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# Theoretical and Practical Dimensions of Language Planning Work

BJÖRN H. JERNUDD  
Hong Kong Baptist University

I shall begin with global communication and narrow my perspective to individual discourse. On the way, I intend,

*first*, to discuss globalization and localization in relation to language management and language planning,

*second*, to draw your attention to systematic differences between communities in regard to language problems,

*third*, to highlight skill in a language as one kind of language problem that requires more attention,

*fourth*, to claim and argue the need for a discourse criterion to determine what problems are problems of communication and what problems are rather social, economic and political problems.

## 1. Global communication

Contact is global and inevitable. English dominates the hierarchy of languages of international communication as the unrivalled contact language; other languages may have regional importance but none besides English is global. Garfield & Welljams (1990) have tabulated language selection for articles in science journals using their remarkable ISI (Institute for Scientific Information) data base. TABLE 1 (page 13) shows how English language articles stand out with 97.4% of the total of all citations in the period 1984-88, and 84.7% of all articles published in 1984. German and French have marginal roles to play internationally with 4.9% and 3.9% respectively of the total of articles and 1.0% and 0.6% of the total of citations for the same data. Approximately 45% of the total number of articles in English was produced outside of the English-speaking countries of production; about the same proportion, 45%, describes the use of German, French and Japanese outside of their home countries of use, out of the entire production in each of these languages. The hegemony of English in publications is as much the hegemony in the production of science of the officially and vernacularly dominantly English-speaking countries. Even allowing for Anglophone hegemony in science because science is the biggest in their countries, English dominates science communication. But there is a local languages side in the science production enterprise as well, because people talk and write as they produce and they do that in their own languages. People may not like the fact that they have to publish or present conference papers in English but that's the reality. Scandinavian psychologists bear witness to the dilemma:

- « — It is constantly depressing to be confronted by one's shortcomings in foreign languages.
- It is meaningless to publish original research in Psychology in Swedish.» (Baldauf and Jernudd 1987, 115).



## Global English and local languages

How can the English dominance of global networking of production and distribution of products and information be reconciled with the simultaneous marginalization of local groups and languages? How can global product be translated into local artefact? How can indeed local difference in arts, thoughts, daily practices and peculiarities of personal interaction survive the onslaught of single-sourcing of media programs and news, of the uniformed messages as well as their production, when people everywhere and especially the young want the global perhaps more than they are willing to assert and defend the local?

## A global language repertoire proposal

Twenty years ago the Afro-Saxon Shakespearian scholar, Ali Mazrui, outlined a plan towards an institutionalized repertoire of languages for global application. Every person should be supported in a utopian multitude of simultaneous and appreciated use of vernaculars. At the same time, all individuals relate in communication through shared communal and/or national, regional and international languages. The triglossic model that Benjamin T'sou put forward for Hong Kong (1982) could be regarded as an instance of Mazrui's ideal. Mazrui wrote (1976, 476):

«In our new world we require that every child in the world should learn three languages — a world language, a regional language, and either a national language or a communal language.»

Do we, linguists and students of language behavior, devote all our efforts to realizing this noble program? If not, why indeed do we not? We do not if we frighten easily at hearing or learning others' tongues. We do not if we merely reverse roles with former linguistic oppressors and do to them what they did to us. And we cannot if we do not have our own houses in order. For that to be the case, we have to be satisfied that our own communication channels are open and functioning well, each in our own networks and communities.

I see no place for prohibition or refusal of language acquisition and use, at any time, anywhere, for any reason. Rather, limits on communicating in any one language should only arise because one may agree in a community to use the one language rather than the other in the interest of achieving mutually intelligible communication. There is truth to the truism that using all the tongues of Babel won't get the tower built. I am also an optimist and I believe that if people really want to complete the tower, they will find a way to communicate. What that way of communicating, that language, would be like is an interesting question which has been pursued by too few linguists (*but see* Bickerton 1975). So how do communities go about putting their communicational houses in order?

