

THE CHANGE OF LANGUAGE AND THE LANGUAGE OF CHANGE: A
CONSIDERATION OF SOME OF THE ASSUMPTIONS BEHIND NON-
GOVERNMENTAL LANGUAGE PLANNING PROJECTS: IMPLICATIONS
FOR LANGUAGE IN EDUCATION POLICY

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ABSTRACT

Language planning and language policy are currently being debated by both politicians and educationists. Language policy is seen by both Afrikaner nationalists and some progressive educationists as the key to political and economic power. This dissertation argues that language policy-making alone cannot achieve political goals. It also proposes that the most successful and most democratic policies are those which are "facilitatory and enabling rather than compulsory and punitive" (Fishman, 1991: 82) and which are differentiated to take account of existing sociolinguistic contexts.

Chapter 1 begins by looking at definitions of language planning and language policy. Following this it examines some of the terms that people use to speak about language and languages in language planning. The concern here is not with establishing fixed meanings but with how the use of these terms constructs certain "realities", for example relationships amongst languages. This chapter also looks at some of the proposed relations between language and "reality".

Chapter 2 briefly outlines the history of language planning in South Africa, focusing on language medium of instruction in education. It examines the Nationalists' and the ANC's language policy positions. A postscript discusses the agreement reached in November 1993.

Chapter 3 looks at the role of various non-governmental associations in the language policy debate. It also examines the phenomenon of white advocacy of increased status for African languages.

Chapter 4 deals with the process of language planning. Who decides on language goals and through what mechanisms are goals promoted?

Chapter 5 asks questions about what bilingual or multilingual medium of instruction models would mean in terms of classroom practice and underlines the lack of consensus in bilingual education research about universally-applicable solutions.

Chapter 6 summarises the main arguments covered in the dissertation and makes some general recommendations about language-in-education policy.

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I declare that:

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is my own work, that all the sources used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references, and that this dissertation was not previously submitted by me for a degree at another university.

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PREFACE

Language policy currently has a very high profile. There are daily items in the Afrikaans press, for example, about the status of Afrikaans and language policy is one area being wrestled with in the negotiations between the ANC and the Nationalist Party. This very topicality proved a major problem during the writing of this dissertation, because different parties' positions would shift from week to week. For example, in November 1993 the Nationalist Party and the ANC reached an agreement about national language policy.

Language policy is also an accessible topic - everyone has something to say about it. Most importantly, language policy seems to mean so many things to so many people, to carry a political and symbolic weight. People seem to be trying to achieve non-linguistic goals through lobbying for certain language policy options and I wanted to question whether language policy-making would actually achieve these goals.

I chose to focus on non-governmental language planners because the government's language policy has been subject to much more public exposure. More importantly, it was because I found the work of non-governmental language planners, particularly that of Neville Alexander and of the National Language Project (advocating strong multilingual models), so interesting and rhetorically seductive. I wanted to "poke away at meanings and assumptions", as Carole Edelsky puts it (1991: 7).

In looking more closely at their work and my own reactions to it, I have grown more questioning of some of the assumptions and expectations behind their project. However, I am not arguing against the promotion of multilingualism and multilingual language policy and would certainly not wish this dissertation to be interpreted in such a way.

The fact that I belong to no political organisation, nor to any language policy lobby groups or language policy decision-making structures has given me considerable freedom to voice my personal opinion in this dissertation. On the other hand, it means that I have none of the experience and insights gained through being actively engaged in such work.

CHAPTER 1

GENERAL ASSUMPTIONS AND THEMES

In this chapter I will briefly explore general definitions of language planning and then focus on assumptions about the role of language in society which inform and motivate language planning.

These assumptions will be grouped under four headings:

- * "the order of things"
- * language and ideology
- * language and the post-structuralist Symbolic
- * language and nationalism

Whilst I shall approach these themes in a general way, my concern will be with the ways in which South African language planners have taken up these concerns.

Building blocks: What is language planning?

A comprehensive definition of language planning would be: "the advocacy, determination of, or implementation of attempts to change the structure, functions or status of a language or language variety". In this somewhat clumsily phrased definition, I have drawn on James Tollefson's discussion of definitions (1991: 16).

The conventional distinction drawn between corpus planning (alterations to the structure of a language) and status planning (alterations to the functions or status of a language) is a useful one. Corpus planning includes the creation of orthographies, standardisation and the coining of new terms (Tollefson, 1989: 24). An example of corpus planning given by CB Paulston is the French Academy's ratification of masculine gender for "auto" (Paulston, 1992: 157). Corpus planning is typically carried out by language specialists. Status planning, in contrast, is usually carried out by people in positions of institutional power who are not primarily language specialists. The history of Afrikaans in South Africa provides a good example of status planning. The status of Afrikaans was boosted by its being made an official language and a compulsory subject for school-leaving exams.

The example of Afrikaans shows that there is a significant overlap between corpus and status planning. The decision to extend the domains in which a language is currently employed usually entails some form of corpus planning if it is to succeed. For example in many African countries, governments have taken the decision to promote the use of African languages as media of instruction in school but have not provided the financial and infrastructural support for these languages to be developed as academic languages, with the result that the colonial languages continue to be used (Ngalasso, 1990: 67).

What is the difference between language planning and language policy? Most writers see language policy as a sub-set of language planning, which refers to governmental efforts to change the status (and, if necessary, structure) of a language (Tollefson, 1989: 24). I agree that it is a sub-set, but would like to broaden the definition to include other influential institutions. For example, powerful people in institutions such as universities and workplaces often have quite considerable freedom to decide upon and enact language policies within their own domains. Language policy-making, then, implies the authority to enact a policy within a particular domain.

Another useful distinction is that between language planning as a process (which includes advocacy, policy formation and corpus planning) and language planning as an academic discipline (the study of language planning).

The change of language and the language of change

Why do people attempt to change the structure or status of a language? A fundamental assumption behind most language planning is that there is a direct causal relationship between linguistic factors and other social phenomena. Nigel Crawhall of the National Language Project (NLP) makes this assumption explicit in the introduction to his paper "Language and Materialism":

The establishment and *raison d'être* of the NLP is predicated on the belief that language can change society. (1991: 40)

Kathy Lockett makes the same point by quoting RL Cooper:

Language is the fundamental institution of society ... To plan language is to plan society. (Cooper, quoted in Lockett, 1993: 43)

The thesis that language is the most important element in a society, determining other aspects of social life, seems to me to be simplistic. To give an example of the kinds of debates this overemphasis on language leads to, the underdevelopment of many African countries is often blamed on their multilingualism (Fishman, quoted by Kennedy, 1989: 19). J Rogers argues the opposite case, that it is in fact the presence of a single European national language which "contributes to the economic misery of many people" in Africa (Rogers, 1989: 10). To attribute levels of economic development to linguistic causes seems to me to gravely underestimate political and economic causes.

Christina Bratt Paulston is one of the few language planners to have pointed out that what are perceived as "language problems" are often actually indicators of more general problems:

In discussing language problems, then, it is important to understand whether they are legitimately problems of language or whether the language situation is merely symptomatic of social and cultural problems. (Paulston, 1987: 10)

Social stratification or structural inequality is the result of many interlinked factors. In any given socio-political context the "effects of [language] plans and policies on the distribution of economic resources and political power" (Tollefson, 1991: 35) will differ, but I would argue that they are not the primary determinant.

The two opposing language planning approaches identified by Tollefson, the "neo-classical" and the "historical-structural" (Tollefson, 1991), are both based on the assumption that "to plan language is to plan society". The real difference between the two is that neo-classicists hold a functional world view, which sees government as a neutral body which rationally carries out language planning to ensure political and economic participation, whereas historical-structuralists hold a conflictual world view which sees government as the self-perpetuation of an elite group which uses language planning to create and maintain unequal social and economic relationships.

Tollefson's analysis of the way that language planning is, in the current American context, a crucial mechanism for disadvantaging immigrants from certain countries seems very accurate to me but this analysis cannot necessarily be lifted out of this

context and applied to very different situations. Tollefson writes of the need for a theory which can

specify the role of language in the processes which structure societies, and the ways in which planning can affect these processes. (1991: 37)

Such a theory will also need to take into account the fact that "the role of language in the processes which structure societies" will differ from country to country, and from context to context.

In this light the concept of "linguicism" is not helpful. Tove Skuttnab-Kangas defines linguicism as:

ideologies and structures which are used to legitimate, effectuate and reproduce an unequal division of power and resources ... between groups which are defined on the basis of language (on the basis of their mother tongues). (1988: 13)

This term universalises and simplifies issues of the intersection between language and socio-political power which are complex and often highly specific to a country and time (consider apartheid South Africa's use of the mother-tongue as medium of instruction, for example).

As an analogy to "racism" and "sexism" it also carries a heavily negative value, which contributes to the already over-polemical nature of the language debate in South Africa. For example, K Heugh quotes Skuttnab-Kangas's statement that monolingualism (being able to speak only one language) is "a reflection of linguicism" and as such is

an illness, a disease which should be eradicated as soon as possible, because it is dangerous for world peace. (Quoted in Heugh, 1993a: 3)

In this section I have argued that linguistic factors should not be seen wholly to determine social organisation and that linguistic factors will have different effects depending on the context. I will now look more specifically at the assumptions behind language planning by examining four "language and society" themes.

The order of things

Both linguistics and language planning, like most disciplines, proceed by classifying and ordering phenomena. In doing so they create hierarchical relationships which are then often accepted as reflections of given reality, rather than as intellectual constructs. For example a "language" is seen as different from and superior to a "dialect" (which is further distinguished from a lower term "patois" in French), although there are theoretical and practical difficulties with this distinction (Haugen, 1972).

The part that linguistic taxonomies have played in language planning and particular in colonial contexts, is an interesting and underexplored area. Linguistic taxonomies establish hierarchies - see for example, the Nguni/Sotho language "tree" (NLP Conference Office, 1991: 11).

