

LANGUAGE PLANNING : FOR WHOM ?

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Résumé

Cette communication porte sur la dimension sociétale de l'aménagement linguistique. Après avoir déploré les faiblesses de la littérature sur le sujet, les auteurs s'emploient à démontrer que le processus d'aménagement linguistique se déroule dans un contexte social où s'affrontent des intérêts divergents. Ils présentent des observations destinées à mieux faire comprendre l'enjeu des intérêts en cause.

Abstract

The paper discusses the societal dimension of language planning. The authors expose the weakness of literature on the subject. Demonstrate that the process of language planning takes place amidst conflictive interests prevalent in the social context. Present observations to better understand the interests at stake.

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Introduction

People are interested in language. They impose their norms on it, evaluate it and change it. In his introduction to sociolinguistics, Fishman calls for a sociology of language that « seeks to discover not only the societal rules or norms that explain and constrain language behavior (but also) *the behavior toward language* (and) the symbolic value of language » (1971: 221). Within a different variety of sociolinguistics, Hymes in his ethnography of speaking refers to « norms of interaction » and « norms of interpretation » by speakers vis-à-vis their language(s) (1974: 104). Indeed, a whole discipline which considers language problems in their societal context has emerged in the 1960s and 1970s as part of the framework of post-structural linguistics. Linguistics is slowly moving towards a better understanding not merely of how people use language but also how they interact with it. Let us call this system of interaction *language management*¹.

Sources and Consequences of Language Management

One of the weak points of the theories of language management has remained the unexpectedly low degree of interest in its economic, social, political and cultural sources and consequences. A large number of linguistic processes (such as uniformation and standardization) usually accompany the process of modernization. However, how exactly are particular features of linguistic and social modernization connected ? What are the economic, social, political and cultural consequences of language modernization ? How does standardization affect individuals and groups within modernizing societies ? There are considerable gaps in knowledge, both with reference to particular societies and in general.

¹ The use of this term, *language management*, in lieu of the currently widely used *language planning* will leave the latter term free to refer to the particular phase of the « linguistics of language problems » which developed in the 1970s. This usage coincides with the Canadian French use of the term *aménagement linguistique* (cf. Corbeil 1980: 9).

An important aspect of this lack of knowledge is the question on whose behalf language management is conducted, and especially whether it can be said that language management serves the whole of a society². In other words, at what costs to what groups in society is a community-wide language planning possible? To whose benefit? When, how and why do groups within a society assume different or even antagonistic positions vis-à-vis the processes of language management? Since different groups normally possess different interests, it would seem that a « neutral », « interest » — free (or « value » — less) system of language planning and of any language management also is impossible.

« Interest » in Language Planning Theory

For language management, a precise understanding of the « interest issue » is of great importance. Within the theory of language management prevalent at the beginning of the 1970s and best represented by the book *Can Language Be Planned?* (Rubin & Jernudd 1971), the discussion of potential conflicts between groups' interests was relegated to political scientists. It was expected from them that they would take full responsibility for dissecting the policy process.

The relationship between language problems and economic, social and political ends, and the inevitability of conflict between these ends in the process of planning was pointed out but not elaborated on in Jernudd & Das Gupta (1971) and Jernudd (1971a). When conflict was discussed, it was seen as either reconcilable or as subject to « decision-making behavior for problem-solving » (Jernudd 1971b: 491). In relation thereto, the task of language planning theory was to explain the links between kinds of language problem and kinds of decision-making. An empirical task became to understand why some language problems are more aptly solved on national levels, and are handled more successfully by certain methods of decision-making, and of organization, procedure, etc.

Das Gupta, among others, went on to elaborate on the language policy process from this point of view in a Georgetown roundtable meeting (1973; cf. also 1970 on language associations)³ and elsewhere, on the assumption

² A *New York Times* May 24, 1986 article entitled « World Bank and I.M.F. Hit By Walkout on Pay » demonstrates how real this question is, albeit in a different area of work : « At a crowded midday meeting of the World Bank staff association in the floral courtyard of the 19th Street headquarters, a senior British-born economist said the issue was both pay and the professional independence of the staff. « Who do we work for — political appointees or the people of the world ? » he asked to loud cheers and applause ».

