

应用语言学习丛书

# Language Planning and Education

语言规划与教育

Gibson Ferguson



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## 出版说明

对于中国这样一个英语教学大国，和语言教学相关的话题一直受到语言学界的关注。应用语言学作为一个涵盖范围十分广泛的研究领域，尤其受到我国学者及语言学方向师生的重视。本世纪初，外教社陆续引进出版了“牛津应用语言学丛书”、“剑桥应用语言学丛书”等国际优秀学术成果，因其内容权威、选择精当而受到外语界的好评。

近年来，应用语言学研究取得了很多新的进展，如何引导我国语言学方向的研究生快速便捷地了解这一领域的发展全貌和研究热点，成为我国语言学界老师面临的一个重要问题。有鉴于此，我们又从爱丁堡大学出版社、Multilingual Matters 等国际知名出版社精选了一批图书，组成“应用语言学研习丛书”，以更好地满足广大师生和相关学者的需求。

本丛书的各分册主题均为近年来应用语言学研究领域的热点话题，其中既有对所论述主题的理论回顾和梳理，也有对较新的发展和应用所做的阐释和分析，脉络清晰，语言简洁，共同反映了这一领域过去三四十年间的成果和积淀。

相信本套丛书的出版将为国内应用语言学研究带来新的启示，进一步推动我国语言学研究的的发展。

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# Language Planning and Education

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Gibson Ferguson

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# Author's Preface

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This book is one volume in a series on applied linguistics and it is natural, therefore, that the subject matter – language planning and language policy – is approached from an applied linguistics perspective, meaning that educational concerns and the relationships of language planning to education feature prominently.

The book has been written at the level of an advanced introduction and thus assumes some prior acquaintance with basic sociolinguistic concepts. In other respects, however, it is intended to be widely accessible, and a potential basis, therefore, for MA-level courses in language planning (LP) or for research work by those pursuing particular interests. The contents will also be of interest more generally to applied linguists, language teachers and educational policy-makers.

As others have remarked before, language planning/language policy is an interdisciplinary field with a very wide scope, geographically as well as conceptually. It is difficult, therefore, for any one volume to encompass more than a small proportion of the issues and sites that could potentially be considered, and this work is no exception. Thus, while we have included examples of LP activity from a variety of geographical locations – in Europe, North America, Africa, and Asia – there are inevitably omissions: little will be found here on Latin America or the Arab world, for example.

Similarly, there are omissions regarding the range of issues addressed, an example being the absence of any detailed discussion of normative theories of language rights. That said, the book does engage, as outlined below, with a number of themes many would see as central to contemporary LP and education.

## THE SCOPE AND ORGANISATION OF THE BOOK

The first two chapters provide overviews respectively of the development of LP over the past fifty years or so, and of key concepts in the practice of LP. This sets the scene for the following two chapters (Chapters 3 and 4) which discuss LP/policy with respect to immigrant and autochthonous minorities.

In Chapter 3, the focus is on the educational and political dimensions of bilingual education for linguistic minorities in the United States. One reason for focusing so specifically on the USA is that there are few other settings, with the possible

exception of Canada, where the educational effects of various forms of bilingual education have been more thoroughly researched, and where, in consequence, a substantial body of high quality literature on the subject has accumulated. Another is that recent developments (for example, Proposition 227) have laid bare with particular clarity the politics of bilingual education, a central issue being the re-imagining of national identities in an era of mass migration.

With Chapter 4 there is shift of scene and topic – to Europe and to regional autochthonous minorities, now reasserting their distinctive cultures and languages. The first part of the chapter provides an overview of the topic of language decline and revitalisation; the second moves to a case study of two Celtic language minorities, Welsh and Breton, and examines in detail how and why they appear to be set on different trajectories of revival.

Chapter 5 focuses on the contested causes and effects of the global spread of English, considering in particular the impacts on other languages and cultures, and on inequalities of various kinds. An emergent theme is that language policy alone cannot contain the spread of English, and therefore democratisation of access may be one of the more realistic ways of managing, or mitigating, some of the more negative impacts.

Maintaining the focus on English but this time giving greater attention to policy as it directly relates to pedagogy, Chapter 6 discusses that other concomitant of spread – the linguistic diversification of English, focusing in particular on the debate over New Englishes, English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) and the choice of appropriate models for teaching English around the world.

The reason, incidentally, for giving the English language more attention than it might command in some other books on language policy is straightforward: many readers are likely to be, or to have been, teachers of the dominant global language, interested in reflecting on how their work relates to broader policy issues. And it is true, of course, that responses to the global spread of English are, in themselves, a major theme in policy debates the world over.