Johannes Fabian discusses this question at length in his monograph on the language question in the Belgian Congo earlier this century (1986). Colonial language planners believed that multilingualism was a threat to order and felt the need for "established hierarchical relations among languages" (p. 48):

As a figure of thought [the taxonomic tree] was used to express notions of inclusion and subsumption. It encouraged "ordering" languages in terms of branches and levels. (p. 81)

In this classificatory scheme there were generally three levels. The colonial language (the "national language") occupied the tip of the pyramid, "lingua francae" ("vehicular languages") the middle and "indigenous languages" and "dialects" the bottom (p. 51). In most contemporary South African language planning proposals, languages are assigned to levels in this way (see chapter 2).

Fabian notes how many of these terms are ambiguous and overlapping (for example, a "vehicular language" such as Swahili was also an "indigenous language") (p. 51). The terms sound authoritative and self-evident, but in fact their use constructs linguistic "needs" and gives the "answer", of particular roles for particular languages. They also allow writers to refer to particular languages in a disguised way, whilst seeming to adopt a neutral and general stance.

Fabian argues that linguistic typology and classification are always artefacts "rather than an accurate indication of communicative praxis" (p. 82). Looking at the taxonomic

count of 200 Congolese languages as linguistic "outsiders", Belgian colonial authorities concluded that the Congolese people needed supra-regional languages in order to understand each other and they decided to "promote" such languages and make them serve the colonial system. Fabian points out that at the time of these debates, very little research had been done on "mutual intelligibility, multilingualism and spheres of wider communication" and that perhaps intergroup communication was not a pressing problem as far as the Congolese were concerned:

the language question belonged to those problems of largely European making whose real importance lay in the fact that they legitimised regulation from above. (p. 82)

It is interesting to note that in a similar fashion English has been proposed as a "linking language" between indigenous South African language groups by writers who seem ignorant of degrees of mutual intelligibility (Ronge, 1993) and of widespread multilingualism in some contexts. R Fasold argues that a linking language is unnecessary in the Pretoria-Witwatersrand-Vereeniging (PWV) area because of the multilingualism and multidialectism which has arisen through contact (Crawhall, 1991c: 6).

This multilingual context prompted Sarah Slabbert to question the "transparency" of the term "mother tongue" (1993). In a study of people living in the PWV area, she found that there was often no singular "home language", but that different languages were used by family members depending on the context. She noted that the term "father tongue", rather than "mother tongue", was used by most African-language speakers for the concept of a dominant home language. This was because traditional custom for most language groups stipulated that the wife and children of a man should learn and use his language in the home. However, in reality, such linguistic "intermarriages" result in bilingualism for all the family members (see also Dube, 1992). Similarly, the respondents used different languages at work and in their leisure activities, depending on contextual factors (Slabbert, 1993: 3). Slabbert concludes:

Placing people in eleven language boxes as current language figures does, and which form [sic] the basis of language planning at present does not reflect the realities of our multilingual society, particularly with regard to the black urban population. (1993: 2)

Linguistic theories often appeal to the concept of "evolution". The trope of progress from simple beginnings to higher forms has been a cornerstone of colonial discourse and of theories of modernisation. Linguistic theories that rely on this concept are "pidginisation" and "creolisation". Fabian found that such "diachronic models of contact-language development that postulate evolutionary sequences from simple, reduced pidgins to more complex creoles" were not plausible when applied to the development of varieties of Swahili in the Congo (Fabian, 1986: 96). The concept of "evolution" is often evoked in South Africa to construct African languages as "primitive" and English as more "advanced".

In this section I have explored the ways in which the terms used in both language planning and linguistics influence the ways in which we conceive of languages and linguistic situations. Language planners need to "unpack" the history and politics of language taxonomies and of terms such as "lingua franca", "linking language", "regional language", "national language" within their particular context.

Language and ideology

James Tollefson's work, which has been influential in South Africa, (NEPI, 1992; Heugh, 1992) relies heavily on the concepts of ideology and hegemony - see for example, the introduction to *Planning Language, Planning Inequality* (Tollefson, 1991).

"Ideology" means "world view", "the overall perception one has of what the world, especially the social world, consists of and how it works" (Robertson, 1985 :152). In the Marxist tradition "ideology" refers to "an interpretation of reality" which is "taken for granted" by members of a society but which reflects the interests of a minority ruling elite (de Kadt, 1992: 10). This biased version of reality holds sway because the elite direct the economy and the main institutions of society (for example, the legal, educational and parliamentary systems, the media and religion). In the classic formulation by the French structuralist Marxist Louis Althusser, ruling class ideology structures all aspects of life, including people's perceptions of morality and their own identities. Tollefson writes: "Ideology shapes behaviour. Yet, because it is largely unconscious, ideology is inherently conservative" (1991: 11).

"Ideology" ensures the automatic reproduction of the status quo, which can then only be challenged by a vanguard which is (impossibly) "outside" ideology. Althusserian

Marxism, although it opened up exciting theoretical vistas, offered little purchase to possibilities of revolutionary change, or indeed to any form of or dissent. These theories of ideology exaggerate both the power and the cohesiveness of a putatively static "ruling class".

They also reduce all phenomena to the same level. For example, the "ideology of the dominant class" becomes "the ideology of English". This approach actually exaggerates the importance of English in international and local contexts whilst attempting to depreciate its value. Arabic, Japanese and German, for example, are economically important languages and all over the world communities exist that are bilingual or bidialectal in languages other than English (for example, the former Soviet Union). The reductionism and pessimism involved in the concept of "ideology" is evident in the title of Tollefson's book, *Planning Language, Planning Inequality*, in which all language planning is seen as working to the same malignant end.

In South Africa it is the National Language Project who have most clearly taken up the theme of the ideological hold of English. The lack of an indigenous language lobby in South Africa is explained not only as the result of apartheid's use of ethnicity to divide and rule, but also as the result of a dominant ideology which serves the interests of present and emerging elites who use English for business and politics.

The term "hegemony" (originally used by Antonio Gramsci) is similar to the term "ideology". Hegemony refers to the consensus that a ruling class manages to establish amongst most sectors of society regarding its legitimacy and ability to govern. Unlike "ideology", then, the concept of "hegemony" acknowledges that different social groupings can contest this consensus and that such contestation can bring about shifts in power relations (Crawhall, 1991b). Hegemony thus seems the more useful term for analysing a society undergoing political change, such as South Africa. Unfortunately, "hegemony" and "hegemonic" are often used by writers as if they were identical with "ideology" and "ideological".

For example, Nigel Crawhall of the NLP discusses the process of "transformational intervention" thus:

we can attempt to promote the voices of the disempowered (marginalised, oppressed) sectors of the society while simultaneously constraining the use of the hegemonic codes by the ruling class. This could be done by the conscious

manipulation of the sociolinguistic rules in the society that would positively evaluate unempowered people's speech. (1991b: 42)

This passage raises a number of difficulties. To begin with, who is the "we" located between the disempowered and the ruling class? How and in what ways have this "we" escaped from the "hegemonic codes" of the ruling class? On what basis do their interests coincide with those of the "disempowered"? If this "we" claims to know better than "the disempowered" and "the ruling class" what implications does this have for democratic decision-making? I will return to this last question in Chapter 4.

Secondly, the question of coercion emerges. Crawhall speaks of "constraining the use of the hegemonic codes by the ruling class" and of a "conscious manipulation of sociolinguistic rules in the society". How will this "we" be able to enforce these measures if they are situated "outside" the ruling class? And to what extent can sociolinguistic rules, which after all emerge from people's own experiences and desires, ever be entirely subject to "conscious manipulation"?

To summarise, the belief that "ruling class ideology" explains and ensures particular current practices depends on dualist explanations of society ("rulers" and "masses") which lead either to despair and pessimism or to condescension and coercion.

Language and the (post-structuralist) symbolic

Contemporary post-structuralist theories of meaning and identity have also entered the language debate in South Africa although in a somewhat strange fashion.

Elizabeth de Kadt draws on these theories in her compellingly-entitled paper "The dangerous power of English" (1992) where she writes:

the most dangerous power of language, however, is a covert power which language exercises over its speakers, which I will term "signitive power".

(p. 10)

However, she shifts quickly from saying that language in general creates and constrains meaning to saying that specific languages create and constrain specific meanings. She

cautions against an English-dominant language policy thus:

accepting English in this way will mean simultaneously - and generally unwittingly - accepting a pre-existing interpretation of reality. (p. 12)

Ulrike Kistner has teased out similar shifts in the work of other South African writers on language planning. She points out that they conflate language as a symbolic order with a particular language (1991: 87).

The view that language per se is a symbolic order is derived from contemporary post-structuralist theories of subjectivity, in particular Lacanian psychoanalysis. These theories claim that it is only through language that meaning and personal identity (subjectivity) are made possible. Language is the "primary structure and locus of subject constitution" (Kistner, 1991: 87). Most theorists understand this proposal to apply to language in general, so that the process of subject constitution is not seen to differ depending on whether the child is brought up to speak French or Zulu, for example. Furthermore, the meanings created in language are never unitary and stable.

De Kadt's conflation of language as symbolic order with a particular language (here English) leads her to believe that speaking English means "accepting a pre-existing interpretation of reality", that when you speak English you inevitably subscribe to that "set of values and concepts" which constitute a dominant "ideology" (1992: 10).

De Kadt's position is a new twist on the Sapir-Whorf brand of linguistic relativism where a particular society's shared language code shapes the way its members experience and interpret the world in a static and total fashion. Crawhall, too, has noted how influential the Whorfian view of language and ethnicity has been in South African academia (1992a: 2). This view ignores the existence of varying interpretations of reality within any speech community and the fact that meanings created in language are always contextual, multiple and unstable.

These points relate closely to the themes in the "language and ideology" section. This nexus of "social theory" themes of ideology, cultural hegemony and the linguistic construction of reality have influenced much language planning in non-governmental circles in South Africa.