³ Das Gupta, studying rural poverty and agricultural policy and planning, demonstrated distinct continuity of thought when he wrote in his most recent book (1981: 110) : « The important thing to consider... is what kind of political conditions can help change the weight of convention in specific historical situations. (...) the task of discovering the political and administrative conditions that may facilitate the difficult task of demiseration and rural development may be the most challenging intellectual and human obligation in the present world ».

that « the major barriers to language planning are political ». His theory regarded planning as « an organizational device to process diverse demands in a framework of reconciling conflicting groups and interests » (1976: 210-211).

In this particular theory, language planning was thus developed as a « technical » discipline on the assumption that with government authorization language planners acted on behalf of the whole community and with a focus on the conditions under which generally acceptable solutions could be found for the problems with which the planners were seen to be charged.

Saulson, for example, discussed the issues of « disagreement over goals », group interrelationships in terms of competitive forces in society, and « special interest groups or classes » (1979: 184-185). This discussion was within the framework of a theory of « publicly authorized planning ». His main concern was to investigate the specific effects that government-sponsored planning could have on a community's language, under different conditions of, among others, group interest. This was in accordance with Jernudd's assumption that

the complex social rationale of language planning must be understood as a basis for any theory. Values and ideas of political, educational, economic, linguistic, and other expert or lay interests interact in a community to resolve language problems (*op. cit.*).

Dissenting Voices

Exceptionally a different position was assumed that did not imply that it was within the power of the theory of language management to seek the reconciliation of interest and value differences. Neustupný claimed already in the 1960s that different social groups valued differently a number of criteria for establishing language policies. Writing about the evaluation principles of « development », « democratization », « unity » and « foreign relations », he claimed (1968: 292) :

For example, the most traditional social groups of developing societies will probably not care about development. It may be typical for the attitude of former colonial administrators that the necessity of communication with other communities (i.e. the problem of retention of the former colonial language) is excessively stressed... In general, however, democratization and its possible implications for development rarely seem to be favoured, because it often seems undesirable from the point of view of the present economic organization. It will be necessary to obtain a thorough analysis of the attitude of various social groups with regard to the different criteria applied.

According to Neustupný, problem-solving recommendations can not be made without commitment to value judgements. As long as social stratification exists, no « objectivity » in language management is possible (1974: 38, footnote 1).

In later work on language management, references to the issue occur more frequently. Where two competing systems of language planning are compared, the fact that certain problem solutions serve particular sectional aims which are irreconcilable becomes quite obvious. Khubchandani devoted two books to what could be called a fight against the Indian language elites and their language policies (1981, 1983). His theory, however, still does not make it clear that the case is not one of a correct theory against a wrong one, but of one point of view fighting against another.

Haugen's Norwegian case study was reviewed for *Language* (Jernudd 1971b) and the then current discussion in Norway was characterized by the reviewer as a « game of pseudo-issues of language as a surface manifestation of political and social affiliations » (492) into which « language issues were brought... not because of felt difficulties of communication, but because of the possibility of using readily available language differences to demonstrate and rally support for socio-economic and political interests » (491).

In 1979, Jernudd severely criticized the English language policy survey in Jordan, subtitled a study in language planning, for failing to take into account its own self-serving ends and for not giving voice to Jordanians.

In another paper, Jernudd sought a general formulation to the « interest problem » in language planning (1982: 2) :

No person is free of opinion and value. The entire planning enterprise can be viewed as a political process. Through a political process, some or all members of a community are given variable opportunity to participate in designing a desirable future and finding ways of moving toward it as effectively as possible. But as we know, different communities have different kinds of political organization through which people may express preferences. There is no escaping this complexity in attempting to understand language planning processes.