In the final chapter (Chapter 7), we explore one of the major topics of language planning in education: the choice of media of instruction in developing post-colonial societies. The chapter considers the socio-political and economic factors that help sustain the retention of English as a medium – despite very evident educational disadvantages – arguing that these so strongly constrain the likelihood of radical policy reform that applied linguists may need to complement advocacy of reform with the investigation of practical measures; measures that might, in the interim, mitigate some of the adverse effects attaching to the use of foreign language media of instruction.

A recurring motif throughout these chapters (3–7) is the tension between the local and the national or global, between identity and access, between belonging and opportunity, which – in the sphere of language – so often appears to place languages in opposition to each other. No wonder, then, that the most commonly urged solution is bilingualism: personal plurilingualism and institutional bilingualism at state level. The idea behind this is that while one language conserves identity, the

other, often a language of wider communication, offers access to opportunities in a wider world.

This solution is not unproblematic, however: personal plurilingualism is not always easy to maintain, and societal bilingualism/multilingualism not always congenial to traditional conceptions of the nation and national identity. Bilingualism can, moreover, be unstable, and the precursor, as we see in Chapter 4, of a shift to a dominant language. Stability, where it does occur, is usually the result of functional differentiation between languages, but this can leave the language of affect subordinate to that of public, formal domains. Nor, finally, is it always easy to demarcate so precisely the functions of identity and utility, and pin them neatly on different, complementary languages.

All that said, the alternatives – usually monolingual ones – are no better, leading, as Wright (2004: 250) observes, in one direction toward confinement and parochialism and in the other toward the loss of diversity and possible anomie. Persistence with policies supportive of bilingualism may, then, be the least disadvantageous path to follow, which implies, as we argue in forthcoming chapters, that bilingual education be more actively considered and investigated as an educational option than has sometimes been the case in the past.



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I must also record my gratitude to colleagues at Edinburgh and to students on the language planning courses I have taught both there and at Sheffield, whose comments and reactions have so enriched my understanding of language planning issues. Finally, I would like to thank my wife, Karen, for her encouragement and support, without which the writing of this book and much else besides would scarcely have been possible.

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# Contents

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Author's Preface	v
Acknowledgements	viii
<b>1 The discipline of language planning: a historical overview</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1 The early years of the discipline of language planning	1
1.2 Criticisms of language planning	3
1.3 The resurgence of language planning and language policy	4
1.4 Changes in the discipline of language planning	9
1.5 Conclusion	13
<b>2 The practice of language planning: an overview of key concepts</b>	<b>16</b>
2.1 Language, nations and nationalism	17
2.2 The role of language planning in the construction of national languages and nations	20
2.3 Language planning in education	33
<b>3 Educational and political dimensions of bilingual education: the case of the United States</b>	<b>37</b>
3.1 The context of bilingual education in the United States	37
3.2 Bilingual education in the United States: educational research and pedagogy	49
3.3 The politics of bilingual education in the United States	62
3.4 Conclusion	67
<b>4 Minority languages and language revitalisation</b>	<b>71</b>
4.1 Language endangerment: a brief overview	71
4.2 The theory and practice of language revitalisation	77
4.3 Language planning and language revitalisation: a case study of Welsh and Breton	87
4.4 Conclusion: implications of the Welsh/Breton case study	107

<b>5 The global spread of English: cause, agency, effects and policy responses</b>	<b>110</b>
5.1 Cause and agency in the global spread of English	110
5.2 Effects of the global spread of English	125
5.3 Conclusion: implications of the global spread of English for English language teaching	143
<b>6 New Englishes and teaching models: the continuing debate</b>	<b>149</b>
6.1 Sociolinguistic contexts of the global use of English	150
6.2 Defining the New Englishes	152
6.3 The genesis of New Englishes	157
6.4 New Englishes and models for teaching	161
6.5 A lingua franca coda	175
<b>7 Language education policy and the medium of instruction issue in post-colonial Africa</b>	<b>179</b>
7.1 Current policies on media of instruction: articulating the problem	180
7.2 Changing the media of instruction: constraints on policy	183
7.3 The medium of instruction issue and the role of the applied linguist	192
Discussion questions, exercises and further reading	199
References	207
Index	227

# The discipline of language planning: a historical overview

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'Language planning' denotes both language planning practices, that is, organised interventions by politicians, linguists and others in language use and form (Christian 1989: 193), and the academic discipline whose subject matter is the study of these practices. In the first chapter of this introductory overview, therefore, we focus on the latter, charting the changes that have taken place in the academic discipline over the past half century, while in the second we review the concepts and terminology the discipline has furnished for describing and theorising language planning activities. We turn first, however, to the emergence of the discipline.