Language and nationalism

The importance of the concept of nationalism for understanding the motives behind and the rhetoric of language planning is the theme of much of Joshua Fishman's work. He argues that groups wishing to wrest political power mobilise linguistic identity to construct a "national" identity which then forms the basis for their claims to political power. Changes in language policy are:

a useful lever for doing many desirable things... including, of course, excluding from their jobs the old bourgeoisie and substituting for them new men". (1972: 42)

There are two main contexts for the mobilisation of linguistic identity for "nationalist" purposes. The first is the case of minority indigenous or immigrant groups whose leaders claim either secession from the state or improved political and economic conditions. The second context is that of areas which were only constituted as "nation-states" through the processes of colonisation and decolonisation. The discourse of nationalism aimed to unify groups within the colonial territory, both in order to fight against colonial oppression and in order to "guarantee" political stability in the newly independent country.

In the first context nationalist themes often appear under the guise of "minorities" and "minority rights", including "language rights". This context of minority nationalist groups in "Western" countries is the source of much of the language planning theory which has influenced the South African debate (Tollefson, 1991; Skuttnab-Kangas, 1988). I will return to this point when discussing the debate over medium of instruction policy in South Africa in chapter 5.

In both contexts, nationalist claims to political power are usually based on a contrast of the "oppressed" and "authentic" vernacular with the "oppressive" "imposed" language. The focus on "authenticity" of language and culture often relies on formulae which equate vernacular language, ethnicity and political and economic interests. Fishman writes:

for prospective protoelites the vernacular was (and is) very much an instrument of power. (1972: 42)

Crawhall admits that vernacularisation policies have often served the interests of proto-elites:

such a policy is usually implemented by nationalists who have no intention of empowering the disadvantaged, but rather intend switching one dictatorship for another. (1991: 43)

Fishman comments:

Even where no unifying vernacular has immediately been available, nationalist movements have commonly set out to either find one or create one. (1972: 57)

This is reminiscent of Neville Alexander's proposals for a new standard for both the Nguni and the Sotho language group (1989).

In South Africa the uses to which African vernaculars have been put in apartheid political and educational policies have severely limited the part they could play in nationalist discourses. So, for example, there has not been significant support for policies promoting indigenous languages from African leaders themselves. Where questions of "national identity" and "national language" have arisen, a colonial language, English, has most often been seen as a supra-ethnic language which could facilitate "nation-building".

Neville Alexander considers the task of "nation-building" the main reason for engaging in language planning (1989). Both in his work and the work of many other "progressive" language planners the terms "nation building", "national unity" and "national culture" (or "core culture") are invoked without being carefully unpacked in the way in which sociolinguistic concepts, for example, are analysed by the same authors (see for example Lockett, 1990: 30).

Kistner argues that such an emphasis on "national unity" and "the people" does not take account of the "intense social antagonisms and inequalities which are not easily neutralised and naturalised in terms of one overriding unitary national identification" (1991: 86; see also Muller, 1993: 55). The appeal of (and impossibility of) such an "overriding unitary national identification" are figured in Crawhall's use of the singular

case in this statement:

In a true democracy the language of the masses should be the standard language (Crawhall, 1991a: 5).

Perhaps calls for nationalism, which ask for the suppression of differences in the name of a common cause or identity, are incompatible with a recognition of and appreciation of multilingualism.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have discussed what I see as the main assumptions behind language planning in a general way, obliquely referring to particular South African language planning positions. This discussion around assumptions behind language planning and conceptualisations of linguistic diversity informs the more narrowly-focused chapters which follow and is reprised in the conclusion.

CHAPTER 2

"OFFICIAL" LANGUAGE POLICY: PAST AND PRESENT

In this chapter I will review the history of government language policy and medium of instruction policies in South Africa up until the beginning of the 1980's. Following this I will discuss the Nationalists' and the ANC's language policy positions. Although extra-parliamentary language planning associations influence the positions of political parties, these associations are discussed separately (see Chapter 3).

Post-structuralist theory and the crisis in political and theoretical Marxism have led to the questioning of explanatory models which rely on linearity and intent. In particular, the current situation in South Africa and the form future events will take, are open to many interpretations. Consequently, I have not used any general model of state or economic power (any "grand narratives") in trying to describe past and present language planning.

Historical overview

Here I have drawn on the accounts of Malherbe (1925), Tunmer and Rose (1975), the De Lange Language Report (1981), Heugh (1985) and Luckett (1992a). I will discuss "white" education policies first.

White education

During the time of the Dutch East India Company's government of the Cape (1652 - 1795) the colonists used Dutch for their church services and mission schools. As time went by, a new form of "Dutch" emerged, which differed from the metropolitan Dutch of the time. The new language which emerged is now known as Afrikaans. The second half of the nineteenth century and the first ten years of the twentieth century was a period marked by many struggles over medium of instruction policy. South Africa was during this time composed of two British colonies and two Boer republics. The considerable rivalry regarding medium of instruction policies for white education reflected the economic, political and religious differences between the "Dutch" and the

"English". Language was one of the most visible markers of difference between the two groups and as such served as a point of mobilisation.

In the Cape, the British authorities periodically tried to enforce English-only policies in public schools, even if the school population was predominantly Afrikaans-speaking. Key figures in this anglicisation drive were Herschel and later Milner (Heugh, 1985: 39-40). Milner's insistence on English medium of instruction led "Dutch" churches and parents to organise a system of independent schools, linked to the Nederlandse Gereformeerde Kerk (p. 40). This system, "Christian National Education", later became the brand-name for a more elaborated but similarly parochial and Calvinist educational approach.

The situation in the Boer republics was reversed. The republican authorities insisted on Dutch as a medium of instruction which displeased the English-speakers who arrived during the mineral boom. English-speaking parents established private English medium of instruction schools organised under the aegis of the Witwatersrand Council for Education (Heugh, 1985: 39).

Following the British victory in the Boer war, the 1910 Union Act brought the country under a single centralised (white) government. The fact that English and Afrikaans were jointly declared official languages is partly attributable to the prevailing discourse of "reconciliation" but it also seems to reflect the considerable pressure exercised by the Afrikaans leader Herzog on this issue at the constitutional negotiations. A contemporary observer describes how Herzog presented a detailed proposal for language policy (relying on regulation and coercion) which was watered down by the British (Rose and Tunmer, 1975: 165-9).

Smuts and Herzog both in turn adopted conciliatory medium of instruction policies which encouraged bilingualism. The legislation acknowledged the principle of mother-tongue instruction at least up to and including the fourth standard (with the exception of Natal where parents' choice prevailed) and promoted the principle of bilingualism (Malherbe, 1925: 415). However, as Malherbe points out in a wry sentence to which educationists today should pay attention:

the fact that these principles were recognised on the statute book was quite a different matter from their practical application in the schools. (Malherbe, 1925: 415)

In reality, poor standards of second language teaching, a lack of fully bilingual teachers and hostile and asymmetric socio-economic relations all served to hinder pupils' attainment of bilingual competency. The perception was that Afrikaans-speaking children suffered (Luckett, 1992a: 9).

In addition, the statutes regarding medium of instruction policy in dual and parallel medium schools of this period were extremely complicated and ambiguous. Malherbe writes (once again, perhaps prophetically) that the "language clauses were so intricate that they were liable to different interpretations by different people" (1925: 383).

When the Afrikaner Nationalist Party came to power in 1948 they abandoned dual and parallel medium policies (Rose & Tunmer, 1975: 187). They advocated the rigid separation of schools according to language, with the second official language taught as a compulsory subject. They consciously strove to promote Afrikaans which they envisaged as the future dominant language of South Africa. At the same time they began to bring educational provision for Africans under state control.

African education

No direct state education was available to African people in South Africa until 1953. There was a limited amount of educational provision by mission schools. The missionaries, who were mostly English speaking, found it necessary to learn local languages and create standardised orthographies in order to evangelise effectively. Initial enliteration in the mother-tongue preceded rapid transition to English (Luckett, 1992a: 8).

In the 1930's and 1940's the linguist-turned-education inspector Eiselen played an important part in preparing the ground for the rearrangement of African education. Eiselen argued that the mission schools should fall under state control and that the mother-tongue should be the medium of instruction throughout primary school, with each school serving a linguistically homogenous population. Cynthia Kros has discussed Eiselen's prestigious academic linguistics background and how it provided him with the theoretical justification for total linguistic and social segregation (1990). Eiselen encountered considerable opposition, particularly from the Transvaal African Teachers' Association, who argued in 1931 that English "had not been found wanting as a medium of instruction, that African languages were not sufficiently developed to

meet the requirements of modern economic life" and that African language medium of instruction would "perpetuate tribalism" (quoted in Kros, 1990: 9).

Eiselen eventually overrode all objections. From the early 1950's African schools were divided according to linguistic criteria and they were instructed to use mother tongue medium of instruction until the end of primary school. The Nationalists introduced several measures to promote Afrikaans in African schools. Both English and Afrikaans were made compulsory subjects introduced within the first two years of schooling. Another stipulation was that Afrikaans should be the medium of instruction for half the time in secondary school (along with English).

The extended mother-tongue instruction was difficult to enforce in practice, due to the meagre funds allocated to corpus planning and textbook production and the lack of credibility of the Nationalist government amongst African intellectuals and parents. African parents and teachers also resisted the promotion of Afrikaans, both because of the motivations behind it and because of the extra academic pressure it placed on pupils.

Even more pressure was placed on pupils in 1976 when, because of changes to the length of primary schooling, they had to write their primary school-leaving examination in both English and Afrikaans, after only a year's use of Afrikaans as medium of instruction. This issue was one of a host of educational and socio-political grievances which led to the student protests of that year.

After 1976 the government reduced the use of the mother-tongue as medium of instruction to four years (until the end of standard 2). The 1979 Bantu Education Act allowed the school to decide which official language to use as medium of instruction after standard 2 and most schools chose English. However, the government did not provide adequate infrastructural support for English in black education (Young, 1990: 128).

