future inadequacies by proactive standardization.

In discourse, a simple correction act is the utterance 'what did you say?'. The most subtle correction act is the weaving of a different pronunciation into a spoken response, without overt comment.

Adjustment of someone else's inadequacy is risky because it does call the other person's competency into question. This is perhaps the main reason why there are teachers (and pupils). By virtue of their relationship, pupils are those who are incompetent and who therefore are allowed to practice corrigible behaviors without sanction (within limits). And if one does not know how to speak (a language), one is potentially a child regardless of one's age. Teachers are individuals who have a mandate to legitimately correct without threatening the integrity of the person being corrected. This also very much applies to language learning. To systematically emit 'wrong' utterances with a straight face and to accept correction cheerfully is the pupil's privilege. Of course, another reason for the teacher's role is the recognition of specialist skills in correction in that teachers claim to know how to effectively apply systematic correction in aid of the individual learner.⁵

⁴ Both Sinclair and Rodgers mentioned this phenomenon in their respective plenary presentations at the ILE Conference, 'Language Use, Language Teaching and the Curriculum' held in Hong Kong in December, 1989.

⁵ Rubin discussed the teacher's role from the point of view of language management (although she did not call it that) in her plenary presentation at the ILE Conference, 'Language Use, Language Teaching and the Curriculum'.

For those who doubt the benefit of specialist skill, at least teachers are people who willingly spend their working time with children (pupils, who are people who don't know). As long as learning is not integrated in the organization of adult working life, this sacrifice alone would seem to be worth rewarding.

Monitoring, noting, evaluating, and adjusting are part of all communicative acts. Individuals' resources include the ability to make use of inbuilt management devices; a discourse management system that permits them to avoid, repair and/or clarify utterances, or not to do so; and access to a more rigorous system of language management through which people get together to deliberately and systematically note, evaluate and adjust language. Individual speakers/writers may support language management by demanding authoritative judgement with respect to appropriateness of expression and choice of work, criticism of efficiency of expression or the esthetic quality of texts. People refer to manuals of various kinds, such as grammars, dictionaries, phraseological handbooks, or may call up the grammar hotline, take effective writing and public speaking courses and so on. Support of authority engenders authority and minimizes uncertainty and dispute, thus creating a feeling of stable predictability. Thus, the fundamental aspect of language management is problem-solving that removes inadequacies in individual discourse.

In the study of *organized language management* it is equally important to connect claims people make about language problems to their or others' actual communication in discourse. There are processes of interaction between individuals' discourse and individuals' support for and actions through institutions that manage language. As a matter of fact, it is through political-institutional processes that members of a community are given the opportunity to participate in *language planning*, to design a desirable future and to find ways of moving toward it as effectively as possible. In its normative aspect, I suggest that language planning should require democratic participation, and in its analytical aspect, that it evaluates extent of participation, including eventual participation in the communicative events that have been noted and evaluated as in need of anticipatory adjustment.

For government to manage language efficiently is no easy matter, however democratic the polity and however agreed the policies and well articulated the plans. On the topic of authority, for example, Saulson (1979:187) derives some interesting hypotheses concerning requirements for successful implementation in language planning from his study of the Israeli Hebrew experience. There would seem to exist no better way to ensure 'effective functional authority' than for agencies to suggest adjustments only to such inadequacies as 'the ordinary member of the language community' has noted in discourse and referred to the agency for evaluation (and adjustment).

What then is language planning? Language planning is proactive, organized language management which typically but not necessarily proceeds with government-authorized involvement by public agencies and/or with the support of subsidy. Language planning can be understood as a problem-solving process for the language community. It offers a framework for people to try for the best decisions for the future (*cf.* Ackoff). In the language planning process, people negotiate what seems to them to be the most satisfactory solution to a (set of) language problem(s) within their limits of control and

cognition. Language planning interacts with social, political, economic and other kinds of planning; and it is embedded in the entire social, economic and political process of development.

Planning is a political process to manage a community's language resources. A fully developed language planning model in a language management approach would aim at an analytical understanding of what policies are possible and under what conditions (both historical⁶ and normative) and it would show what designs, measures, instrumentalities and operations are available with what systemic effects, in relation to policies. The student of language planning may decide to reproduce people's actions by drawing on social science or even cognitive science discourses but a student of language planning who has chosen a language management approach will approach peoples' behaviors toward language with these questions uppermost in mind:

Where's the problem in discourse?
What's the problem?
Whose is the problem?

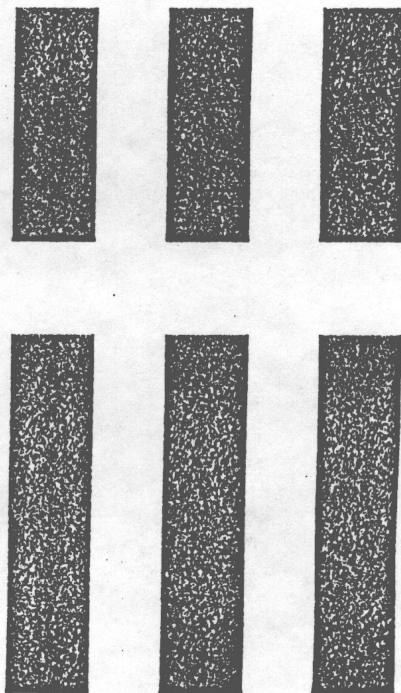
References

- Ackoff, R. L. (1978). *The Art of problem-solving*. Wiley.
- Fishman, J. A. (1987). Reflections on the current state of language planning. Pages 407-428 in *Proceedings of the International Colloquium on Language Planning*, Ottawa May 25-29, 1986. Lorne Laforge, ed., ICRB A-21, Les Presses de l'Universit  Laval, Quebec.
- Jernudd, B. H. (1990). *Lectures on language ^{problems} planning*. New Delhi: Bahri Publishers.
- Neustupn , J. V. (1985) Problems in Australian-Japanese contact situations. Pages 44-64 in *Cross-cultural encounters. Communication and miscommunication*. John B. Pride, ed., River Seine Publications, Melbourne.
- Saulson, Scott B. (1979). *Institutionalized language planning*. The Hague, Paris and New York: Mouton Publishers.

⁶ I think historical comparative study is very important.

LANGUAGE USE LANGUAGE TEACHING AND THE CURRICULUM

Edited by
Verner Bickley



Institute of Language in Education
Education Department
Hong Kong
1990