## 2. Different societies have different language problems

Societies in different circumstances — whether seen across time or across social and economic and political organizations — are characterized by their types of language problems. It would be great to have comparable data on language problems and ways of solving them from different times and different places (*see* Neustupný, this volume). An attempt at an inventory of language problems in Sri Lanka in 1983 suggests that practically all language problems then related to formation of a viable state and to individuals' participation in the economy. Uyangoda and Jernudd (1987) classified language-related issues under the following headings:

- «I. The resurgence of English in Sri Lanka.
- II. Language and ethnic relations in Sri Lanka.
- III. Problems of communication
  1. The judiciary and the language problem.
  2. Radio, television and communication.
  3. Language identity and language purity.»

Participation — successful mobilization and integration of all groups in the developing economy — seems the common denominator. This is so even for the issue in III.3, Language identity and language purity. This heading represents a Sinhalese traditionalist movement who feel they have the better program for national mobilization in Sri Lanka.

The same research group inventoried language issues in India in 1983 on the basis of classification of all mentions of language in all-Indian newspapers (Rajyashree and Jernudd). The first four categories of classification, namely:

1. THE NATIONAL LANGUAGE PROBLEM
2. REGIONAL LANGUAGES AND REGIONALISM
3. THE PROBLEM OF LINGUISTIC MINORITY
4. LINGUISTICALLY MOTIVATED TERRITORIAL BOUNDARIES OF STATES

largely describe problems motivated by group interests within the constitutional framework of the Indian federation. A federal language policy produces debate, problems and conflict in the federal and state political arena. The policy process has institutionalized political debate about language in India. This debate serves many different interests. Jyotirindra Das Gupta (1970 and later) evaluates this debate as a good one because it strengthens the democratic process — as long as conflict does not set the process back. As the fourth category illustrates, the institutionalization of answers to the question «who speaks which language» can move state boundaries in India and obviously sets in motion a continuous process of claim and counterclaim. Meanwhile, Hindi gains speakers throughout the federation for spoken contact communication as does English for elite communication. People may refuse to let go of English (Dua 1994) but they do learn and use other languages and at a broader communicative scale. Unfortunately, there is not enough sociolinguistic survey work on the ground to validate these impressions of India. In the language planning field, sociolinguistic surveys are vital (as the Catalan Institute also recognizes).

Another three categories of Indian data, however, may reflect universal concerns in language management and language planning:

- CORRECT LANGUAGE
- THE HANDICAPPED
- LANGUAGE TEACHING

The all-Indian newspaper data shows how regions within a state assert rights of self-determination in the face of forces of federal unification, the states themselves upheld by linguistic criteria. And I discern inadequacies of discourse behind the latter group of headings.

This conference bears dramatic witness to interests that support and actively promote diversity in Europe. Are the forces that motivate language problems of diversity and the ways of managing and planning language to solve these problems the same in India as in Europe? Although similar, I believe there are significant differences.

## **Ecology and diversity as contemporary language planning interests**

Einar Haugen endorsed the concept and word ECOLOGY in his later writings on language planning (Haugen 1972). More recent professional discussion has gone beyond environmental concerns so far as to call up parallels between diversity of languages and diversity of species. Within the linguistics profession there are calls for protection of endangered languages in the name of protecting human heritage in all its diversity. The Secretary-General of the United Nations spoke at UN's 50th anniversary of the anxiety among peoples that contemporary globalization induces. Consciousness of differences in behavior and interest results from the rapidly growing interaction and interdependency between individuals and groups within regions, continents and indeed in the world. Globalization challenges what's local, what is characteristic of the place and what is valued among the people of the place, and changes the conditions under which continuity of inheritance is possible. The perception of this challenge however is not evenly distributed across the globe. It has not yet arisen in most Asian countries; it will come but will



it project language as an issue? Will Asian countries therefore face language planning problems in the future which parallel those in Europe today?

## **Development and mobilization**

### **as language planning interests**

Most Asian countries are still developing economies. The Asian nations, with a few exceptions, are not new states. However, they have not yet reached a stage in 20th century development when they have become preoccupied with protection of diversity. India and Sri Lanka are not counterexamples. They are still grappling with conflicts that were present at the time of independence and that continue to arise as a result of institutionalization of language policies at the time of the founding of the state. Asian nations are still consolidating. General language planning discussion in the 1970's did not respond to calls for help with protection of diversity but rather responded to calls of national development and national mobilization, in the then developing countries. Not quite a generation later, consolidation and further development into efficiencies of communication to meet still emerging new needs are very much on the agenda.