In 1981 the Human Science Research Council's (HSRC) *De Lange Report on Education* appeared, arguing for wide-ranging reforms in education. It recommended that schools and parents be given more say about when and how the transition from mother-tongue to English medium of instruction should take place. It urged that African pupils should only have to learn two languages (one of which should be English or Afrikaans) instead of three (van den Berg, 1981: 8-9). At the time, the government

rejected the De Lange Report's recommendations - only in the past few years have some of the recommendations been taken up.

In 1990 the HSRC's Threshold Report severely criticised the sudden changeover in medium of instruction at the end of standard 2, arguing that the changeover should take place in a more gradual and planned-for way (Macdonald, 1990). I shall discuss the Threshold Project at length in Chapter 5.

In 1991 in an apparent response to both the De Lange Report and the Threshold Report, the Department of Education and Training (DET) responsible for African education gave the parent bodies of individual schools the right to decide when each school should make the changeover. This devolving of language in education decision-making occurred at about the same time as the substantial privatisation of white schools. The medium of instruction choices offered to parents are: English only from first year ("straight for English"), sudden transfer to English after a given period (the current system) and gradual transfer to English (phased in over time and over different subjects) (Heugh, 1993c: 31).

Late in 1992 67% of DET schools voted. The fears expressed by both "multilingual" advocates and by the DET itself that there would be a massive shift to "straight for English" options proved unfounded:

twice as many schools returned a vote in favour of Gradual Transfer to English than did those who favoured the Straight for English choice. (Heugh, 1993c: 31)

The results from this vote show that conventional assumptions about popular opinion are often way off mark. Without research, it is difficult to predict what decisions parents will make about language policy or to know all the factors behind their decisions. It would be interesting to try to separate out the different factors (administrative, political, social and so on) leading to the regional variations in the "straight for English" vote, for example.

Official bilingualism and apartheid

During the apartheid era compulsory bilingualism in English and Afrikaans was rigidly required and maintained through legislation in all spheres. Bilingual proficiency is required for civil service jobs, for example, and a pass in both English and Afrikaans are needed to gain the matriculation certificate.

To what extent did this compulsory bilingualism serve as a gate-keeping device to exclude speakers of languages other than English and Afrikaans? I would argue that this language policy was aimed mainly at privileging Afrikaans-speakers over English-speakers (as Afrikaans-speakers were usually more bilingual than English-speakers), rather than at excluding black people. The latter were denied access to power through more overt racially-based measures. Examples are the job reservation acts, the quotas on university admissions, the underfunding of African education, the legal limitations on owning property, land and companies, the denial of both South African citizenship through the homelands system and the denial of the vote. The policy of compulsory bilingualism in English and Afrikaans and the use of African languages in education and the homelands to reinforce ethnic divisions certainly complemented Afrikaner Nationalist political goals. I doubt, however, whether language policy played as significant a "critical role in the imposition and maintenance of apartheid" as some writers claim (Crawhall, 1992a: 5).

The current situation (October 1993)

Here I have drawn particularly on National Education Policy Investigation (NEPI) working papers by Kathy Luckett (1992a) and Nigel Crawhall (1992a).

Afrikaans as a shorthand for Nationalist fears

At the moment South Africa is undergoing a torturous and often incoherent process of political restructuring. The national Negotiating Forum has brought together political opponents to work out the form of a future government and establish areas of consensus on policy issues. In this transitional period the language question has once again assumed importance for many Afrikaans groups.

The preservation of Afrikaans as an official language and as a medium of instruction for Afrikaans-speaking children is of great importance to the Nationalist Party and to many of their Afrikaans-speaking supporters. Lockett comments that

the status of Afrikaans ... is at the heart of the contentions around language policy. (1992a: 24)

Why is the status of Afrikaans an object of such concern to the Nationalists? Crawhall argues that the Nationalists equate language and ethnicity:

The preservation of Afrikaans is clearly important to the entire Nationalist bloc owing to the Afrikaner ideological constructs of language, culture and nation. (1992a: 11)

The Nationalists and their traditional constituency fear a loss of political and economic power in a future political dispensation. Because in the past the Nationalists have seen political identity as co-extensive with ethnic and linguistic identity, these political anxieties are now translated into a concern with the status of Afrikaans.

The Nationalists' fear of being a political minority have led them to champion the cause of "minority rights", specifically of collective ethnic rights which are linked with collective language rights (Crawhall, 1992a: 18). For example, the Pretoria-based Languages in Contact and Conflict in Africa (LiCCA) project has promoted the idea of collective language rights (p. 11). It is within this context of the prospect of diminishing political power that we should understand the Nationalists' endorsement of "minority rights", "self-determination" and "multilingualism".

Crawhall comments that the Nationalists insist on the retention of Afrikaans as an official language, but the way in which this is done is negotiable (p. 16). The Nationalists' latest language policy model (a press release dated 27 July 1993) (Marais, 1993) differentiates between national, regional and local levels of government. The document proposes that Afrikaans and English will be retained as official languages at all levels of administration, but that regional and local authorities will be allowed to nominate additional official languages for their areas.

The Nationalists desire "the maintenance of an Afrikaans medium educational infrastructure from primary school through tertiary education" (Crawhall, 1992a: 19) and to

this end they have generated quite detailed models regarding language in education (to be discussed in chapter 5).

The elusive ANC language policy position

The ANC has paid far less attention to the "language question" than have the Nationalists. For a long time the theme of English as the language of liberation (in contrast to Afrikaans), unity (in contrast to ethnic division) and modernisation dominated ANC thinking on language policy. Recently, however, as a result of the negotiations with the Nationalists they have been forced to develop language policy positions.

In discussing all political parties, institutions and organisations one has to be wary of attributing to them a unified and non-contradictory position, when in fact they contain conflicting and fluctuating forces. This seems particularly true of the current position of the ANC. As regards language policy Crawhall observes:

The tensions between the de facto hegemony of English, the powerful and hostile Afrikaans lobby, and the lack of a vocal lobby for African languages has pushed the ANC in several directions at once. (1992a: 21).

I would add that another factor influencing the ANC is the convergence of calls for multilingualism coming from several quarters. We saw that the Nationalists invoke "multilingualism" in order to protect the status of Afrikaans and because they equate language and ethnicity. Liberal and "progressive" academics advocate multilingualism for a variety of reasons, which include seeing linguistic identity as cultural identity and seeing language policy as a potential barrier to political participation. In fact, there is a "vocal lobby for African languages", but it is composed mainly of mother-tongue English and Afrikaans speakers (for example, the NLP, Neville Alexander and the writers of the NEPI *Language Report*).

Two discernible strands in the ANC's approach to language policy reveal the degree to which their position is shaped in reaction to Nationalist apartheid language policy. Firstly the ANC has been suspicious of the mother-tongue medium of instruction orthodoxy, which has led it to keep a certain distance from the multilingual lobbyists. Secondly, they have wanted to downplay the status of Afrikaans, inasmuch as Afrikaans has often been made to symbolise apartheid.

In 1992 an ANC language commission issued a statement saying that no language should be declared "official", but that each of the 11 languages should be "fully recognised" (Crawhall, 1992a: 24). As for education, the commission argued that:

subject to the availability of public funds and private resources, primary and secondary education should, wherever possible, be offered in the language or languages preferred by parents, teachers and students. (*New Nation* 21/2/92, quoted by van den Berg and King, 1992: 24)

Crawhall observes that the refusal to grant official status to any languages and the "recognition" of eleven languages "does not make status differentiations" between languages (in particular, it avoids the question of the status of Afrikaans) and it "avoid[s] dealing directly with practical issues of medium of governance" (Crawhall 1992a: 22; 24).

This laissez-faire approach to language policy has astonished those interested in language policy in South Africa. It is so unlike the over-intricate, regulatory policies beloved of apartheid government planners. In a way of course, it is a reaction against such policies and a recognition of their likely unpopularity. The commission's statements have been criticised as intellectually and pragmatically naive, as exemplifying an indifference to language policy or as hypocritically encouraging the superior status of English whilst seeming to be neutral (Titlestad, 1993a: 30; Heugh, 1993b: 12).

Anthony Johnson of the *Cape Times* commented:

it is ... a "politically correct" policy document which strives to be all things to all people. (1992)

The actual content of these recommendations overlaps considerably with the government's proposals of the same period and later (devolution of decision-making and parental choice of medium of instruction). What is at issue is not the content but the ANC's hesitancy about "fixing" the status of particular languages (through the act of naming "official" languages) and about imposing national formulae for media of instruction. The anger directed towards the commission's statements is at the ANC's refusal to assume authority on this issue. I will return to this point when I discuss regulation, coercion and the democratisation of language planning in chapter 4. For now I would like to suggest that the ANC Language Commission's statements exhibited sensitivity rather than indifference towards the politicised language policy debate. The

refusal to "fix" the status of languages at this juncture is echoed in Ndebele's statement that this transitional period is not an appropriate time to decide on a language policy (Crawhall, 1991c: 6).

Luckett's prediction that the ANC will compromise with the Nationalists on language policy in return for what they see as more important areas seems to be holding true for the coming electoral period (Luckett, 1992a: 25). In recent public statements the ANC has indicated that it will accept Nationalist demands that Afrikaans remain an official language of government at all levels. In part, this may be an attempt to woo Afrikaans-speaking voters (white and coloured).

Postscript: The Negotiating Forum's November language policy agreement

On the 10th of November 1993 an "ANC proposal that all major indigenous languages be elevated to official status" was accepted by the Nationalist Party (*Weekly Mail*, 12-18 November). The eleven official languages would be Afrikaans, English, Ndebele, Pedi, Sotho, Swazi, Tsonga, Tswana, Venda, Xhosa and Zulu. Regional authorities were given the power to decide what languages to use for government and administration, subject to certain provisos. Amongst the more specific clauses one of the most important is that already existing language rights and statutes should not be reduced (*Die Burger*, 12 November).