## 1.1 THE EARLY YEARS OF THE DISCIPLINE OF LANGUAGE PLANNING

The academic discipline has a comparatively recent provenance, with the first use of the term 'language planning' attributed to Haugen's (1959, 1966a) description of the development of a new standard national language in Norway following independence from Denmark in 1814 (Karam 1974: 105; Fettes 1997: 13).

Its early years are most strongly associated, however, with decolonisation and the language problems of newly emergent states, as is reflected in the title of the now classic language planning publications of this period – *Language Problems of Developing Nations* (Fishman, Ferguson and Das Gupta 1968), *Can Language Be Planned? Sociolinguistic Theory and Practice for Developing Nations* (Rubin and Jernudd 1971), *Advances in Language Planning* (Fishman 1974a), and in Fishman's (1974b: 79) definition of language planning as 'the organised pursuit of solutions to language problems, typically at the national level'. The reference here to the 'national level' is indicative of the historic importance in language planning of nation-building and associated processes of national identity formation, including language standardisation.

The decolonised states of Africa and Asia were regarded as a particularly apt arena for language planning and policy partly because their patterns of language allocation were felt to be more flexible and less settled than those of the older states of Europe, offering opportunities thereby for the application of theory to practice, and partly because the challenges facing the new states were all too evident. These comprised

modernisation and development, the evolution of more democratic forms of governance, and traditional nation-building; that is, the construction of a cohesive state to which citizens could give their allegiance in place of more local ethnic attachments. This latter enterprise was viewed as particularly problematic, for the new states inherited the artificial, arbitrary borders imposed in the colonial era, and consequently encompassed a diversity of ethnic and linguistic groups. There was, therefore, no pre-existing ethnic or linguistic cohesion on which the new ruling elites could draw to fashion a new national identity.

Analysing this problem from a language policy perspective, Fishman (1968: 7) described a tension between **nationalism**, the cultivation of a national identity (or authenticity) to supersede 'ethnic-cultural particularisms', which pointed to the espousal of some indigenous language as the national language, the emblem of national identity, and **nationism**, meaning operational efficiency in administration and economic management for the maintenance of political stability, which pointed in an opposite direction – to the official use of a non-indigenous, and therefore non-authentic, former colonial language.

In an ideal world, 'ideal' for being modelled on European nationalist solutions, the official language of state administration and the national language, with its identity functions, would be one and the same, but such a solution was difficult to achieve – particularly in Africa. The hope nonetheless was that in the fullness of time, with nationalist requirements satisfied, it might be possible with careful language planning to displace the former colonial language from its roles as official language and language of wider communication (Fishman 1968: 7).

In fact, however, such hopes have not been realised, and in most post-colonial states English or other metropolitan languages (such as French or Portuguese) have been retained as languages of the state and of education. Post-independence, the immediate justification was practical: the new states were mostly poor and fragile; there was little indigenous experience in implementing radical policy change; and changing the language medium of education, even, would have entailed considerable preparation, not least retraining teachers and the expensive redesign of teaching materials. A second justification was political: allocation of any one, or any one set of, indigenous languages to official functions was seen as having the potential to excite accusations of ethnic favouritism, threatening the national unity the new political leaders were keen to foster.

Behind these rationales there also lurked less openly declared considerations. While the retention of former colonial languages may have reduced the risk of ethnic division, it did very little for greater socio-economic equality, serving in particular to bolster the power of ruling elites who owed their privileged position to their proficiency in English or French, a language few others could readily acquire as long as access to formal education remained limited.

To this pattern there were exceptions, however, as in a number of states it was possible to identify an indigenous language that could both signify a distinct, authentic national identity and serve official state functions, the most cited examples being Tanzania, Indonesia and, eventually, Malaysia (see Wright 2004, Foley 1997,

Omar 1992). As a long-standing regional lingua franca with a Bantu grammatical base and relatively few resident native speakers, Swahili – in a highly heterogeneous Tanzania – was well suited to serve as a national official language, a role for which it was soon selected.<sup>1</sup> A similar situation obtained in Indonesia, which, like Tanzania, but to an even greater degree, encompassed a great diversity of ethnic and linguistic groups scattered through an archipelago extending over 5,000 kilometres. Here, the early nationalist leaders preferred a variety of Malay (subsequently known as *Bahasa Indonesia*) over dominant ethnic languages such as Javanese for the role of national language.<sup>2</sup> The advantage of Malay was that it was an established and prestigious regional lingua franca not associated with any dominant ethnic group yet historically linked to Islam, and therefore relatively acceptable, and accessible, to a wide range of the Indonesian population. In post-independence Malaysia, meanwhile, a ten-year transition period, during which English was retained as an official language, came to an end in 1967 with the passage of a language bill installing *Bahasa Malaysia* as the sole official language (Omar 1992: 113). Not long after it also became the medium of instruction throughout the education system, though significantly in 2003 the government took the decision to reinstate English as the medium for mathematics and science at secondary school.