The systematic development of federal, national and regional languages and encouragement of general acquisition among citizens of these languages follow quite naturally from the state elite's perception that there is need for broadening national communication. The state controls public agencies and public education and could therefore prescribe language use in these public domains. Education at the same time provided an opportunity of acquisition of the designated languages by youth but at an additional cost to other educational content because it takes time rather a long time and much effort to acquire another language, especially if it is distant from one's own vernacular. Obviously, the less the cost, the better the language system which bespeaks localization. Also, adults are reluctant to switch languages and face high retooling and social costs if they would. Planned language shifts have to be implemented and outcome measured over generations.

Parenthetically, acquisition of national languages is similar to acquisition of a standard in any community. It always costs, if in no way a social-psychological hindrance, because few vernaculars are not somewhat distant from the standard norm.

## **Asia is still developing:**

### **mobilization and development interests dominate**

Local self-assertion and the rights movement have not yet reached Asia in contemporary form, with the possible exception of international ideological support for certain victims of Asian colonialism, as in Tibet and Timor. In most of Asia, and Japan is now beyond that stage, there is fast development of society in general, mobilizing all inhabitants. In this, there seems to be an agreed practice that government, including education, operates through some languages rather than others if for no other reason than to be able to function at all under the pressure of rapidly increasing demand for public services — and the same certainly applies to the private sector. There is awareness of language difference, even of conflicts of interest and systematic disadvantage for many people, but such awareness is overshadowed by the other developmental forces.

An example of gross disadvantage on the face of it is the situation in the schools in Hong Kong. Access to a good education is widely thought to be coterminous with going to an English-medium school. At secondary level, out of 400 some schools, only 52 (13%) reported Chinese as a medium of instruction for 1994-95; 56% reported English and 26% either English or Chinese by subject or level. The reality is that very few schools teach in spoken English; English is often only nominally the medium of instruction because English competence among teachers varies enormously, as does the students', and many manage classroom discourse by resorting to *de facto* Cantonese-medium instruction, many to what is called «mix» which is Cantonese



with English vocabulary (So 1992, 87). It is the government's policy that by 1997, 70% of secondary schools should use Chinese as medium of instruction. Yet, parents and schools resist change. English-medium schools attract the better students, and a circular causation spiral is set up in their favour. The medium of instruction issue in Hong Kong will eventually resolve itself in favor of one or most probably two Chinese languages but given the present political, economic and social opportunities in Hong Kong, consensus or even government-mandated use of Chinese beyond primary school has proven impossible to accomplish. In any case, only a once-and-for-all switch to Chinese in all public-funded schools would neutralize parents' desire for the best education for their child and rescue English from its socio-educational gate-keeping function. At present, such a switch-over would seem an impossibility and if it were attempted, the private sector would fill the void overnight (Daniel So, personal communication). There are simply other priorities for parents and government in Hong Kong; and matter of fact within-school discourse adjustments to overcome communication problems in the class rooms allow schools to function (So 1992). The result is sharp stratification in terms of quality of education, covarying with English achievement, and people are aware of that and for the moment at least accept it. They can accept it in part because the government has expanded the educational system rapidly and everybody is getting a better education than before. There is vastly increased individual opportunity. Graduates find employment, and apparently function adequately, in a society and economy in which English and Chinese languages are both important.

Equivalent feelings extend to other sectors of Hong Kong society. Under these circumstances, people would have no patience with speakers of Hakka or Hokkien or Punjabi or Tagalog — there are perhaps as many as 150,000 people in Hong Kong who regularly use Tagalog — if they were to advocate public support for rights of use in the public domain of their minority languages. There is even little patience with the uniqueness of Cantonese — excepting in academic-intellectual circles — relative to the superordinate norm of written Chinese. For example, there exists no movement to extend writing of Cantonese.