How, then, does the new language policy agreement relate to the earlier policy positions of the ANC and the Nationalists?

The Nationalists' goal of ensuring that Afrikaans remains a national official language has been achieved. In addition, the language policy agreement stipulates that "already-existing language rights and statutes may not be reduced" (*Die Burger*, 12/11/93, my translation). Members of parliament are entitled to address the house in the official language of their choice and members of the public are entitled to use the language of their choice in dealing with the government at a national or regional level. However, they may find that legislation does not guarantee practice.

The ANC's proposal of eleven official languages is very similar to their earlier "no official language" approach. They do not want to be seen to give special status to Afrikaans above the African languages, nor do they want to alienate the Afrikaans

constituency by demoting Afrikaans. All nine "major" African languages are nominated as official languages at the national level rather than the few most widely spoken ones (for example, Zulu, Sotho and Xhosa) because the ANC does not want to be seen to favour particular "ethnic" groups. Like the earlier policy, the new one avoids practical questions of which languages are to be used at what levels in government. Many of these decisions are devolved to the regional level.

The agreement gives *de jure* official status to the eleven languages but does not specify what this means in practical and justiciable terms. Combined with the current lack of infrastructural support for African languages in public spheres, this will mean that in the short term the real "official" status of these languages will remain lower than that of English or Afrikaans. As for the impact of the new policy on the regions, each region is expected to nominate one or two African languages as "official" "regional" languages in addition to English (and in some cases Afrikaans). There could be considerable differences between the language policies enacted by the various regional authorities.

Conclusion

I have outlined the history of language policy, particularly in regard to education, in South Africa.

I have discussed the language policy positions of the Nationalists and the ANC. In this discussion I found useful Crawhall's observation that "the various positions of principle on language policy" are open to considerable negotiation (1992a: 1). Language policy history and practice cannot be understood in isolation from the circumstances. The Nationalists and the ANC have come to share a vocabulary of "multilingualism" and "language rights", but their reasons for using this vocabulary and their interpretations of these terms differ considerably.

The new language policy is a compromise between the ANC and the Nationalists which, through its vagueness, allows various groups to claim victory and defers making specific decisions. I have argued that strictly regulated language policies which rest on hierarchical relationships between languages are usually linked to forms of nationalism and discrimination. Perhaps the very looseness of the current language policy agreed on by the ANC and the Nationalists, which is the result of attempts to accommodate competing interests, will be conducive to fluidity and dynamism in language use.

As a final postscript, I note that the ANC's Centre for Education Policy Development issued a draft "Language Policy in Education" document in January 1994 in which they re-affirm their commitment to the principles of choice and non-regulation in language policy.

CHAPTER 3

EXTRA-PARLIAMENTARY LANGUAGE PLANNING

In the previous chapter I outlined the language policy positions of the ANC and the National Party. In this chapter I will consider several different non-governmental projects and associations that have played a part in the language debate in South Africa.

Ivory towers and "tale"?

In chapter 1 a distinction was made between language planning as a process (including advocacy) and language planning as an academic discipline (the study of language planning). In South Africa as elsewhere, the academic study of language planning and language policy has often overlapped with a party political interest in language planning as a process (for example, see Kros, 1990, on Eiselen).

"Language planning" as a self-conscious academic discipline began to take shape in South Africa through the work of Afrikaans academics in the early 1980's. Much of this work was sponsored by government funding, mainly channelled through the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC). Particularly influential in this regard was Karel Prinsloo of the HSRC. The various Afrikaans academics currently working on language are all concerned with the future status of Afrikaans, but cover a spectrum of political views.

In 1989 a project called Languages in Contact and Conflict in Africa (LiCCA) was set up at the University of Pretoria (Crawhall, 1992a: 17). LiCCA organised a conference in 1990 where collective ethnic rights were linked to language rights (p. 18), a theme which dovetailed with the Nationalists' new concern with "minority rights" (discussed in the previous chapter). There was much criticism of LiCCA from those who saw it as a vehicle for Nationalist strategising around language policy, but it is now acknowledged that many of its members are non-aligned (Alexander, personal communication).

A non-academic body, die Stigting vir Afrikaans, was founded in 1992 to lobby for the retention of Afrikaans as an official language, through press campaigns and public meetings.

In the middle '80's English-speaking academics began to contribute to language planning study. The 1986 South African Association of Applied Linguistics (SAALA) conference at the University of Cape Town was the first South African conference to focus specifically on language planning and was opened by the internationally renowned sociolinguist Christina Bratt Paulston.

Also in 1986 the English Academy conference included several sessions which dealt with language planning. The English Academy has traditionally seen English both as a "neutral" language and as the carrier of "progressive" and "modern" ideas, in opposition to Afrikaans. This characterisation of English as an "innocent language" (and of its speakers as "innocent") was substantially challenged by Njabulo Ndebele, in an opening address delivered at the 1986 conference. Ndebele argued that the uncritical acceptance of the superiority of English as a lingua franca was usually accompanied by an equally uncritical approach to colonial institutions and attitudes. However, he carefully avoids equating language with culture, arguing that English can and should "assume the cultural colour of its respective users" (Ndebele, 1986: 14). Ndebele also urged the Academy to abandon its preoccupation with Standard English, suggesting that lexical and grammatical features that have developed (and are developing) should be accepted (p. 13).

In 1992 the Academy Executive made a submission to the CODESA negotiating forum proposing that English should be the main official language and that the variety of English should be Standard British English. Many Academy members disagreed with both the manner and content of this submission, arguing that they had not been consulted and that the proposal was educationally and sociolinguistically unsound (Young, D, 1993: 186-7). In spite of significant criticism of this policy at the English Academy conference, the English Academy persists with its position on Standard English, as can be seen in its latest presidential statement (Titlestad, 1993b).

The English Academy's promotion of English is echoed in many English-medium newspapers and magazines (see for example, Ronge, 1993). It presumably also reflects the views of predominantly English-speaking business leadership (Crawhall, 1992a : 26).

The National Education Policy Investigation (NEPI)

Many "progressive" academics and language practitioners have felt that the onus is upon them to counter the government's considerable language planning research and language policy-making capacities in order to produce "progressive" policy.

The National Education Policy Investigation attempted to bring these academics together to contribute towards the restructuring of education. The impetus for the work came out of the National Education Crisis Committee, an ANC supporting organisation. In essence it was an educational "think tank" which produced a series of reports in 1992, one of which, *Language*, dealt with language-in-education policy (NEPI, 1992).

Kathleen Heugh has pointed out that the Report veers uneasily between discussing ideal options and desirable principles and predicting what is likely to happen, given certain factors (for example, the funding criteria of the World Bank) (Heugh, personal communication). The Report also tries to synthesise the many different positions of the contributors, some of which are mutually contradictory.

The language-in-education policy that the Report finally endorses is one where the mother tongue is used for initial enliteration, followed by English medium of instruction with at least one other language as a subject (NEPI, 1992: 90). The arguments for and against different models of bilingual education which are made in the Report are discussed in chapter 5.

The National Language Project

The National Language Project (NLP) is a "funded" organisation which was established in 1983 through the efforts of the educationist and anti-apartheid activist Dr Neville Alexander.

Alexander argued that the oppressed African majority needed to be able to communicate in a common "non-ethnic" language in order to break down the linguistically-based particularistic identities created by apartheid. English was best suited to be this neutral "linking" language. Consequently, the original plan was to call the Project the National English Language Project (Heugh, 1987: 216).

The goal which motivated the establishment of the NLP, therefore, was to contribute towards bringing to power a unified African majority. Alexander's socialist convictions are reflected in this belief in unity and totality. In the space of 10 years the NLP has moved from promoting English as a *lingua franca* over "ethnic" languages to a denunciation of the high status of English and the institutional neglect of indigenous languages. It is not surprising that the content has changed several times whilst the theme has always been one of national unity and the radical transformation of structures.

Combining his desire for unifying nation-wide *lingua francae* and for the promotion of the indigenous languages, Alexander has suggested that two new standard language varieties "Nguni" and "Sotho" should be created out of the existing Nguni and Sotho language families. He refers to this as "harmonisation", which word suggests a "natural" and appropriate coming together. Joshua Fishman has identified this common paradox in language planning proposals whereby "natural processes" have to be "helped along" (1972: 46-3). Fishman also remarked that nationalist movements often desire to create a common vernacular if no convenient one exists (p. 57).

Alexander's proposal seems to contain a residual belief that linguistic diversity is inherently problematic and needs to be reduced. It also seems to suggest that language is the only maker and marker of political and social difference. These remarks apply equally to many other writers dealing with language policy in South Africa besides Alexander, but it is he who has wrestled with these questions in the most appealing and public way.

The NLP's shift to the advocacy of multilingual language policy and medium of instruction policies draws most of its arguments from foreign contexts. They refer to research in African countries which correlates poor educational pass rates with the use of non-indigenous languages as media of instruction (Heugh, 1993b: 7-10). They also draw heavily on the work of Tollefson and Skuttnab-Kangas, who argue that language policy is a key means of discrimination against minority groups in Western countries (pp. 4-6). In chapter 5 I will discuss this research in more detail.

The NLP propose language in education policies which would promote proficiency in two languages as a minimum, but preferably three. They argue that the target languages should all be used as media of instruction, ideally throughout the school system (Heugh, 1992a: 3).

The considerable consensus around the promotion of multilingualism, evident in all parties' agreement that bilingualism is a minimum requirement, obscures the differences between parties as to how they envisage the details of future political structures and syllabus and classroom practice. I will return to this question in chapter 5.

How influential is the NLP? Alexander and the NLP have expended considerable energy in creating and popularising the language debate in anti-apartheid circles. Alexander's book *Language Policy and National Unity in South Africa/Azania* is widely cited in both local and overseas considerations of South African language planning (Laitin, 1992: 136; Brown, 1990: 65). The NLP publishes a magazine quarterly, which in 1993 changed its name from *Language Projects' Review* to *Bua!* They organised a conference on language planning in 1991 which tried to encourage "grassroots" political participation, with limited success (McLean, 1991: 5-7). They also organise many workshops and seminars aimed at both teachers and the general public, often in conjunction with Neville Alexander's Project for Research into Alternative Education in South Africa (PRAESA).

