

**Language
Planning &
Policy**

Language Planning in Local Contexts

Edited by

Anthony J. Liddicoat and Richard B. Baldauf Jr

LANGUAGE PLANNING AND POLICY

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Introduction

Language Planning in Local Contexts: Agents, Contexts and Interactions

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Local Contexts in Language Planning Research

Traditionally language planning research has focused on the actions of governments and similar macro-level institutions. Language planning as an academic discipline began in the context of nation-state formation following the end of colonialism (see for example Ferguson, 1962; Fishman, Ferguson, & Das Gupta, 1968; Pool, 1972; Rubin & Jernudd, 1971). The chief concerns were related to issues of creating national unity and developing and maintaining effective communication within emerging nations (Mansour, 1993; Ricento, 2003). Such a focus privileges the consideration of national level actions and the intervention of official bodies in the language questions facing a society. In this context and in that era, local issues of language planning were seen as secondary to the overall process of planning, or to ones that raised unwanted problems and competition for the national language. Initially, such issues often have been ignored (e.g., local language development in Indonesia – Nababan, 1991), or suppressed (Tai'yü, Hakka and aboriginal languages in Taiwan – Sandel, 2003; Tsao, 1998) if considered at all.

One of the reasons for the marginalisation of micro-level language planning within the context of language planning research has been definitional. Most definitions of language planning presuppose 'deliberate planning by an organized body enjoying either legal or moral authority, such as a government agency, commission, or academy' (Nahir, 1998: 351). Such legal or moral authority has regularly been located within macro-level institutions created and/or sanctioned by nation-states. This view of language planning locates research within a theory of power which sees the top-down exercise of power (or domination) as the relevant construct for understanding decision-making about languages. Such a view of power in language planning is however problematic as a delimiting agent for constituting the focus of language planning research. It is problematic for a number of reasons.

The first is that deliberate planning of language issues implies a direct causal relationship between decisions made by those with the power to execute them and the actual results of language planning – leaving aside a role for acceptance of the language plan itself. Such a causal link is not justified by language planning outcomes, which may be *unplanned* or may result from activ-

ities which were not planned (Baldauf, 1994; Eggington, 2002). Such research shows that a restriction that limits analysis to deliberate planning is not helpful in understanding the realities of language planning. In fact, it is often local contextual agents which affect how macro-level plans function and the outcomes that they achieve. As Baldauf notes, the need for an understanding of the unplanned dimensions of language planning outcomes 'is probably especially true at the "micro-level" because there is less awareness of language planning at this level and because such planning is ongoing and therefore commonplace' (Baldauf, 1994: 86).

The second reason is that it oversimplifies the nature of power as it applies in speech communities and how this power is realised in matters of language. All social groups involve technologies of power through which the actions of social agents are shaped. If power is understood as *l'action sur les actions* (Foucault, 1975), the operations and role of power become more complex as power lies not simply in the ability to dominate but also in the ability to shape the behaviour of others. The operation of power is not therefore simply enforcement of particular norms but consists in ways of getting others to act of their own volition in particular ways. This means that individuals and groups have the potential to exercise power over other members of their society in ways which affect the behaviours of others. Thus, it is not through the coercive and normative power of institutions – the power ascribed by status or realised through sanctions (Carspecken, 1996) – that behaviours are changed but through more subtle operations on the choices of others. Among these are the strategies that Carspecken (1996) identifies as *charm* – the ability to use culturally understood identity claims and norms to gain the trust and loyalty of others – and *contractual power* – an agreement specifying reciprocal obligations between parties. Within a more elaborated view of power, an exclusive focus on macro-level phenomena becomes problematic for a full understanding of the nature of language-related processes.

This analysis suggests that language planning work in local contexts is a fundamental and integrated part of the overall language planning process, which merits attention both within the context of the operation of macro-level planning – as a necessary extension of it – and in its own right – as a local activity with no macro roots.

