 《外国语言文学研究》丛书

# 话语语言学 与语言教学

Text Linguistics and Language Teaching

主编 阳志清 曹志希

上海交通大学出版社

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图书在版编目 ( C I P ) 数据

话语语言学与语言教学 / 阳志清, 曹志希主编. —上海:  
上海交通大学出版社, 2008  
ISBN 978-7-313-05254-4

I. 话… II. ①阳…②曹… III. 话语语言学-应用-外  
语教学-研究 IV. H09

中国版本图书馆CIP数据核字 (2008) 第085251号

话语语言学与语言教学

阳志清 曹志希 主编

上海交通大学出版社出版发行

(上海市番禺路 951 号 邮政编码 200030)

电话: 64071208 出版人: 韩建民

常熟市文化印刷有限公司印刷 全国新华书店经销

开本: 787mm × 960mm 1/16 印张: 16.75 字数: 312 千字

2008 年 11 月第 1 版 2008 年 11 月第 1 次印刷

印数: 1 ~ 2 050

ISBN 978-7-313-05254-4/H · 738 定价: 32.00 元

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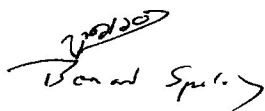
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## FOREWORD



Language policy can be seen as part of educational linguistics. ① But I wish here to present the opposite argument, namely that educational linguistics provides the tools and techniques for language policy and more specifically for language education management. First let me outline the model of language policy that I have been developing (Spolsky 1996; 2004; 2005b; 2006a; 2006b; in press; Spolsky & Shohamy 1998). It does not offer ready-made solutions or advice so much as it tries to make clear the complexity of the factors that need to be taken into account in language management.

First a word of history. The earliest language management activities were particularly concerned with the preservation of sacred texts—witness Panini and the mediaeval Arabic and Hebrew scholars. An even earlier tradition of language management started in China, with two major trends: the development of a single writing system to serve the range of varieties that make up Chinese, and the parallel process of persuading speakers of the different varieties of the unity of Chinese. While the effort to establish a single approved variety, now known as *putonghua*, is much more recent, the 2000 years of persuasion has encouraged the belief that such a national variety is achievable and worth achievement. Language management in Europe, in practice the cultivation and modification of varieties for nationalist reasons, in the 18th and 19th centuries was also the preserve of language scholars (grammarians commonly associated with national independence movements) or the language academies established and still powerful in Romance countries and charged

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① An earlier form of this paper was given at the University of Pennsylvania to present the 16th Annual Nessa Wolfson Colloquium, an occasion marking the thirtieth anniversary of the establishment of the Educational Linguistics Program at the University.

especially with the purity of the national language (Spolsky 2005a). It was Haugen's study of one of these movements (Haugen 1961; 1966) that might be claimed to have launched the scholarly study of language policy as a field. It was also at this time that the involvement of linguists in language planning in the various postwar independent states especially of Africa and Asia helped develop what I have called the American school; their work is obvious in the Ford supported studies of Africa (Bender, Cooper, & Ferguson 1972; Ford Foundation 1975; Ohannessian, Ferguson, & Polomé 1975), in the one comparative international evaluation of lexical elaboration (Rubin, Jernudd, Das Gupta, Fishman, & Ferguson 1977), and in a number of collections such as (Fishman 1968); their work was attacked essentially by the so-called linguistic rights and linguistic imperialism approaches (Phillipson 1992) (which ignored the earlier linguistic totalitarianism of the Arabic conquest or the Spanish in South America to pick on the diffusion of English). More recently, there has been a rapid expansion of the field, with problems being faced with the failures of early planning, the effects of globalization and immigration, the spread of interest to what are called endangered languages on the one hand, and to large state responses to growing multilingualism. In this model, I argue also for a further extension, adding to the earlier concentration on the nation-state as prime focus the importance of language policy at other levels and in other institutions and social groups, which moves the focus closer to education.