The regional nature of most (academic) and political activity in South Africa makes it hard for organisations to have a national influence and hard too to assess any organisation's influence. The NLP seems to have considerable influence in Cape Town, being the only organisation focusing on language in "progressive" circles, its viewpoints tend to be taken as correct by other service and political groups (see for example, literacy organisation USWE's Darryl McLean, 1993). It makes good use of the press as a forum.

Nationwide, Alexander and the NLP have probably played some part in shifting the ANC to a more "multilingual" position (as discussed in chapter 2). The NLP contributed considerably towards the NEPI *Language Report*, for example through Nigel Crawhall's excellent report (1992a). However, the *Language Report's* preferred language-in-education option, that of transition to English as the sole medium of instruction, contradicts the NLP's position.

Here I pause to look at some of the tensions apparent in the NLP's work, some of which are also evident in the NEPI *Language Report*. A central tension is between a focus on state-led national-level policy and an emphasis on participatory local-level language work responding to specific needs. This is related to the tension between language policies relying on coercion and those eschewing coercion (see chapter 4). A theoretical tension which recurs through their work is between the view that radical

transformation of existing political, economic and educational systems is necessary and the view that such radical transformation is unlikely to happen but should not deter attempts to achieve as much as possible within present circumstances (chapter 1 and chapter 4). Another tension in their work is between a "cultural" argument for multilingualism and minority rights phrased in terms of recognising and reconciling cultural diversity and a "pragmatic" or "functional" argument for targeting specific languages in specific contexts as candidates for extended use in the public and private sectors (chapter 4).

How does the NLP envisage its future role, given the current political changes? According to Crawhall, the changed national context and a reassessment of their strengths and capacities has prompted the NLP to shift attention from the national to the local level. They hope to promote and facilitate trilingualism in Xhosa, English and Afrikaans in the public education, health and legal systems (telephone interview, 2nd December 1993).

They hope to be able to encourage a future regional (Western Cape) education structure to adopt policies promoting trilingualism in Xhosa, English and Afrikaans in schools. To this end they have established contacts with the present regional white education department and, through PRAESA, with the ANC's Language and Education Committee.

The NLP's decision to scale down their ambitions mirrors Joshua Fishman's advice to minority language advocacy groups. He says that they often have inappropriately ambitious goals - "the typical ... scenario presents the problem of too much that needs to be done urgently and too few resources with which to do it all" (1991: 86). They are reluctant to give up these "inappropriate goals", despite evidence that they are unattainable and damage their cause. He comments that it is "hard for true and complete believers to settle for less than the full demographic and functional pie" (p. 13). He argues that popular momentum and support for the extended use of languages needs to precede its prescribed use in formal domains, for example in education (p. 13). He counsels a realistic and differentiated approach to language advocacy:

[minority language advocates] need to focus their precious but limited resources on a well-chosen, smaller, "urgent but do-able" agenda, so that which is most "urgent but do-able" may well vary from community to community... Accordingly, "tailor-made" efforts are preferable to "across the board" efforts in

which the same goals are pursued (or prescribed) everywhere. Tailor-made efforts also permit more local input, elicit more local commitment and make better use of diverse local talent. (pp. 86-7)

This approach could avoid both the defeatism linked to attempting impossible transformations and also the arrogance of coercive measures.

Monochromatic visions (1): White advocacy of multilingualism

In a forthcoming paper on language-in-education policy Zubeida Desai remarks:

it is ironic that the cause of the promotion of the African languages is largely being taken up by people who do not speak the languages. (Forthcoming)

How do we interpret the paradoxical fact that it is mainly mother-tongue speakers of English or Afrikaans who are campaigning for the promotion of African languages and multilingualism in South Africa? In the discussion which follows I use the term "white" and "black" to refer to the social and political identities constructed by apartheid.

The most obvious point to be made is that African-language speakers' wariness of the promotion of African languages is the result of past divisive apartheid language policies. This will be discussed further later.

Secondly, racial stratification through apartheid policies has for the past few decades ensured that educational and management qualifications mostly went to white people. As a result, most university-based educationists are white. These academics are often asked to play a "public intellectual" role (Prinsloo et al, 1992 : 18), to give input into policy debates and policy formation in their areas. They are influenced by overseas research about multilingualism, which usually emerges in the context of linguistic minorities.

An additional way of understanding the paradox of white promotion of multilingualism is offered by Anne Halbert who, in a refreshingly honest paper written in 1988, explores the motivations and expectations which underlie white people's attempts to learn Xhosa. In her study she interviewed Cape Town people who had attended

beginner's Xhosa courses. She suggests that "learning Xhosa"

may in fact be a metaphor for attempts to come to terms with a society in a state of transition. (p. 2)

She concludes that:

learning Xhosa must be understood as a complex set of purposes and motivations which represent attempts to come to terms with the problematic nature of the relationships between blacks and whites, and may have little to do with the actual spoken language. Unless this is recognised, there is little hope that the expectations of learners, both linguistic and non-linguistic, will ever be met. (p. 13)

Because "learning Xhosa" carries such a heavy symbolic weight for these learners they have "unrealistic expectations of both the learning process and the anticipated gains", which lead to a disillusionment with the learning process - the learners give up (p. 12).

The learners have unrealistic expectations about their ability to transform their social relations with African people. Halbert points out that

merely switching from one language to another is not enough to transform the master-servant quality of an interaction where one person is in fact the "master" and the other person is the "servant". (p. 8)

She discusses the Catch-22 situation experienced by the learners. They wanted to learn Xhosa to speak to Xhosa-speaking people, but felt that they were not able to learn Xhosa because they did not have Xhosa-speaking acquaintances with whom they could practice the language (p. 11). She found that they had no practical need to speak Xhosa in their everyday lives. The Xhosa-speakers with whom they came into contact were able to speak English or Afrikaans more fluently than the Xhosa learners could speak Xhosa (p. 10).

The symbolic meaning of "learning Xhosa" is so strong, however, that "learners' intention to learn Xhosa and their expectations of anticipated gains are unshaken by their lack of progress and the failure of the courses they attended" (p. 10).

She realised from talking to learners that guilt was a common motive:

learners experience a sense of discomfort with the social and political situation in South Africa. They puncture discussions about learning Xhosa with the words "should" and "ought". (p. 4)

Some see learning Xhosa as a joyless duty to be performed in the name of "building a national culture". (p. 4)

I find Halbert's discussion convincing because it describes both my own attempts at learning Xhosa and partly explains some of my own attraction to the idea of promoting multilingualism. It also seems immensely pertinent to the utopian advocacy of the NLP and similar predominantly white "multilingualism" lobbyists. Political and economic problems are displaced onto language and the solutions to them sought there (Fishman, 1972).

The NLP's discourse is definitely "punctured" by "should" and "ought". The following quotation, which describes an incident at a language policy seminar attended by "mostly NLP staff, project workers and academics", illustrates the themes of guilt and duty:

[The speaker] asked how many people present ... had understood what had been said [by someone speaking in Xhosa]. About half of those present put up their hands. The other half hid their shame and embarrassment behind sheepish grins and inwardly vowed to begin Xhosa lessons immediately. (*PRAESA News*, No 1, July 1993: 4-5).

The negative feelings generated by guilt and duty probably hinder good language learning, which involves playing with language, personal involvement and a willingness to make mistakes.

It is interesting that although the NLP have for years run Xhosa second-language classes, there have been no articles or papers by them reflecting on problems associated with the courses, such as Anne Halbert's paper discussed above.

The zeal characteristic of "multilingualism" advocates can easily slip from persuasion (trying to influence people's choice) to imposition (allowing people no choice at all). For example, recently Kathleen Heugh "ticked off" publishers for having produced

textbooks designed to be used for "straight-to-English" classes. She warns:

a new national education structure will need to address the role of publishers in order to ensure that they embark upon responsible and educationally sound initiatives. (Heugh, 1993c: 31)

This prescriptiveness seems to me to work against the opening up of the language debate to popular participation. This point will be pursued again in chapter 4.

Monochromatic visions (2): Desperately seeking black multilingual lobbyists

On the whole there are very few mother-tongue African-language speakers visibly lobbying for the promotion of African languages in South Africa at the moment. This is partly the result of the way African languages have been used to divide black people in the past, by the Nationalists' equating of language, ethnicity and political identity.

The African Languages Association of Southern Africa (ALASA) focuses on theoretical linguistics and literature, leaving the more controversial topics of sociolinguistics and language-in-education policy to the South African Applied Linguistics Association (SAALA) (Crawhall & Mankomo, 1991: 12).

ALASA's board has historically been dominated by white academics sympathetic to the Nationalists and their influence remains strong (p. 13). Crawhall and Mankomo argue that ALASA has not taken up a language policy advocacy role so far because of the above mentioned reasons, but that in future it might play such a role (p. 13). However, a participant at the 1993 ALASA conference reports that language policy issues were not discussed at all (Nkhelebeni Phaswana, personal communication). It seems that professional specialisation, satisfaction with English and wariness over a politically-sensitive issue prevailed amongst this group of academics.

In fact, the only calls for increased use of African languages in education made by Africans have come from education departments and language academies in the "homelands" of KwaZulu and Bophuthatswana (Crawhall, 1992a: 26). Two factors seem to account for this. The first is that promotion of a particular African language in these areas is linked to a nationalist agenda. Leaders in these "homelands" are basing their claims to political independence on discourses of nationalism - "the Zulu nation",

"the Tswana nation". Secondly, these areas are largely rural and perhaps the schools experience more severe problems with English medium of instruction than in urban areas.

Conclusion

I have examined some of the various non-governmental language planning associations. I have paid particular attention to the Cape Town-based National Language Project, a vocal lobbyist for the promotion of African languages. Fishman's work on minority language advocacy (1991) was useful in looking at the NLP's work.