Chinese is being pressed into use in new domains and for new discourse events, both because of the transition of sovereignty in Hong Kong from the colonial power to China and in response to communication demands arising both out of international contact and the rapid domestic economic development. Business needs Mandarin and English. At individual discourse levels, there is undoubtedly intense management of communication — within English and Chinese — to get the machinery of communication working.

The dominant macro-issues are to get people mobilized and involved in the larger productive community. A transition from manufacturing to a service-based and information-based economy is currently under way in Hong Kong and there is some unemployment as a result. Training is difficult for older people but for the young, education is the answer, and education means acquisition of sufficient proficiency in written Chinese and Mandarin and English to function well on the labour market in the international and regional trade depot and service center that Hong Kong is.

Vis-à-vis the Chinese mainland, English is seen as an asset that Hong Kong should cherish because it supports Hong Kong's relative self-rule as a SAR (special administrative region) within China after 1997. Hong Kong perhaps more than other Asian locales has an elite that will continue to have their children acquire English in private schools and use English at home and at work. What is equally true is that an absolute majority of the population speaks Cantonese and writes Chinese. The default language in international business is English just as, a small elite excepted, Chinese languages are the default languages in most any other spoken communication. People do not select to use their own languages, they simply use them. When they have language problems, these are language problems that one way or other relate to adjustments within their repertoire, i.e., of individual acquisition, correctness, eliminating misunderstandings and so on. English represents an explicit cost which has to be balanced by benefit. People set aside their own in favor of the foreign. I think we can understand this balancing act in Hong Kong as elsewhere.

Not that there are not political and ethnic divides in Asia that involve language and that require management. There are many such divides. I have mentioned some already. Despite obvious



political and economic conflicts of interest, coincidental with territorial and ethnic divides, the Asian developmental process appears to accommodate individual and community multilingualism — as long as people can and do join the developmental and economic mainstream. This mainstreaming is levelling, it requires incorporation of people into least troublesome social communication networks. Whether this happens at the expense of individuals' different languages or by widening of individuals' repertoires is not the issue. It's joining this mainstream that's in people's minds and in Hong Kong this means being able to use Cantonese fluently and unremarkably, acquiring as much English as possible and learning to write Chinese well, and now also acquiring some spoken Mandarin. In Indonesia and Malaysia, it is acquisition of Bahasa Indonesia and Malaysia, respectively, that opens opportunities, with English and other languages, too, for added chance; but in the present apparently not at the expense of the major vernaculars, nor under protest from other-speaking communities. Minority language issues would be anachronistic if thought of in terms of minority rights, or in terms of endangering the preservation of variation and linguistic uniqueness for its own sake. They are a matter for the future, if they are to be at all. People who do join the mainstream and in particular those who enter the professions meet with significant language problems, however. I now turn to one class of such language problems.

### **3. A forgotten set of problems: skill in language use**

The development of individual skill in written Chinese, support for learning and using Mandarin, and ever more skillful use of English are the issues that require planning if any in Hong Kong. Among these language development matters, one particular class of language problems stands out in Asian development, namely, the degree of sophistication — of precise expression in specific situations — in use of a language. This aspect has been neglected in the characterization of language problems in language planning (although not in histories of European languages). Of course, «elaboration» of vocabulary and so on are regularly mentioned under the heading of corpus planning, but beyond grammatical basics under the heading «standardization» have not received sufficient attention (but see the Prague School's explicit concern with stylistic development, Beneš and Vachek 1971). I simply propose that use of language in many contemporary professional domains of work require very highly developed skill in that language, presently beyond native language users' general tertiary level of education skills even, in just the same way as professional behavior in general does. Such skills must be nurtured as language to be acquired comes into general and expected use. Much written language use in work places is so routinized and stereotyped that individuals need not attempt new formulations but rely on templates, and extract ready-made language from stored exemplars of earlier documents, or fill in more or less linguistically constraining forms. But much language use, as behavior in general, especially in the service sector, requires new formulations of great precision and delicacy. That language use is acquired mainly during professional practice, on a foundation of professional education. This language is managed from within the professional practice. How that is done has not been properly described. For example, engineers focus on technical competence and standards which involve a not insignificant linguistic component, the more salient linguistic ones of a lexical nature, other professions may focus on texts. In law, for example, legal education is to a significant extent linguistic training. Individual acquisition of skill comes primarily from participation in speech events in the course of work, not from education. Education lays the foundation — even tertiary education merely lays the foundation. Written professional language use is supported by professional language management behavior, to the point of allowing me to claim that the legal profession is a «linguistically constituted» one. Information specialists of the future will undoubtedly fall into this category as well. Study of the Eurocrat translation scene in Brussels and national European capitals undoubtedly belongs here. One of the tasks of language planning must be to understand these professional language management behaviors in their discourse contexts. By discourse contexts I mean the study of actual language behavior, as it happens, at work, including production and correction, context and consequence.