The focus on local contexts in language planning mirrors an increased concern for the democratisation of decision-making in social policy in general which recognises the impact of power asymmetries on policy outcomes (Hill, 2003). Concern for democratisation has been prompted by a realisation that existing national-level power structures have undergone an erosion of legitimacy in many contexts which cannot be remedied by centralisation of decision-making, and in which there need to evolve local processes to address local contexts (Ghani, Lockhart & Carnahan, 2006). A focus on local contexts is not only warranted by the democratisation of decision-making, but also from the perspective of devolution, especially in education where the locus of much of the decision-making lies with local communities (Tunstall, 2001).

However, it needs to be noted that the shift in the locus of power from the macro to the micro – to the local level – may alter only some of the power relationships, but may maintain others (Jocelyn Graf, 2007, personal communication).

For example, regionalisation may shift power from centralised structures (e.g., the Ministry of Education in Jakarta) to more regional structures as has occurred as part of 'Reformasi' in Indonesia since the fall of Suharto. This had led to local government elections and in 2006 in education to the initiation of 'localised curriculum' that gradually is putting more power and decision making about language and curriculum in the hands of local administrators, schools, lecturers and teachers. However, consultation may not be being extended to students. Thus, although power relationships may now be more immediate, and hopefully more attuned to students' needs, it also may be the case that from a student perspective local language planning and democratisation may have had little impact on their ability to influence change.

Agents of Language Planning at the Local Level

Haarmann (1990) was perhaps the first to suggest, in the context of promotional activities for prestige planning, that there are different levels of agency in language planning – government, agencies, pressure groups and individuals – ranging from the macro to the micro. Rather than focusing on the work of governments and their agencies as the agents in language planning, a micro-level approach needs to consider a range of agents, which exist with greater or lesser formality within their local speech communities. For the latter three micro groupings of agents in Haarmann's categorisation, the range is quite diverse as language issues can arise in association with many different types of activities and in different domains. Thus, any survey of the agents of micro language planning must necessarily be incomplete because of the diversity of potential groups who need to engage in language: e.g. a local committee deciding to use sign language interpreters, interest groups disseminating their material in multiple languages, or workplaces with multilingual populations. Spolsky (2004) also has examined this issue indirectly by briefly outlining a number of domains or sociolinguistic contexts ranging from the micro (i.e. families, schools, religious organisations, the workplace, local government) to the macro (i.e. supra-national groupings, and polities) where language planning occurs. However, we would argue that power and its use ultimately are constituted by agents who exist in particular domains. Therefore, in this overview there is an attempt to outline some of the better documented agents, roughly along the lines of the three agentive groups suggested by Haarmann (1990), without *a priori* excluding any potential others.

At the most micro-level of language planning is located the work of individuals, or often small groups of individuals, who work to revive or promote the use of a language. The influence of Eliezer Ben-Yehuda on the revival of Hebrew is widely known, although his individual role may be contested (Fellman, 1973; Nahir, 1998). His influence in actively using Hebrew as an everyday language and raising his son as a first-language speaker of Hebrew, together with the development of new lexical items as required, are frequently cited as initial steps in the revival of Hebrew. The work of linguist Rob Amery, in collaboration with the indigenous community, in the corpus planning for the revival of the Karna language in Australia has also been well documented (Amery, 2000, 2001). Sabino Arana (1865–1903), who created many of the cultural symbols

of Basque nationalism, was responsible for the development of the first standardised variety of Basque in his grammar, which was based on a compilation of different existing dialects (Sánchez & Dueñas, 2002). The development of a standardised orthography and the development of a codified lexicon for Jersey Norman French was fundamentally the work of Frank Le Maistre (Le Maistre, 1966; Liddicoat, 2000). In many cases, these activities were the work of enthusiasts who were motivated by a range of different concerns. In some cases they worked in relative isolation from organisations or institutions, with goals of recording a language or because of a personal investment in the language. The work undertaken often has language planning as a secondary or even tacit goal. However, the resulting work has shaped patterns of language use and the forms of language used in speech communities.