But 1983, the general atmosphere in the theories of language management seemed to be changing so rapidly that when describing the incipient « new paradigm » of language management, Neustupny (1983) claimed that the problem of differential aims of language management was one of the basic features of the new approach. He claimed that :

any theory of language planning must provide a full account of all political values involved in language planning processes. The public must be made aware that political aims are either intentionally or unintentionally supported by such policies as the retention of English as an official language in Singapore, by the current anti-reformist language cultivation processes in Japan, or by the promotion of ethnic languages in contemporary Australia. This should be not an optional addition but one of the primary objectives of the discipline (1983: 3).

Weinstein (1986) acts in the spirit of these earlier claims when he applies the theory of interest as employed in political science to examples of language management to show the diversity of interests involved. Unfortunately, he retains the more popular and at the same time either contradictory or irresolvable claim that « interests of the whole community »

(page 56) should be sought and that there is a universal « cause of justice » or « democratic principle » (page 58) which should be served by a good policy. These two abstract claims stand in direct contradiction to Weinstein's exploration of differential interests.

The theory of the interest of « the whole community » as superordinate to that of individual and group interests postulates an abstract notion that can only be given meaning, at best, through a political process which sets aside or changes one group's interest in favor of another's. Or recourse can be made to abstract principles of rights of higher causes of justice, as Weinstein also does. However, such notions are subject to philosophical and legal enquiry and remain obscure (cf. Van Horne & Tonnesen 1983, especially the article by Ruiz). In practical terms, rights and justice are determined, made and implemented through various forms of social negotiation, especially through law, through a judicial process, itself of course interest-ridden⁴.

In the remainder of these notes, some observations are presented which can possibly lead to a deeper understanding of the interest issues in relation to language management.

↓ Frame of Reference

When language management is made the object of enquiry, it can be viewed as a process, in which

- (1) language is monitored by speaker/writer and hearer/reader and compared with norms that they possess, thus *deviations* being noted,
- (2) deviations from norms are evaluated, thus *inadequacies* being established,

⁴ Variety of interest, and the role of government in distributing consequences of decisions that favor some and disfavor others as a result of arbitration of justice, is brought out very clearly in a related field of practice, namely, removal of discrimination in the United States. A recent Supreme Court ruling received comment in a *New York Times* editorial on May 24, 1986 entitled « Affirmative (to Most People) Action »: « The Supreme Court rejected the lower courts, 5 to 4, saying that racial classifications require the most rigorous scrutiny. The majority found that the Jackson plan was not designed narrowly enough to exemplify a compelling government interest in redressing a prior pattern of discrimination. The court held that the layoffs imposed too much hardship on innocent third parties.

A majority of the justices nonetheless endorsed the broad concept of affirmative action. « In order to remedy the effects of past discrimination, it may be necessary to take race into account », wrote Justice Lewis Powell. « As part of this nation's dedication to eradicating racial discrimination, innocent persons may be called upon to bear some of the burden of the remedy ». Justice Sandra Day O'Connor suggested that a majority of the Court rejects the Justice Department's cramped view — that even after specific findings of discrimination, affirmative action plans must be limited to specific victims ».

- (3) and corrective designs are selected, thus *correction adjustments* may be carried out,
- (4) the process is completed when correction has been *implemented*.

Details of the *correction theory* of language problems are given elsewhere (most recently in Neustupny 1985a) and will not be repeated here. Let us, however, emphasize that language management can be directed either to discourse (*correction in discourse*) or towards a language system or part of a system (*systemic correction*) (Neustupny 1978: 244). Further, correction can be either *simple*, that is to say, without the use of any theoretical components, or *organized*. An example of a simple correction process in discourse is the correction of an incorrect lexical selection. A complete process of language management starts from marking in discourse of some aspects of that discourse as inadequate, and finishes with the implementation of the simple correction design, again in discourse. Simple correction in discourse is thus the most important category of the entire language management process. On the other hand, *organized correction* normally addresses itself not to discourse but to language as system. It is characterized by the presence of theoretical components, by a complicated social system (there are « specialists » involved, etc.) and by a specific idiom for discussing language issues. Organized language management is usually directed towards the management of language system rather than individual discourse.