I use the term Language Policy for the field as a whole, preferring it to language planning (or language policy and planning). Each social group (or more precisely, speech community) is likely to have a language policy, which may be implicit in the language practices of the members of the group (who speaks what variety of language to whom under what circumstances) or the language beliefs or ideologies of members of the group (what do they believe to be an appropriate policy, and how do they value each of the salient varieties available to the group), or which may be made explicit as a result of language management, namely the effort of someone with or claiming authority to modify the language practices or believe other members of the group.

Language policy exists at many different levels of society. We can study it in the family, noting the actual varieties used in talking to various family members; we can study beliefs at the family level, such as the critical question of what language should be spoken to young children; we can look for examples of management, as in efforts of grandparents or parents to bring up children speaking their heritage lan-

guage. Beyond the family, another significant level is religion, with the setting of choices of the language to be used for prayer, sermon, sacred text, and teaching: here one can find strict management as in the Catholic church before Vatican II with its insistence on Latin for the mass, or as in the Islamic requirement on the use of Classical Arabic even in parts of the world where it is not understood, or there may be flexibility, as in the Jewish and Christian willingness to authorize translation and in the recent introduction of English into Hindu rituals in the United States (Spolsky 2003).

There is language policy in the neighborhood, reflected in the language of public signs (Backhaus in press; Gorter 2006), the appropriate language to speak in local stores, the acceptability of using foreign languages in public places. Individual institutions commonly have a language policy: the language that workers use with each other, with their employers, and with their customers. There may well be attempts to manage this in regulations set out by local government bodies. Businesses too have policies, often hiring to provide service in specific languages, or encouraging their employees to learn specific languages. Government and civic agencies regularly have policies, reflecting either voluntary adaptation to local language practices or centrally enforced management decisions based on hegemonic monolingual or pluralistic multilingual ideologies, regulations, laws, or constitutions. Of all these institutions, it is no doubt the school that has most chance of influence and managing language practices and ideology.

At the apex, there is the language policy of the nation-state, broken down in some circumstances regionally (the territorial solution adopted by bilingual countries like Belgium and Switzerland or multilingual countries like India). Within any nation, there may be majority or minority ethnic or political or religious groups attempting to persuade the appropriate authority to modify or vary language policy, generally by assigning a higher value and status to the variety they use.

As a result of the complexity of levels involved and the multiplicity of practices and beliefs, the development of a utopian stable language policy remains a major challenge in much of the world. Failure is probably more common than success (Spolsky 2006b). There is regular public debate in much of the world. In spite of its complex territorial management plan, Belgium continues to argue about the status of French and Dutch. Some Swiss cantons are now seeking to replace the teaching of the other national language by English. Malaysia has recently given up on half a century endeavoring to establish Bahasa Melayu by switching to English in



language instruction for all school levels. The European Union continues to bicker about the languages used in its institutions, and sets language policy challenges to its new members. The United States, lacking a national language policy, has now developed a National Language Security Initiative to try to encourage the teaching and learning of foreign languages relevant to defense, is slowly implementing a civil rights program to provide access to health and public services for non-English speakers, and continues to struggle with the question of bilingual education and English teaching in schools (Spolsky 2006a).

To have any hope of successful implementation, a national language policy must take into account the full complexity of the sociolinguistic ecology of the society. Unfortunately, data on the language practices of society are commonly sparse. There are number of reasons for this. The first is the nature of the object; I have used the word variety rather than language as a first attempt at this. Commonly, we talk about labeled varieties of language (English, Quebec French, Palestinian Arabic, Argentinean Spanish) as though they were discreet easily identifiable objects rather than complex bundles or clusters of linguistic features—specific pronunciations, lexical items, grammatical patterns, appropriate genres and styles—used in pattern variation by members of the speech community. Some of these variables become salient as methods of identification of group membership, and specific language management policies may be applied—for example, the Spanish Academy has recently ruled that only a handful of the hundreds of names of professions may be used in the feminine form permitted by Spanish morphology and desired by proponents of equality.