If these three cases, all of which involved intense language planning input, can be portrayed as language planning successes, the larger picture was distinctly gloomier. In the decades after independence the economies of many post-colonial African states first faltered, and then in the 1980s went into frank decline. A number of states also entered a period of internal ethnically-based conflicts, and in some extreme cases there followed in the late 1980s and early 1990s a total collapse of state authority (for instance in Somalia, Sierra Leone, Liberia and Zaire/Congo).

Against this background of failure, confidence in the efficacy of all kinds of planning – language included – that characterised the early efforts to address the language problems of developing nations dissipated, and interest waned. Hardly encouraging either was the changing intellectual climate, which by the 1980s had turned away from the grand projects for development with which language planning had become associated.

## 1.2 CRITICISMS OF LANGUAGE PLANNING

By the 1980s and early 1990s language planning (henceforth LP), as a discipline and an activity, had also become the object of a battery of criticisms deriving from Marxist, post-structural and critical sociolinguistic perspectives. It was accused, for example, of serving the interests and agendas of dominant elites while passing itself off as an ideologically neutral, objective enterprise; of embracing a discourse of 'technist rationality' that transformed into 'simple matters of technical efficiency' problems that were actually value-laden and ideologically encumbered; of neglecting the inevitable implications LP enterprises held for power relations and socio-economic equality (Luke, McHoul, Mey 1990: 25; Williams 1992).

In its approach to the language problems of the new African states, LP was also

criticised for being wedded to, and for projecting, traditional European notions of the nation state, in which citizens are unified around a common standard language. Such conceptions, with their emphasis on the ideal of a coincidence of nation, state and language, inevitably helped propagate the view that multilingualism was problematic, a potential source of inefficiency and disunity, thereby lending justification to LP interventions that sought to discipline or tame it. Bamgbose (1994: 36), in a much cited passage, makes this point forcefully, remarking additionally that a common language cannot in and of itself unify:

In Africa, it seems that we are obsessed with the number 'one'. Not only must we have one national language, we must also have a one-party system. The mistaken belief is that in such oneness of language and party we would achieve socio-cultural cohesion and political unity in our multi-ethnic, multilingual and multi-cultural societies.

Another strand of criticism focuses on the tendency of LP to objectify language(s); that is, to treat languages as natural, 'out-there', discrete entities (Blommaert 1996, Ricento 2000b), a view contrasting sharply, of course, with more recent conceptions of languages as political constructions (see Joseph 2004: 125), and of language names (for example, Malay, Swahili, English) as labels sheltering 'a disparate set of language practices' (Wright 2004: 98). Applied to Africa, such objectification lent support to the practice of enumerating a diverse set of distinct languages for each country – 41 in Zambia, 125 in Tanzania, 54 in Ghana, and so on. The impression thus created of an unruly multilingualism, of a veritable Tower of Babel, provided arguments for language planners to discipline multilingualism, and to 'reduce sociolinguistic complexity' (Blommaert 1996: 212). In fact, however, as Makoni and Meinhof suggest, these diverse, distinct languages are inventions in the specific sense that they are the product of decisions to divide a linguistic continuum into discrete named entities, decisions determined in the African case 'by outsiders without any reference to the socio-linguistic identities of the local communities' (Makoni and Meinhof 2003: 7).<sup>3</sup>

Though not all the criticisms outlined above might stand up to close examination, they did collectively have a cumulative effect. By the end of the 1980s LP as a discipline had diminished in prominence and prestige, appearing, almost, to be set on a downward trajectory. The term itself, even, had a somewhat dated resonance, eliciting unfavoured images of manipulation, positivist social engineering, and technical rationality.

### 1.3 THE RESURGENCE OF LANGUAGE PLANNING AND LANGUAGE POLICY

All the more striking, therefore, has been the recent resurgence of interest in language policy and planning, signalled most obviously by the appearance in 2000 and 2001 of two new journals dedicated to the subject – *Current Issues in Language Planning*

and *Language Policy*, and by the publication in 2004 of two major book-length treatments (Wright 2004 and Spolsky 2004).