A systematic study of differential interest in language management must apply a framework such as the above one, and it must relate « interest » to each of the components of the management process. Some general and important questions suggested by the framework in relation to « interest » are :

- (a) Is the issue of interest the same in the case of simple discourse management and an organized system management ?
- (b) How do group interests emerge at various stages of the management process ?
- (c) How do group interests change in the historical process of the development of society ?
- (d) How should language management experts handle differential interest ? How can theoreticians of language management handle differential interest ?

Just a few words about each.

Discourse and System Management : Linguistic and Non-linguistic Interests

Organized language system management, for instance selection of an official language, is a complex task revealed in a protracted and complicated process consisting of extensive discussions between some but not all members in society and in which many arguments are raised.

During the process of organized language management, various participants claim the features of discourse and (normally) language system constitute language problems (i.e., are marked as inadequate by members of the community in question). Some such claims may be based on previous application of norms and evaluation in actual discourse. For instance, a claim for the introduction of a certain language variety into schools may be based on a direct (or indirect) previous perception of communicative needs, in an accumulation of contact encounters. These cases we can call cases of *linguistic interest*. Linguistic interests in this sense normally also coincide with some economic, social, political or cultural interests of speakers. However, they are a direct part of the communication process.

On the other hand, some claims obviously lack this base in communication. A representation on behalf of a language variety may be based not on a perception of a communicative inadequacy but on the variety's « symbolic » value or on the potential effect from use of this variety. The variety may be used to prevent people who do not possess it from obtaining jobs and to facilitate access for others who do possess it. Claims such as this can be seen as a result of *non-linguistic interest*. If the call for a status being given to the particular variety is successful, a language norm which places the variety in the variety system can be induced and the unavailability of the variety negatively evaluated. In this case, the non-linguistic interest becomes linguistic interest. Non-linguistic claims must be introduced into discourse in order to become problems of language. They are then perceived as inadequacies and corrected through the normal management process.

Some claims made in the process of organized management are overtly ideological, others are made without much awareness of their actual sources and consequences. Note, however, that either linguistic or non-linguistic interests are interests of particular social groups, whether presented in the name of such groups or in the name of the whole society. It is also necessary to realize that competing claims on individuals' time and energies block knowledge about, consideration of or implementation of participation in organized language management. One group's interest may even block others from participating at all.

So far, organized management has been discussed. In simple management in discourse, interlocutors are pitched directly against one another in speaking, and before the text in writing or reading. Simple correction does not allow for claims that would not be immediately implemented. If an editor deletes a particular word for ideological reasons (interests), he has already changed norm and evaluation criteria. Correction can therefore be taken as an application of the editor's linguistic interest. Understandably, in many cases simple correction is completely unaware: even so it serves differential (linguistic) interests.

Interests at Various Stages of the Management Process

Firstly, the relationship between the issue of « interests » and the process of *noting of deviations* can be considered.

A potential deviation from a norm is not always noted (Neustupny 1985b). For instance, a deviation such as an idiosyncratic pronunciation normally remains unnoted if it is recurrent and if the interlocutors are well known to each other. Deviations also easily escape attention in the case of great urgency in a communicative situation, if they themselves are not crucially connected with the problem. For instance, a foreign accent of a crew member may be totally unnoticed by passengers evacuating an aircraft that has crashed. Does this fact of noting or not noting a deviation from a language communication norm connect with economic, political, social or cultural aims and other « interests » of the participants ? It seems that it does.

Ethnic, regional or social class markers often remain unnoted even when they are incongruent in communicative situations in societies in which such markers have no substantive significance for the differential outcome of the encounter, in other words, are not connected with the « interests » of participants, relative to the particular communicative act. For instance, it did not matter in pre-modern European society whether a speaker spoke with a different regional or idiosyncratic accent if such an accent was not connected with claiming any substantive change of benefit within the society. Pluralism was simply an accepted practice. Social class accents are not noted by many Japanese speakers because they are bound with particular situations (e.g., a shopping situation) and do not correlate with any substantive claims. In post-war Czechoslovakia, social class variation in language almost completely lost its former significance and stopped being noted as a deviation (at least in the spoken language). In the USA today, it does not matter whether a speaker speaks with a mild German accent on public radio or in Congress; it could just as well be a Chicago accent. The accent may not be noted at all.