Naming a variety is a first step in giving it status, rather than simply a natural action by biological classification. In order to develop an accurate account of the varieties used within a defined speech community, one needs to embark on a long process of careful observation and analysis of an appropriate sample of people and situations. There are such studies, but they are more likely to be found in academic monographs than in published surveys. If there is something more than guesses or estimates, it is likely to be the result of a government census. Censuses, however, have many limitations; the language question is rarely considered very important; it is asked in a number of different ways and it is answered by self-report, often expressing ethnic rather than linguistic claims. But an accurate survey of actual language practices of the various groups constituting a speech community is a critically needed first step.

An additional complicating factor is that language is just one of the many factors relevant to language policy; demography, politics, economics, religion, and culture can all play significant roles in the success of language planning. In Ireland, the failure to coordinate linguistic and economic planning in the Gaeltacht had, it has been shown, serious effects (Ó Riágain 1997). In many countries, language revival movements are in fact ethnic mobilization around the language question; once Ireland became independent, the urgency of revival seems to have been lost.

Language beliefs are also difficult to recognize. Various members of social groups are like to have quite distinct attitudes to the salient varieties, and these attitudes may not seem on the surface consistent. Thus, studies of US attitudes to language show general acceptance of the belief that English should be the national official language alongside a general tolerance of other languages and recognition of their importance in education (Robinson, Brecht, & Rivers 2006). Again, a national language policy that ignores popular ideology is unlikely to succeed. In many parts of South America now, native American languages are starting to be recognized in use in education, but their low social status mitigates against the success of language maintenance programs and against their acceptance even by speakers of the language (Hornberger & King 2001).

Among the many beliefs that people hold about language, one of the strongest appears to be a belief in the superiority of one language over another. Another common belief is the existence of some pure correct version of each language, and the acceptance of some authority to rule on it (Fishman 2006). There is commonly a division between those who accept multilingualism as normal and natural and those for whom the ideal is monolingualism.

Especially during the halcyon days of language planning in the 1960s, language management activities were divided in two. The first was called status planning; it involved assignment of some recognized function such as official use or use for education of a named variety of language. This was assumed to be appropriate for government action in constitutional clauses, language laws, or language regulations. Many newly independent nations used the writing of the new constitution to proclaim a national official language. Bilingual nations like Belgium or multilingual nations like India were often involved in long complex struggles over the determination of appropriate status for their competing varieties, each with solid support from a related ethnic group.

The second was called (somewhat confusingly to outsiders) corpus planning; it

involved in various modifications to the language itself. There was a relation between the two: a language assigned official status or chosen as the school language of instruction needed of course to have a written variety, and would require standardization, modernization, lexical elaboration, and cultivation. The formal management of these tasks is commonly assigned to the language agency or Academy, or to the Ministry of Education, or in a more *laissez-faire* approach, left to publishers and schoolteachers.

More recently, Cooper (1989) identified the third significant branch of language management, which he labeled language acquisition planning, which requires, I am arguing, educational linguistics for its implementation. This involves determining which members of the society should be expected to learn which variety of language; it governs in other words language education policy at the various levels of the school system and perhaps even outside it, such as in language teaching programs for immigrants. An important sub-component is called language diffusion management, namely central government or agency activities to teach a national language outside the nation-state where it is official (Ammon 1992; Cooper 1982).

By definition, language management has initiators or actors (a specific agency or person who can be identified), explicit purposes, a plan laying out the steps to be taken, resources to support the agency and its activities, and ideally a method to evaluate the effectiveness of implementation. Like all other planning, there can easily be gaps between plans and implementation.

#### **Educational linguistics and language policy—a personal view**

At this point, I propose to think aloud a little about my own academic development, trying to track what I was hoping to understand when I proposed the term “educational linguistics” in Spolsky (1974b; 1978), and how it relates intimately to my own current interest in the field of language policy and management (Spolsky 1977; 2004; Spolsky & Shohamy 1999). The intertwining of the two areas is close: language policy is one of the major areas of educational linguistics, and educational linguistics has come to recognize more and more its social context and responsibilities. Indeed, I will go further and argue that educational linguistics provides the tools that serve language policy and specifically what I call language education management.