For example, in Hong Kong, a transition is under way away from a superposed use of English to a greater use of Chinese varieties in public administration in which the individual civil servant relies, at a routine transactional level of sophistication, on spoken Cantonese and written English forms, at the highest levels on rhetorical figures, literary intertextuality and the discipline of legal drafting.

A most demanding language use is that of law. In a recent article, Derek Roebuck describes aspects of the process whereby Chinese will «increasingly become the language not only of forms and written official communication but of all aspects of work in the courts» in Hong Kong, and the problems associated with it (1994:189 et passim). Roebuck notes potential problems, but among language problems actually encountered in the process of «providing Chinese texts of all the law» (192), he notes for example the following:

«unavoidable problems of matching the Common Law [...] with any existing style of written Chinese in such a way as to produce accurate statements of law in a language that is both comprehensible and aesthetically acceptable»

«political and emotional problems raised by the different vocabulary and syntax of written legal Chinese in Hong Kong and the rest of China» (193)

«those who knew the Common Law best did not know Chinese. Even bilingual lawyers are rarely trained linguists and the scientific subtleties of this process [of an attempt «to reduce into a digest or restatement [...] the general law of contracts»] require unusual sophistication» (193-4)

«the Chinese version [of above] is so unlike any other Chinese that it can hardly be understood by Chinese speakers, even those with common law backgrounds» (194)

«There is no official recognition of syntactic abnormality» (194)(?)

«Lawyers or scholars from mainland China — or, indeed, from Taiwan — glancing at the syntax of Hong Kong Chinese legislation remark on its aberrant style. Some profess that they cannot understand the Hong Kong Ordinances in Chinese without constant reference to the English text» (194)

«A further problem is to find the right stylistic level» (195)

«consistent opposition [to «providing Chinese texts of all the law» (192)] has come from public statements by representatives of the Bar, which has an interest in opposing change» (193)

«there are significant divergences between the styles of written legal documents in mainland China and Hong Kong» (195)

«[«for increasing the use of Chinese in the courts»] powerful interests at work. Many barristers (some of them Chinese) feel threatened, not having the language skills» (195)

«there are problems in introducing Cantonese speech and Chinesewriting [into the courts]» (196)

«adequate terminology [for «legal argument» in courts] [...] cannot be found» (196)

«the first question to an applicant for a place in a law firm or barrister's chambers is [...] 'Do you speak Mandarin?' (198)

Problems of professional language are the reality at present in Hong Kong, as in the rest of Asia. They reflect management of discourse by adjustments at some considerable scale and difficulty in selected domains, within largely predictable repertoires. The actual problems in language use reflect both linguistic and non-linguistic interests in intricate interrelationship and in a rapidly changing social, economic and political environment. As we saw above, there is an elite interest among some members of the Bar to preserve English, thus allowing those already at the Bar a measure of control over new entry, and there are quite important linguistic problems of terminology, syntax, style, and of intelligibility and compatibility with other Chinese varieties and styles. There is no question but that Chinese will eventually supercede English

in legal practice in Hong Kong. On the way, however, a great many linguistic problems have to be solved.