Paradoxically, most of the advocates for the promotion of African languages in South Africa have English or Afrikaans as their mother tongue. It seems likely that their utopian advocacy is partly the result of displacing concern about social and economic problems (and, specifically, guilt about their own position as white people) onto the level of language and seeking the solutions to these problems through language policy where they are not to be found.

CHAPTER 4

THE DEMOCRATISATION OF LANGUAGE PLANNING

What is meant by "the democratisation of language planning"?

"Democracy" notes David Robertson "is the most valued and also the vaguest of political terms in the modern world" (1985: 80). He notes that it "only takes on a more useful meaning when qualified by one of the other words with which it is associated" and identifies four types of democracy: direct democracy, representative democracy, liberal democracy and participatory democracy (pp. 80-1).

In direct democracy the right to make policy decisions is exercised directly by the whole body of citizens. This is impractical on a national scale but can work on a smaller scale, for example in local government or within particular institutions (p. 88).

In representative democracy "the citizens exercise the same right not in person but through representatives chosen by and responsible to them" (Encyclopaedia Britannica, 1975: 458). The representative can be instructed by those she represents as to how she should vote in the legislative assembly on any particular issue (the "delegate model") or she can be free to vote as she sees fit, or according to the dictates of her political party (Robertson, 1985: 288).

The key feature of liberal democracies is that there is a "framework of constitutional restraints designed to guarantee ... the enjoyment of certain individual or collective rights" (Encyclopaedia Britannica, 1975: 458).

In a participatory democracy elected representatives hold ultimate decision-making powers but the "widespread use of public enquiries, of advisory referenda, of consultative bodies, and similar devices ... increase[s] the degree to which ordinary people participate in the forming of policy" (Robertson, 1985: 251). These categories are not exclusive: a political system may combine elected representatives, constitutional restraints and consultation.

Past South African governments have not been characterised by any of the above forms of democracy, because the majority of the population have been excluded from

participation in important decision-making structures and have been denied political, social and legal equality with a racially-defined minority.

Robertson's typology of democracies allows us to examine different possible implications of the phrase "the democratisation of language planning". Direct democracy at a local or institutional level would allow majority voting to decide language policies in those contexts, independently of central and regional government. In the liberal democratic model, "language rights", which have been agreed on by the majority, could be written into the constitution. If language policy is to be decided by elected representatives who are seen as delegates, then they are required to ascertain the wishes of their constituents and vote accordingly. Elected representatives not seen as delegates would be given more scope in deciding how to vote. In this latter case, the use of public enquiries, referenda and consultative bodies could encourage the participation of the public in forming language policy.

In language planning as an academic discipline, comparatively little attention has been paid to the question of how popular opinion is to be accessed and incorporated into language planning.

In this chapter I will first consider language attitude surveys, a form of public enquiry which can inform language policy-making. Then I will briefly reconsider the traditional focus on the state in language planning and examine the distribution of policy-making powers across different levels. I will look at the question of legislating language policy and writing language rights into a constitution. Finally I will discuss two attempts at encouraging popular participation in language policy-making.

Language attitude surveys

A traditional way of discovering popular views is the opinion poll or attitude survey. In South Africa government-linked research organisations have often carried out extensive attitude surveys on different topics. Large-scale surveys require financial backing and infrastructural expertise, as well as a cooperative attitude on the part of the researched. The government has enjoyed the first two, but scarcely the last, due to its lack of legitimacy in those communities it has called "non-white". Questions drawn up by researchers were often, at worst, insultingly phrased, or at best naively conceptualised. For example, a question such as "Which language do you use to talk to your children?" does not take into account the fact that the language might vary depending on the

circumstances or that a combination of languages might be used in some circumstances. People used to years of repressive measures remain suspicious of the motives of government-connected people asking them questions. They are also quite aware that attitude surveys do not exist in a vacuum, but are often used to "test the waters" before an already-planned measure is implemented (Kros, 1990; Fabian, 1986).

Small non-governmental organisations and "alternative" research initiatives like National Education Policy Investigation (NEPI) have avoided language attitude surveys presumably because they feel they lack the financial and infrastructural support and also because their members feel that years of experience in their particular area have acquainted them with the opinions and problems of the people they see as their "constituency". They might feel, uncomfortably, that popular opinion would actually prove to be contrary to what these researchers deem to be desirable policy. Alternatively, they might suspect that attitude surveys would yield an "unhelpful" welter of contradictions.

I will now explore these issues in detail by looking at actual examples of recent language attitude surveys. It is not my intention here to give a comprehensive overview of all the language attitude surveys which have been conducted in the recent past (see Dube, 1992 and Neethling, 1992 for overviews).

Mparutsa, Thondhlana and Crawhall, who carried out a small-scale language attitude survey in Zimbabwe, state that the goal of language attitude studies:

is to contribute to our understanding of which languages are positively evaluated, which are learned, which are used, and which are preferred by bilinguals. (Mparatsu et al, 1992: 240)

A study which aimed to gauge the popularity of English as a medium of instruction in Western Cape high schools found much higher levels of support for multilingual options than current received ideas about the popularity of English would have suggested (Young et al, 1991). The most popular MoI option across all schools was trilingual, "Afrikaans, English and Xhosa" (p. 23). This result shows the danger of unfounded generalisations about popular opinion.

Both these studies revealed frequent contradictions between respondents' answers. For example, in one of Young et al's pilot studies

75% of the Std 9 pupils wanted English as MoI, in contradiction with their previously stated wish to be taught through their mother tongue. (p. 11)

Mparutsa et al found that mother tongue Shona students both supported their own language and argued for the dominant position of English in the education system (1992: 236-7).

Survey compilers generally are not comfortable with contradictions. They reluctantly accept the social-psychological tenet of possible contradictions between attitude and behaviour (Young et al, 1991: 5) but do not consider the possibility of attitude-attitude contradictions (1991: 6). For example, Young et al ascribe the attitude contradictions which they found to "problems of respondent interpretation" and to the "unstable and poor condition of education in these schools" (1991: 11).

No doubt problems of interpretation did contribute to these contradictions. However, to me a more useful way of approaching contradiction in language attitudes is that offered by Mparutsa et al. These writers argue that such contradictions "connote larger ideological / cultural contradictions" (1992: 237). They note that:

most L1 indigenous-language speakers find themselves in a position of preferring their first language for communicative purposes yet functioning in an educational, social and economic system that emphasises the importance, even the hegemony of English. (p. 238)

The speakers prefer to use their own language and are more capable of expressing themselves in it, but their desire for socio-economic empowerment within the current system leads them to insist on the dominance of English. This is a "mutually dependent" contradiction or paradox which "embodies social contradictions inherent in the social dialectic" (p. 237).

A recent language attitude study of interest is Matilda Dube's 1992 dissertation *Language Attitudes in Soweto - the place of the Indigenous Languages*. An African Languages specialist, she provides much information about the widespread multilingualism which has been brought about as the result of interaction between people speaking different mother tongues. She also describes different language

varieties, dialects and slang languages, which coexist alongside the more "standard" African languages (p. 82). Her respondents expressed very positive attitudes towards their own languages and other African languages, and nearly all held positive attitudes towards multilingualism (p. 80). There was, however, widespread opposition to language policies which rely on compulsion. I will return to this point later when discussing mechanisms for the implementation of language policy. Unfortunately, Dube's sampling is far from random (her group consists mainly of very articulate people active in politics and the media) and it seems that she might have posed "leading" questions (Crawhall, personal communication).

What emerges from these investigations is the need to design surveys that elicit more than "mere stereotyped responses or clichés" (Mparutsa et al, 1992: 239). Researchers must examine "not a single set of language attitudes, but a complex system of seemingly contradictory positions" (p. 240) which are to be understood in relation to wider socio-cultural conflicts and power relations. If they are intelligently constructed and interpreted, attitude surveys can tell us a lot about the sociolinguistic situation and the implications for policy formation and implementation.

Grounds for regional doubt?

Most definitions of language planning assume that it is the preserve of a centralised state (Alexander, 1992). This focus on a central government is not helpful given the strong regional structures currently being established in contemporary South Africa.

The arguments for and against centralisation and decentralisation have been presented at length time and time again in the debate over federalism and in education policy discussions (see for example, Nkomo, 1992: 61-65; NEPI, 1992: 65-71). Basically, centralisation is called for to remedy the unequal social provision characteristic of apartheid and to remove elaborate and inefficient bureaucracy. Regionalism, it is argued, will reinforce existing inequalities. The proponents of decentralisation argue that there are real regional differences which will only be exacerbated rather than eliminated by unitary national policies and that decentralisation, especially at a local level, is the only way to ensure that the people affected by decisions are involved in decision-making.

In the Negotiating Forum's language policy agreement, most of the decisions about language policy are left to regional authorities. Language-in-education policy is not

mentioned. The question of how school-level, regional and supra-regional language-in-education policies will be formulated and coordinated and how they will interact with regional authorities' language policies could prove to be a complicated and controversial one. The NEPI *Language Report* suggests that language-in-education policy should be decided on at a regional or local level, but within nationally-decided guidelines (1992: 70-1). Unfortunately, they do not adequately address the crucial question of how these basic guidelines would be arrived at.

Most commentators assume that regional authorities will nominate one or two "regionally dominant" African languages as regional official languages, in addition to English and in some cases Afrikaans (Crawhall, 1992a: 29). In a few regions this would not present problems. For example, in the Western Cape Xhosa is by far the most widely-spoken African language. But in many regions there are several sizeable linguistic groupings and raising some languages in status above others could lay the regional authority open to accusations of ethnic favouritism.

Nigel Crawhall of the National Language Project (NLP) points out that "there is not yet a mechanism or formula" for deciding on what are regionally dominant languages (1992: 29). He favours what he terms a functionalist solution, whereby regional languages would be "selected on the basis of a straight majority population count" (p. 29). This "majority wins" approach is an attempt to visualise a practicable and affordable multilingual language policy. However, to me it seems at odds with the NLP's idealism and their discourse of "minority rights".