For an explanation of this renaissance one needs to look to the major geopolitical developments that have marked the closing years of the twentieth century and set new challenges for LP, a problem-oriented and profoundly political discipline, to address. Particularly significant among these developments for the changes they have wrought in the context of LP work are the following:

1. The collapse of the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe (1989–91), and the ending of the Cold War, two principal effects of which have been the resurgence of ethno-nationalisms and the formation of new states in Central Asia (e.g. Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Azerbaijan, Georgia) and in the former Yugoslavia (e.g. Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia), not forgetting the resurrection of states in the Baltic (Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania). The resultant processes of nation-building, and of identity construction, have led to LP interventions not very dissimilar to those associated with decolonisation and earlier phases of European nation-state formation – for example, the selection of official languages, standardisation and purification.

One might add here that the ending of the Cold War also indirectly hastened the final, formal decolonisation of Africa, specifically in Namibia and South Africa,<sup>4</sup> both of which have been sites of intense and ongoing language planning/policy work. In South Africa, for example, the 1996 post-apartheid constitution bestowed official status on eleven languages,<sup>5</sup> and charged the newly established LP agency (the Pan South African Language Board) with the task of elevating the status of the indigenous languages among them.

2. Not unrelated to the above developments has been the re-emergence of small nations and regional languages within the old established European nation states. In the UK, for example, devolution has given new levels of political autonomy to Wales and Scotland, paralleling the autonomy previously granted to Catalonia and the Basque country in Spain. Concomitantly, the languages of these groups (Welsh, Catalan, Basque, and so on) have been revalorised, achieving – in some cases – co-equal status in their region with the dominant majority language.

The reasons for the resurgent assertiveness of minority nationalisms are complex and not altogether clear. Wright (2004: 201) argues persuasively, however, that the weakening of the nation state due to globalisation and the consolidation of supranational economic, political and military institutions (such as the European Union and NATO) have in combination opened up space for regional and national minorities to assert their distinctive identities and press for a commensurate degree of political autonomy. That this has, by and large, been conceded also reflects, one might argue, the emergent view that intolerance of separate regional identities is not easily reconciled with the democratic principles on which the European Union is founded. More than democratic idealism is involved here, however: many European governments



have come round to believing that devolution – the granting of a degree of political and cultural autonomy to regions – is one of the more effective ways of defusing minority nationalisms and of preserving the overarching unity of the state in the long run.<sup>6</sup>

However one analyses the causes, one consequence has been a noticeable intensification of language planning/policy work on behalf of autochthonous regional languages in Europe, some of which has been of the traditional nation-building kind, albeit on a smaller, sub-national scale – defending the purity of the language, or promoting the standard variety throughout the speech community, for example.<sup>7</sup> The main focus, however, it would be fair to say, has been on revitalisation, on reintroducing the minority language to the public domains from which it had previously been excluded (a process known in Spain as ‘normalisation’) and on spreading knowledge of the language through school and adult education (see Chapter 4).

All this has been accompanied, and supported, by legislation on minority languages at regional, national and supranational levels (for example, The European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages 1992), and by a burgeoning of interest in normative theories of language rights on the part of political theorists (such as Kymlicka and Patten 2003), to whose work language planners, reflecting the interdisciplinary character of their subject, are increasingly turning for guidance.

3. A third set of global developments reshaping the context of LP may be brought together under the label ‘globalisation’ – a fashionable term for a fashionable concept that has spawned a voluminous literature. The initial debate over the very existence of the phenomenon – a myth, a fundamental dynamic of our age, or neither – has been broadly settled, Giddens (2004) affirms, in favour of the globalists: globalisation is real rather than mythical, and is a genuinely new rather than old phenomenon. That said, and reflecting no doubt its multiple material, cultural and cognitive dimensions, there appears to be no settled, definitive characterisation. It tends instead to be defined in terms of a cluster of related features – ‘action at a distance’, deterritorialisation, time-space compression, the increasing mobility of people and capital, interdependence and integration, and the weakening of the nation state (Held and McGrew 2003: 3).

Fortunately, a language planning/policy perspective licenses a selective focus on language-related aspects, three of which seem of particular relevance and are summarised briefly below:

*Migration:* As is well known, North America, Europe and Australasia have been receiving increasing numbers of migrants, becoming as a result ever more obviously multilingual and multicultural, especially in urban centres. The historic policy response of most Western countries has been assimilative in education and in the civic realm more generally: that is, they have encouraged, sometimes obliged, migrants to learn the dominant majority