#### 4. Happy communication

Language problems have been solved when people engage in communication and, once they have engaged, continue to communicate. My shorthand expression for this is, simply, happy communication. Such close study of actual discourse will allow me to separate linguistic from non-linguistic interest as factors that determine whether communication is happy or not. Such close study of actual discourse brings language planning theory and practice into scholarly contact with ethnography of speaking, ethno-methodology, conversation analysis, discourse analysis, pragmatics and language acquisition and learning. Non-linguistic interest as a factor in discourse management can be separated out and placed in sharper focus. For me, the goal of enabling continued communication takes precedence over any other goals in language planning and language management processes. Elaboration of this dimension has to address relationships between language problems that arise as a matter of linguistic interest and which therefore originate in discourse or that arise in consideration of the discursive, that is to say in consideration of language as a system or in consideration of non-linguistic interests such as ethnic, socio-economic, or professional (etc) interests.

#### People solve language problems in actual discourse

It is a fact that people have ways of solving language problems that arise in actual communication; they engage in discourse management. It makes us ask what kinds of language problems arise in actual discourse, why, and what do people do about them. It also allows defining and grounding in discourse the study of the systematic management of language, including language planning. A student of language planning should combine the political scientist's analysis of interest with the linguist's analysis of language communication in discourse and ask this question, in general and in the particular:

***what management behaviors help and what management behaviors hinder communication?***

Even better, to quite simply define,

***what is the problem?***

I encapsulate details of a program to find out what is the problem in the following research questions. Please note that a deliberate and systematic management process can begin or stop at any point in the sequence of questions below. In discourse however, following along with intended or actual production of utterances, the questions represent sequence in a real speaker/hearer interchange of discourse (Jernudd and Neustupný 1987):

what language behaviors do participants note?

what noted language behaviors do participants evaluate (or not)?

what adjustments do participants produce (or not)?

and, in what ways may the adjustments be implemented (or not)?

That which is not noted by participants in discourse but constitutes a deviation from previous language behavior can only be identified by a linguist against the linguist's own yardstick of description. Such a deviation seeds language change, and at least at that moment not language management. That language feature which is noted in discourse by the discourse participants however may both signal language change and initiate management. If someone notes his/her inability to produce utterances in a language — a clear consequence of linguistically motivated interest — and evaluates this lack of proficiency negatively, s/he can seek adjustment by enrolling in a course to acquire the language. The decision to implement adjustment by learning a language may for someone else not be motivated by communication but by the person's liking for languages or language classes. Or the decision may have been made by the community or the state in



anticipation of changes of trading and employment patterns so that schools require study of certain languages — clear examples of non-linguistic interest with adjustment consequence of organizing implementation of language teaching. (J. V. Neustupný has lectured and written extensively on language teaching as language management, e.g., 1989).

Language users refer noted and/or evaluated language features to different kinds of experts; to learn a language, s/he turns to an expert language teacher, or may go to a dictionary or grammar for suggestions of adjustments. In fact, it is because people need help with solving problems that have arisen in discourse that speech communities have experts in the first place. Those instances of noting that lead to discussion outside of ongoing discourse are but the tip of the iceberg among all instances of noting. Stereotypes of correctness account for some of these.

Close study of discourse reveals how discourse is constituted by the interplay between production and feedback following noting. (For examples, refer to the literature on repair; and in the language management literature, to Fan 1992, Ho 1993, and Neustupný 1994). The plot of discourse thickens when we consider that people make use of management techniques for pragmatic effect (as observed already by Jefferson 1972). It is not easy to recover notings from discourse and to understand their purport.

Term management provides additional and straightforward examples that illustrate the model's sequence of noting, evaluating, adjusting, and implementing, in the context of overt, systematic language management. On April 2, 1970, an engineer at Electrolux in Sweden called the Swedish Center for Technical Terminology (TNC) and asked whether one may call different types and qualities of plastic (in Swedish:) 'legeringar'. He asked because, reveal the archives, in a lecture a representative of a wholesale business in Gothenburg had discussed 'legeringar' with reference to plastics. The engineer evaluated this usage as odd enough to call up the Center with the question, I quote, «is this written somewhere?» He suspends his own evaluation in search for an authoritative evaluation. The Center answered that 'legering' should not be used of plastics. It refers to metals. As for plastics, «Polymera material vari merer av olika slag ingår kallas sampolymeriserat». The agency's evaluation rejects 'legeringar' and as adjustment provides 'sampolymeriserat'. Implementation would of course be to use this word. This is an example of linguistic interest, linking noting in discourse (of other's use of a word, a term in this case) by an individual listener to systematic term management — a form of language planning.