The inspiration for my studies in this area came when I began to teach English in a high school on the east coast of New Zealand. Nothing I had learnt in my uni-

versity studies in English language and literature seemed to have prepared me to understand the problems faced by some of my Maori students, or to help me understand the paradox that those who reported that they still spoke Maori at home proved to be better speakers and writers in English than those who came from homes that had shifted away from the heritage language. In the course of time, I discovered linguistics as an area offering potential solutions, but was continually frustrated by the concern of most linguists for language as an abstract system and later for its instantiation in the brain than for the social context of its users. The structuralists who were my earliest teachers<sup>①</sup> and the generativists who succeeded them strove to build a science of language protected from the messiness of the real-world—some of the former refused to deal with meaning, and the latter followed Chomsky in his pursuit of the ideal monolingual. Those of us who wanted to teach language were forced to develop intermediate and less prestigious sub-disciplines—contrastive analysis as a cheaper but useful structural grammar that permitted comparisons denied by current theory, second language acquisition that produced data congruent with transformational grammar which had denied relevance to language teaching—to try to influence schools and classrooms, with wasteful and even tragic results. The hope resided, I came to feel, in sociolinguistics and especially in the work of Dell Hymes who refused to accept the artificiality of splitting abstract idealized competence from performance (Hymes 1967; 1974; 1997).

Applied linguistics as it had developed seemed to me to be a fairly soulless attempt to apply irrelevant models to a narrow range of problems, especially teaching foreign languages. It had produced a couple of potential monsters: the deadening drills of the audio-lingual method, and the ungoverned chaos of the early natural approach. I put the challenge in this way:

Many linguists believe that their field should not be corrupted by any suggestion of relevance to practical matters; for them, linguistics is a pure science and its study is motivated only by the desire to increase human knowledge. Others, however, claim that linguistics offers a panacea for any educational problem that arises and quickly offer their services to handle any difficulties in language planning or teaching. Each of these extreme positions is, I believe, quite wrong, for while it is evident that linguistics is often relevant to education, the relation is seldom direct.

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① While I was at high school, I had read Bodmer's "Loom of language" but Charles Fries was the first modern linguist I read.

(Spolsky 1978).

I proposed rather to start with specific problems and then look to linguistics and other relevant disciplines which could contribute to solution. The other fields were education itself, sociology, economics, politics, and psychology. The relevant sub-fields of linguistics itself were not just language theory and description (including their influence on language acquisition and learning theory) but also the hyphenated fields<sup>①</sup> of psycholinguistics and sociolinguistics: "Recognition of the complex sociolinguistic forces within a community is essential to the development of a valid and workable language education policy, just as knowledge of the status of the language concerned is vital to a clear understanding of the attitudes and motivations of language learners." (Spolsky 1978: 3)

My appreciation of the social significance of language teaching had in fact, started much earlier; while my earlier work had fitted the current approaches of applied linguistics, by 1971, when I was invited to a conference in Britain, I had already been in the Southwestern United States for long enough to move from talking about the social and political implications of selecting foreign students on the basis of their knowledge of English (Spolsky 1967) to the first of a series of papers dealing with what I called the "language barrier to education" (Spolsky 1971; 1974a; 1986). The situation in the Bureau of Indian Affairs schools that I visited when I moved to New Mexico in 1968 was dramatic: Anglo teachers with little or no knowledge of Navajo were teaching a regular English curriculum to classes full of Navajo children with little or no knowledge of English, dragged away from their homes to boarding schools situated by the US Corps of Engineers for their location close to water rather than to the children's home community. If one could help, one needed an educational linguistics based not on a contrastive or transformational grammar, but on an appreciation of the place of language in society.