While it is theoretically possible to dismiss the above cases of lack of noting of deviations as merely instances of congruency, vagueness or tolerance in norms, the fact that deviations are actually noted when there is a substantive interest would support the position taken here. Thus, deviation may be noted both by others and by self when a regional accent comes to be associated with political conflict (the German accent may have been a handicap once in the United States and worth eliminating for the individual; only to return with Kissinger) or a Chicago accent with Hispanic economic advance in the USA. The claim can thus be made that the interests of speakers do influence the process of noting of deviations from norms.

Another case to be considered is the existence of norms specific to groups. For instance, an upper class norm may specify that a foreign variety is a component of the repertoire of varieties of members of the class. Deviations from this norm are then quite clearly noted, by members of the class,

but for other speakers in the community, the absence of the variety in question does not constitute a deviation at all.

Further, the second component of the management process, the process of *evaluation* of deviations, is clearly linked with group interests (cf. Neustupny 1968 as quoted above). Many examples could be given. For example, in organized language management certain stated principles of evaluation may govern subsequent selection of correction strategies. In Swedish language cultivation, the integrative Nordic goal of maintaining close alliance between all Scandinavian languages has remained an evaluation principle for acting on normation of vocabulary especially since the middle of the last century. This principle assumed greater salience relative to other principles during the Second World War, and served then to assert a majority opinion of will to resist and to oppose any further threats on the basis of Scandinavian uniqueness and unity in the face of the German invasions. The application of this principle in the interest of the majority of the populations in several communities asserted such opinion both domestically and abroad to Germany and other foreign powers. Another dominant principle in Swedish language cultivation is the « democratic » one which closely parallels the social democratic party's political program interests especially during the last 40 years. Yet another useful principle is to preserve intertranslatability with source languages (mostly English today) on the basis of true-international mutual recognition of the word in its usual meaning. This latter principle sometimes therefore supports a lexical choice which differs from the « democratic » principle's preference. It applies after the first mentioned ones, and introduces balance through the opportunity for differentiation of correction strategies in language cultivation in favor of the interests of the highly educated and specialist language users.

Thirdly, the *selection of adjustment* is also subject to variation in interests. The middle class intellectuals who normally hold important positions in language management favor corrective adjustments in accordance with their own interests. A spelling reform, which would be in the interest of the working class, may be rejected in order to lend the Standard Language a higher degree of stability. Such stability is normally necessary for the consolidation of the interest of the middle classes through language use.

Finally, in the area of *implementation* group interests decide in what way the corrective adjustment will be implemented and whether it will be implemented fully or only in a partial way. For example, relaxation of national « standards » of language use or of foreign language goals of competency in education may be implemented in state-funded schools and not in private schools. « Relaxation » by broadening tolerance of acceptance of variation in speaking and writing does not represent the interests of the so-called elites who will resist the dismantling of « standards », and will, instead, maintain them or construct new ones. A pertinent and particular example is the postponement in 1985 of implementation of the national Tanzanian policy of replacing English with the Swahili language in secondary schools as medium of instruction. According to Khamisi (con-

ference discussion; and 1986), an English-educated elite's preference for the retention of English as much as failure to sufficiently prepare teachers for a switch-over (which itself is a consequence of group interests) accounted for the postponement.

A significant fact is that involvement through interest of various social groups may be different at different stages of the management process. An adjustment which was originally selected in accordance with the interest of the middle class can create a language situation which also favors the working class. For instance, language purism in some communities in 19th century Europe was not intended to serve the interests of the less educated working class. The criteria adopted were of a different nature (cf. Neustupny 1985c). However, by creating a lucid and easy-to-remember lexical system with few or no foreign words, the process also de facto created a situation which was in the interest of the less educated classes. People without higher education could access this lexicon more easily. Similarly, in the course of the Japanese post-war reforms, the interests of the less educated speakers were not at stake. The old system of spelling was evaluated negatively because it was perceived as inconvenient for administration, the media and further economic development. However, the results of the reforms, which created a language that was relatively easy to use, were in the interest of the less advantaged sectors of the population as well.