Micro-level planning is however not always, or even typically, the work of a single individual. In some cases, the evolution of language planning in a particular local speech community may be the result of the successive work of single individuals. For example, in the revival of Cornish, the process can be seen in the work of a series of individuals. Henry Jenner, in his *Handbook of the Cornish Language* (Jenner, 1904), not only produced the first textbook for self-directed learning of the language, but also established a standardised spelling and grammar by regularising the uses found in extant Late Cornish texts. This work provided the basis through which other individuals began to use Cornish. Morton Nance developed a more elaborated form of Cornish, based on Jenner's work and Middle Cornish literature with additional lexicon adapted from Breton and Welsh, known as Kernewek Unyes (Unified Cornish) (Nance, 1929). These early developments received support from Cornish cultural organisations, but there was no coordinated body supporting the revitalisation of Cornish until 1967 when the Kesva an Taves Kernewek (Cornish Language Board) was established. In the 1980s, a revision was made of Kernewek Unyes by Ken George, known as Kernewek Kemmyn (Common Cornish) (George, 1986). It retained the Middle Cornish base but regularised the spelling on the basis of phonemic theory and established rules relating spelling to pronunciation. Kernewek Kemmyn was adopted by the Kesva an Taves Kernewek as their preferred system.

Similarly, language organisations have played a significant role in the local language planning for small communities. Typically some of these institutions have focused on literature rather than language specifically, but have nonetheless played a powerful role in shaping languages and language use. For example, the Selskip foar Fryske Taal- en Skriftekenisse (Society for Frisian Language and Literature) was established in 1844 primarily to promote Frisian through its literature. The primary function of the society was to develop a writers' union in which the 'working members' were to write literary works in Frisian (Feitsma, 1986). It published literary work in Frisian first in the magazine *Iduna* and from 1850 in the annual *Swanneblummen* and instituted a literary prize for Frisian writing. The Selskip, although primarily a literary body, was of necessity involved in language planning work as an element of its publishing work. It established an archaïcising variety of Frisian as the literary norm, with spelling conventions adopted from Old Frisian. These subsequently became codified in the Selskip's grammar. As the principle publisher of Frisian language texts, the

Selkip exercised a considerable influence in the early period of the standardisation of Frisian (Hoekstra, 2003).

Other organisations have focused on the maintenance of language and culture more generally, such as the Institut d'Estudis Occitans (IEO), established in 1945 as a co-ordinating body for work in maintaining and developing Occitan language and culture. The IEO is an essentially militant *occitaniste* organisation expressing a conviction in the unity of Occitan language, culture and territory and this set of beliefs has had a powerful role in shaping ways in which the revitalisation of Occitan (as opposed to that of local varieties such as *languedocien*, *auvergnat*, *limousin*, etc.) has been conducted (Kremnitz, 2001).¹ The establishment of a movement in support of Occitan as a single named language has therefore been a significant achievement of the IEO, and other militant organisations. The IEO is particularly engaged in Occitan language education through publishing teaching materials and conducting language courses. It also publishes a number of literary works and periodicals in Occitan and conducts conferences and other public events. As part of its work, it has adopted a unified spelling system, which has become the norm in Occitan language education. The work of the IEO has contributed significantly to the forms of language used in the *Calandreta* schools, although there is a tendency in Provence to use the older roumanillien orthography (Belasco, 1990). In both these cases, it can be seen that the work of an organisation with a language focus requires local level language planning as a practical necessity for undertaking written communication within their field of work. Such work may then be applied more widely, or may be revised or resisted, in the on-going development of the language.