The field of sociolinguistics had been born or at least taken its first toddling steps at the Linguistic Institute at Bloomington Indiana in 1964, where a group of young and energetic scholars studied and defined the complementary approaches of sociolinguistics and the sociology of language. A great deal was going on in southern Indiana that summer. Noam Chomsky, the Philadelphia-born son of a distinguished Hebraist, was challenging linguistics and psychology with his theories

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① This was Carl Voegelin's term.

about the structure of language; Joshua Fishman, brought up on the other side of the street by a committed Yiddishist, was building a sociology of language that would tackle the problems of language minorities everywhere; and elsewhere on campus, Uriel Weinreich, the one scholar who might have bridged the gap between the transformationalists and the sociolinguists was lecturing on semantics. ① Bloomington was where I made my own first contact with big-time linguistics, but I was still confined to an applied linguistics approach, albeit involved in one of the earlier attempts to break into the world of computers (Garvin & Spolsky 1966). It was only a few years later that I became aware of the ground-breaking work of Joshua Fishman, and was persuaded by him of its relevance to education and by Cooper (1968) of its significance for my growing interest in language testing.

Cooper's paper read at a testing meeting in Ann Arbor in fact drew on the pioneering work of Dell Hymes, whose ethnography of speaking was just starting to impress many sociolinguists as a reasonable alternative to the more dehumanized model of what Chomsky called competence (a formal representation of the grammatical knowledge of an idealized monolingual). Trained as an anthropological linguist, Hymes came to Pennsylvania in 1965 and ten years later was persuaded to become dean of the school of education, a position that permitted the instantiation of his views on language into an educational program that became the heart of educational linguistics. It was a year later that Nessa Wolfson joined the faculty, carrying on her own work building bridges between sociolinguistics and second language acquisition, both in theory and an institutional structure.

Against this background, I want in the rest of my talk to describe the closely related fields of educational linguistics and language policy as they have developed into the 21st century.

## Educational linguistics

My latest attempt to define the field has been in the preparation of the *Handbook of Educational Linguistics* that Francis Hult and I are currently editing for

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① His dissertation in 1951 was a pioneering work on bilingualism; he developed his father's work on the history of Yiddish into a major study of dialectology; and he was working on the critical relation between semantics and syntax. His death in 1967 ended the chance of bridging the gap between the theorists and what I like to call the realists.

Blackwell. In a review of a recent Festschrift dealing with applied linguistics, Davies (2006) suggested a distinction between those like Henry Widdowson who argue for a dictionary definition of the field, maintaining that there is "an applied linguistics core which should be required of all those attempting the *rite de passage*" and those who prefer the approach by ostensive definition, "if you want to know about applied linguistics, look around you". He correctly places me somewhere in this latter camp, although in the case of educational linguistics, which I argue is necessarily more focused, I think I have less trouble in finding a core, in the interactions between language and education. It was the very lack of a core in applied linguistics that led me to propose educational linguistics. In planning the *Handbook*, we essentially selected what we considered the core areas and added other areas in which there was relevant research and publication.

We divided the forty or more commissioned chapters into three clusters. The first cluster presents the foundational background, by setting out the neurobiological, the linguistic-theoretical, psychological, sociological, anthropological, and political-ideological knowledge relevant to educational linguistics and the school systems in which it operates. Language, it has come to be realized especially since the work of Chomsky, is embodied in the brain, and growing knowledge of the brain is therefore relevant if not yet directly applicable (Schumann 2006). But, at the same time, all varieties of language and their use are contextualized in social settings, depending on common co-construction and the interplay of social and linguistic structures and patterns. The inevitable effect of code choice on power relationships, the realization that choice of language for school and other functions has major power to include or exclude individuals, has taught many people to take what is often called a "critical" approach and ask who benefits from decisions about choice. Thus, while educational linguistics tries like most other disciplines to achieve a measure of scientific objectivity, it is often committed and regularly interpreted as being on one side or the other in the politics of education. ①

In the central core of the volume, we include 25 chapters dealing with specific themes or sub-areas of educational linguistics. The first group essentially picks up my original language barrier question. One chapter reviews the evidence on choice of language of instruction in schools; all major empirical studies support the

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① I am starting to wonder again how relevant scientific methods and approaches are to the social sciences.