Furthermore, the interest of a social group may be limited to one or several stages of the management process only. Politicians may raise certain language problems in the discussion of evaluation of language during the process of organized management. It is in the interest of such politicians to assert their participation in order to attract the attention of the voting public. However, the same politicians may be completely indifferent in regard to selecting proper adjustment or implementation procedures and to whether corrective adjustments are implemented or not. In public debate in the United States, such allegations have been made about (the opposing side's) politicians' interests in bilingual education policies and programs.

Interests at Various Developmental Stages

Participant interests change as the language management process evolves. To speak of one stable set of relationships between interest and aspects of language management among participants throughout the process will not suffice, as has already been shown above; neither will it suffice to do so over different historical periods.

Language problems and interests differ at different historical stages of development. For example, uniformation as a pervasive policy in developing modernizing society replaces one set of language varieties with another and at the same time also suppresses a number of interests of some groups in society in favor of other groups. This was so, for example, in modernizing and modern Sweden. There, dialects, other languages such as the Same

language(s), and rural populations in their ecological settings were actively opposed, suppressed, and uprooted, partly for « natural » reasons of inevitable consequences of industrialization, partly for wilfull reasons of ideology and group interests. However, the situation has changed somewhat in contemporary Swedish society. The subordination to « national » uniformity of local and ethnic group interests — the latter both immigrant and « originally endogenous » — and many of its expressions, including language, dominated early modern societal development. This is no longer so.

Today, the uniformation of society through unification of variety of language or through support for a centrally encompassing state system simply is not an issue. It is not in the interest of any particular social group to foster it. For example, in Norway people now agree on the idea of a common language norm (samnorsk) as a matter of collective (state) policy, while at the same time not marking as inadequate the considerable variation in speaking and some in writing that exists. Rather, localism and difference within already established boundaries of uniqueness of society and language(s) characterize a contemporary Norwegian frame of mind and thus of action (practice). The current situation serves the interests of the local centers, and these interests are supported by a multiplicity of de facto norms of communication. This Norwegian pluralism has replaced a former urban and elite oriented centralism.

The dominant role of the state is called into question in contemporary societies. It follows that group interests take on greater visibility and significance in these societies. So-called « rights » of children (in Sweden) including their language communication behaviors, and those of women (everywhere in the First World) including degendering of language, and those of refugees and labor migrants including their language communication behaviors, have become foregrounded. The emergence of the Fourth World is also a necessary accompanying feature of contemporary society.

How To Handle Differential Interest

In reflection on the fourth question, how to handle the facts of differential interest, it must be understood that the global situation today permits the coexistence of modernizing, modern, and contemporary. A seed of feeling and thought directed at post-contemporary social organization is also inevitably present. This coexistence places severe strains on contact between individuals who come from societies each characterized by a dominantly different developmental situation, each with its own configuration of interest, and with differential goals vis-à-vis each other, and therefore on communication and exchange between individuals from vastly different backgrounds concerning language management matters. Contexts and purposes have to constantly be made explicit. This coexistence also places severe strains on intellectual and theoretical communication, because of the fact that thought is necessarily « situated » in a particular social system. To transcend the social, economic, political and cultural

condition of one's dominant networks is difficult, indeed. Furthermore, the scholar finds him/herself in different roles as s/he participates in different networks, having been educated and continuing to participate in conferences in the international network of the academic discipline, yet, living in another system, consulting in a third and debating students' theses conceivably in a fourth time phase.

Thus, scholarly responsibility has come to be (a) relative to system but (b) absolute in the sense of an obligation to reveal language-to-interest relationships within and between language management systems.

Conclusion

At the present stage of language management and planning theory it will not suffice to give isolated examples of interest and pronounce on principles of rights or justice. Each language management process is connected with multiple interests of particular social groups or individuals. A full analysis of differential interests is necessary. This is the scholar's task; and self-reflection (Habermas 1970: 50) will reveal how in the practice of language management, knowledge and interest are one.

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