## The holistic communicative interest

In actual discourse, ideologies and principles are less easily mobilized because continuing communication may be the overwhelming immediate concern. The communicative interest to maintain communication in an on-going discourse may block application of ideologies and principles, and enables contact communication. One may also of course refuse to speak to another. Refusal to communicate is clear expression of non-linguistic interest. But if you share the claim with me that should people communicate they can find ways to continue even under rather adverse conditions, say, of considerable linguistic distance, then you must also agree with me that interests can be negotiated.

It may seem that discourse narrows the scope of work of language planning and diffracts it, even dissolves it, into the myriads of individual encounters that constitute human life. That is not so. The opposite inference has to be drawn. Discourses add up to encompass all contexts of communication. This extreme degree of ambition of scope of work does not escape me. But something follows from it. Take for example smaller speech communities in which there is concern with future use of their own language, perhaps because people also communicate by means of a superposed *lingua franca*. Clearly, people in smaller communities who are intent on communicating in their own language into future generations must give all-embracing attention to all ways of communicating in their own language. Discourse means obligations and opportunities to talk to and write to people. It means opportunities to meet and interact with people at meaningful, realistic, sustainable scales. These scales are relative, and I believe relative in the first place to will to use one's own ways of speaking. That will is not independent of



changes that occur around one. If one person is discouraged, others will be, too. Therefore, collective self-help and mutuality of support are critical, and acceptance, interpenetration and institutionalization of one's interest within the public system are highly desirable. In taking such an uncompromisingly holistic point of view which in my mind follows from demanding attention to discourse I am reinforcing the message in an article by Colin Williams (1991) on the Welsh experience:

«To be truly effective, language planning has to deal with all aspects of communal life, for that is the real context which sustains language interaction» (67)

### **Indigenous languages win (or languages indigenize)**

I am convinced that exogenous languages cannot withstand the force of indigenous languages. Indigenous languages may be oppressed or their populations marginalized for whatever social, economic or political reasons to such extents that they perish. But as long as indigenous languages have support in a community of speakers, their very presence and use exert pressure of acceptance and of being given a place and of extension of their use from within families into broader social and public contexts. In Europe, as elsewhere, long periods of public neglect and even oppression had severe adverse effects on peoples' willingness to teach the next generation their languages because opportunities to use them were very limited relative to the dominant languages. They were the dominant languages that were required for the individual's social and economic success. Few parents are willing to sacrifice their children for the sake of a tongue, certainly not for the sake of the family tongue, when children are educated in any case to take their places in a broader society, a society in which another language may be the key to the child's success. This other language may be as distant from the vernacular as educated use of English is from vernacular use of Cantonese. But families do not therefore have to give up their own, and when they did not, the time came to give more attention once more to their invaluable heritage of linguistic uniqueness and community.

### **In conclusion**

A linguist in the role of the professional, scientific linguist has no choice it seems to me but to endorse equal right to communication in any and all languages by all people. Ali Mazrui sought a solution to overcoming barriers of communication arising out of the towering multitude of tongues that divide yet belong to some group of people. He sought a program that preserves the multitude of tongues yet enables all to share in communication by the principle that

«a World Federation of Cultures has to take pluralism, as well as convergence, into account» (1976, 474).

He spoke as a linguist and acted as a planner. One may condemn history for allowing centralizing forces to neglect, marginalize and even create lesser-used languages during the industrializing and modernizing stages of societal development. Mazrui's values allowed him to endorse a particular proposal with the former oppressors' language as a language of contact and international communication while at the same time asserting the productive use of everyone's own language(s) for national and local communication. I agree with Mazrui. And I wholeheartedly agree with Colin Williams's «watchword for social action» (1991, 65) which is well worth repeating again that to accomplish a sustainable future for my children I am required to

«Think global, act local».

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