UNESCO-proclaimed belief in the value of initial instruction in the language that children bring with them from home, and suggest that it takes at least five or six years careful preparation in some model of bilingual education before pupils are ready to benefit fully from instruction in the national official school language. Unfortunately, reality is far different. Other chapters look at this theme. One focuses on cultural as well as linguistic differences between home and school. Another tackles the even more difficult situation where the home language is stigmatized as a dialect or nonstandard. Another considers the relevance of the language barrier to the education of the Deaf, a group now increasingly recognized by some as analogous to a linguistic or ethnic minority. New definitions of literacy are shown to be related to developments of multiple identities in modern societies. A final chapter attempts to analyze causes, looking at the effects of colonization and its aftermaths and the growing pressure of globalization.

The second group deals specifically with language education policy and management. The first chapter describes work in Europe to define common goals for foreign language teaching. The second considers language teaching inside and outside schools. The third presents the theories and practices of language management cultivation initially developed by the Prague School of linguists who were interested in the elaboration of developed literary languages at a time that the American school of language planning was tending to concentrate on the issues faced by previously under-developed languages. The next chapter describes the work continuing with language cultivation in underdeveloped contexts, such as the development of writing systems, the choices involved in adapting vernacular languages to school and other uses, the sharing of functions with standard languages. Another chapter looks at the extreme cases, presenting arguments for the involvement of education systems in the preservation of endangered languages. The final chapter adds a note of realism or sounds the tocsin, presenting evidence of the rapid invasion of primary education throughout the world by English.

In the third group of articles, the central theme is literacy. Thirty years ago, one might have been satisfied with a chapter on the teaching of reading, but now there is separate treatment of literacy in general, vernacular and indigenous literacies, religious and sacred literacies, and the particular approaches to multiliteracies that have developed out of Michael Halliday's alternative view of linguistic theory. (Halliday of course was also at Bloomington, but shortly thereafter moved to Australia.)



The fourth group picks up major themes in Second Language Acquisition, a term coined after the transformational revolution to replace the more obvious language learning is. One chapter tackles the problem of the order of acquisition that started to be studied in the light of Chomsky's claim that language was innate rather than learned. The second takes the opposite view, looking at research encouraged by anthropology into the process of language socialization. The next three return to what have become traditional Second Language Acquisition themes; the nature of interlanguage and the influences one language has on learning another language; the extent to which the language learner is able to reach the proficiency or competence level of the native speaker and whether this is biologically or otherwise determined; and the continuing debate as to whether natural exposure to a new language must be supplemented by explicit teaching and focus on forms.

The last five chapters in this group deal with language assessment, not just as twenty years ago they might have done as simply various topics in language testing, but now in a sociologically anchored and ethically informed discussions of language assessment for inclusion or exclusion (immigrants, asylum seekers, minorities), recent work in diagnostic and formative assessment, ethical approaches to accountability and standards, the potential of scales and frameworks, and the effects of attempts at national standardization particularly in the United States. Again, the recurring concern about policy is evident.

The third and final section of the *Handbook* has a number of sectors exploring the relationship between research and practice. One summarizes recent work in task-based learning. The second outlines developments in instructional approaches that take advantage of current work in corpus linguistics. The third looks at the actual language use inside the classroom. The fourth picks up and describes the field I was working on forty years ago in Bloomington, computer-assisted language learning. It is very different now. The three final chapters present some wider perspectives: an ecological perspective on educational linguistics within the context of semiotics; a classroom agenda which tackles the complex question of what educational linguistics the language teacher should know; and finally, a research agenda of the field itself suggesting the gaps that remain.

The field of educational linguistics has clearly expanded and grown over the years, thanks to the realization by scholars like Nessa Wolfson of the fundamental symbiosis of language and education.