Language planning work is also conducted by official institutions which are not necessarily language oriented. One of the most prolific of these groups has been religious bodies. The work of missionary societies in the development of languages has been particularly significant and in these cases, language planning work has been secondary to proselytising, but a central tool for it. In some cases the impact of missions has been on the development of literate forms of vernacular languages and in others it has been on language spread. Missionary activity in South America at different times followed both of these trajectories, at first developing vernaculars and then replacing them. Early Spanish missionary activity in South America played a supportive role for local languages, including the establishment of a chair of Quechua in Lima by the Society of Jesus in the 1570s (Sánchez, 1992; Sánchez & Dueñas, 2002). The establishment of Quechua within the education system necessitated further work to develop a written form of the language and write grammars and dictionaries. As the process of colonialism unfolded, missionaries increasingly came to favour the spread of Spanish as the language of religious teaching and proselytising. Sánchez and Dueñas (2002) argue that the decision-making regarding the use of Spanish or indigenous languages for religious work was not based on a coherent top-down policy, but was rather undertaken locally according to the agendas and sympathies of particular individuals or groups within the missionary Church. In Taiwan, Dutch missionaries developed a written form of Siraya, a southern lingua franca, for missionary work, with the language later coming to be used for administrative matters in the Dutch colony (Tsao, 1999).

Protestant missionaries of the nineteenth century tended to have a strong role

in the development of local written vernaculars with many missions establishing written language forms and working in the area of Bible translation. In so doing they both developed written language forms and sought to introduce literacy into local language ecologies, often with changes to the use patterns of local languages. For example, the Methodist mission in New Georgia (Solomon Islands) established Raviana, the local language of the mission area as the lingua franca of the mission, being used liturgically and in the mission schools and hospital. As communities with other languages joined the mission, Roviana was adopted as the language for these contexts, leading to eventual shift to the mission language (Dunn, 2007).

Since the Second Vatican Council, the replacement of Latin with vernacular languages in the liturgy of the Catholic Church has also shaped local language planning decisions (Liddicoat, 1993). In multilingual communities, the change in liturgical practice may have led to the development of multilingualism within a particular church's practice or it may have lead to the use of a single local language and the imposition of linguistic uniformity on congregations. In some contexts, the use of vernaculars in the Catholic liturgy was the first modern use of the language in a valued context, affecting the perceived prestige of the language. These local decisions can have strong political consequences as statements of group identities and aspirations, as in the case of the adoption of Tetum in East Timor from 1975. In this case, the use of Portuguese had been banned and the use of Tetum was a form of symbolic rejection of Indonesian as the newly imposed official language (Carey, 1999).

Local community education groups may also be significant agents for micro language planning. Such local groups often establish educational undertakings in order to fill gaps found in mainstream provision or even to resist perceived discrimination within the macro-language planning context. The New Zealand Māori-medium Kōhanga Reo or 'language nest' is a pre-school movement which began and was developed with very little government support. The success of the movement, however, has had a considerable affect on the nature of Māori language education in New Zealand (May, 1998). The Kōhanga Reo movement has grown to include primary schooling in the Kura Kaupapa Māori and also in secondary and tertiary-level institutions. Since 1990 both Kōhanga Reo and Kura Kaupapa Māori have been incorporated into the state educational system and have received government funding. In Scotland, the Sabhal Mór Ostaig² is a similar community-generated educational institute, but in this case it was established to teach tertiary level courses, especially vocationally oriented courses, through the medium of Gaelic. In 1983 the school began its first full-time further education course and since 1997, as part of the UHI Millennium Institute, it has begun to offer Gaelic-related degree programmes, and postgraduate qualifications (Smith, 2003). Its initial course offerings sought to bridge the traditional-modern dichotomy confronting the Gaelic language ecology in Scotland and included Gaelic broadcasting and multi-media, business management and information technology (MacDonald, 1985). Its degree programme also includes music, literature, media studies, language planning and economic development.

This section has reviewed a number of agents of language planning in local contexts – at an individual, pressure group and organisational level. It shows