A "straight majority population count" also assumes that one can easily identify a person's "first language", an assumption which Slabbert argues does not hold true for multilingual urban populations such as that of the Pretoria-Witwatersrand-Vaal region (1993).

An iron constitution - Obligations, choices and rights

In many ways the concentration on "regional" and "local" versus "central" decision-making in language planning has obscured more interesting questions that arise when looking at democratisation. Here I would like to explore the degrees of coercion entailed in various ways of enforcing language policy. I will also discuss the implications for coercive rather than consensual language planning of differing theories of social change.

Language policy in South Africa has been enacted through statutory legislation. Compulsory bilingualism in English and Afrikaans was rigidly required and maintained through legislation in all spheres, from the post office to parliament. Bilingual proficiency is required for civil service jobs and all civil service publications must be available in both English and Afrikaans. In education, English and Afrikaans are compulsory subjects right up to matriculation and pupils have to pass both subjects in order to gain the matriculation certificate.

In the current confusion, a loosening of the compulsory bilingualism legislation seems to be happening. In education, for example, the requirement for teachers to pass proficiency tests in both English and Afrikaans has been dropped (DEC, 1993). The SABC has begun to abandon its strict "50:50" TV1 policy, whereby equal time was devoted to English and Afrikaans and it is beginning to mix languages in its programmes (for example, in the popular soap opera "Egoli" and in CCV programmes).

It seems to me that rigid and hierarchical policies are very problematic. They entrench different languages' differential status. But, most importantly, they rely on coercion. Non-governmental language planning groups have successfully identified and criticised government coercion in language planning. However, coercion "for their own good", that is to introduce new policies which, although unpopular, are "educationally sound" is a theme which stalks "progressive" language planners. In chapter 2 I showed how Crawhall acknowledged this problem of coercion (1991b). The ANC's original "no official language" position (again, discussed in chapter 2) seemed to be in part an attempt to avoid coercion in the matter of language use.

Joshua Fishman addresses the question of coercion thus:

it is highly preferable for ... advocates to initially seek out those things that they themselves, as an organised and legitimate constituency, can do for the strengthening of their own language ..., even without governmental or broader societal assistance, just as it is preferable for government funding, when and if it becomes available, to be facilitatory and enabling rather than compulsory and punitive. (1991: 82)

The Afrikaans language lobby is campaigning for "group language rights" to be included in a new constitution and bill of rights and "progressive" language planners have also called for the creation of "language rights" although as an "individual" right

(Lockett, 1992a: 24). The call for "language rights" seems quite rhetorical, as no-one specifies what they would entail. In any case legislation does not always translate into practice.

The Afrikaans lobby's relief that Afrikaans has retained its "official" status seems to me to place too much faith in the ability of legislation to ensure the continued wide use of Afrikaans in government and public administration. The focus on legislated status and rights does not take into account the social context of language use. For example, an NLP press statement points out that during the negotiations at the World Trade Centre "most of the debates took place exclusively through English" (11 November 1993). Afrikaans-speaking delegates at the World Trade Centre were not constrained by legislation to speak English at the negotiations and it would have been easy for them to use interpreters to translate from Afrikaans into English and vice versa had they wished to do so. However, the fact that nearly all the delegates understood English and that some of them did not understand Afrikaans (or pretended not to as they rejected it as "the language of the oppressor") meant that the Afrikaans-speaking delegates spoke mostly in English.

The history of compulsory bilingualism in South Africa shows that over-legislation of the language issue is linked to coercive practices.

In an interview with Neville Alexander in September 1993 I raised the question of coercion. Alexander recommended promoting the status of African languages and increasing multilingualism through "incentives" rather than having compulsory language requirements in education and for jobs:

We need to build in incentives to language policy so that people get rewarded for knowing a number of languages. I think this is very important and it's a way that language planning can be done without actual political or economic coercion. We're not saying that people won't get jobs because of language, but they will be rewarded if they do have lots of languages. That approach is much more likely to gain the consent of the people than the approach which says that you must have English, you must have Sotho etc. (Interview)

When "incentives" as a term is opposed to "coercion" in this way it sounds entirely acceptable. But the term needs further scrutiny. At what point do "incentives" become "coercion" in a competitive job market? How and by whom are these incentives formulated and how do they operate?

Alexander's position is quite complex. He sometimes seems to subscribe to the "false consciousness" or "ideological hegemony" thesis that, because the ruling class's interpretation of reality holds sway, the majority of people cannot identify their own needs and interests. Vanguard groups therefore have to identify and promote the needs and interests of the majority (Alexander, 1992: 146). This argument could lead to the rejection of democratic participation in policy-making. In Alexander's benevolent version of vanguardism, however, the masses are allowed to participate in policy-making despite their false consciousness. He envisages that they will come to identify their own interests and needs, given time, experience and the conscientising work of vanguard groups.

In my interview with him, Alexander distinguished between short-term and long-term views on language policy. He suggested that, in the short-term, Afrikaans-speaking "coloured" parents will choose English as the medium of instruction for their children. However, in the long-term these parents might realise that their children would learn to read more successfully through Afrikaans, leading to a shift back to Afrikaans medium of instruction (interview). These remarks have the advantage of acknowledging shifts in power relations over time. They also attribute to ordinary people the capacity to analyse situations and act in their own interests.

For me, then, there are unresolved tensions in Alexander's work. On the one hand he believes in popular intelligence and agency and democratic policy-making. On the other hand he believes that the majority of people cannot identify their own interests and should be guided by vanguard groups who have their interests at heart. Alexander's persistence in advocating his "harmonisation" project (see chapter 3) in the face of widespread popular opposition to it (Dube, 1992: 88; McLean, 1991) contradicts his commitment to "language planning from below".

These tensions also appear in the NEPI *Language Report* and much of the work of the NLP, where writers debate the need to introduce "parent-proof" language-in-education policy measures (1992: 43). The reactions to the DET decision to allow parents to vote on medium of instruction were patronising to parents. As I discussed in chapter 2, their fear that the majority would choose the "straight for English" option was unfounded.

These unresolved tensions are partly related to the current political transition in South Africa, where the former opponents of the government are becoming incorporated into and reshaping government structures. They also reflect the global crisis in Marxism and political theory. Both these factors have problematised simplistic and dichotomous

views of "the state" and "society". Language policies are produced and modified as the result of interaction and negotiation by different forces, rather than being imposed by an all-powerful elite and passively accepted by a helpless populace. This "conspiracy theory" of language planning, held for example by James Tollefson (1991), was discussed in chapter 1.

Harlech-Jones notes that the legitimacy accorded to the policy-makers by those who are subject to policies is crucial (1989: 164). A government which is seen as representative and fair can implement policies which would be treated with extreme suspicion in a different context. Popular goodwill, however, has its limits. Namibia provides some examples of popular checks on state language policy. The new government has enthusiastically adopted English as the only official language and is attempting to promote its use in all public spheres. Although Afrikaans is much more widely used than English as a lingua franca, it is held in disdain by the government for its associations with apartheid and South African colonialism. Theo Du Plessis relates how the audience at a Workers' Day rally walked out when the President, Nujoma, addressed them in English only. The next time he spoke in public he used interpreters (1991: 18).

Two attempts at participative policy-making

The NEPI project aimed quite explicitly to promote the participation of a broad range of groups in the language policy debate. The NEPI team tried to involve teachers and parents in the debate, for example by sending information sheets and letters to schools, but they received very little feedback. Again, when they contacted political parties there was very little response (1992: 1). The final Report, then, was based almost entirely on the views of academics.

The National Language Project's conference (1991) also tried to involve diverse social groups in the language policy debate, with limited success (McLean, 1991: 7). It seems that academic forums, by their very nature, do not attract popular participation. In addition, the academics' assumption that they are the "experts" might prevent communication between them and members of the public. In South Africa in the past academic "expertise" and repressive language policies have been closely linked (Kros, 1990; Haacke, 1987). This history makes people suspicious of "expert", "scientific" knowledge about their situation pronounced by people who are socially and experientially removed from them.

Both the NEPI Report and the NLP have made repeated calls for a national campaign to increase public awareness of and involvement in language and language-in-education policy-making (McLean, 1991: 7; NEPI, 1992: 92). "Campaign" suggests advocacy of a particular position, conscientising, rather than simply attempting to open up the academic debate. Who would organise the campaign and how would various interest groups have an equal say about language policy issues?

Democratising corpus planning

An area of language planning where academic expertise holds undisputed sway in South Africa is corpus planning. Corpus planners pay attention to the structures and forms of language, developing or authorising new words, for example (Tollefson, 1989: 24). Corpus planning in South Africa is the preserve of several language boards, one for each of the "major" African languages and one each for English and Afrikaans. These boards have historically held conservative sociolinguistic views, adopting purist and very prescriptive approaches to language (McLean, 1991: 6; NEPI, 1992: 93).

The NLP and Neville Alexander have argued for the transformation of these boards. They have called for the unification of the various boards into one national language board, whose members would be elected in some fashion (Crawford and Crawhall, 1991: 3; Alexander, 1992b: 160). More recently, Crawhall has argued that democratic participation in corpus planning would be better facilitated through several local-level bodies accountable to the public (personal communication).

The discrepancy between the standard and spoken varieties of African languages in South Africa has been noted by several writers (see for example, Dube, 1992 and Slabbert, 1993).

Fishman points out that every language is a system made up of many socio-functionally and geographically restricted varieties (1991: 341). Thus the standard variety of any language is different from the informal spoken varieties, because it serves different social functions. The standard variety is only needed for formal written communication and in speech situations characterised by formality. Fishman urges greater permissiveness and acceptance of non-standard spoken varieties in education and in public life generally (p. 344). He also argues that the written standard should be as

flexible as possible, calling for:

inclusive and permissive, rather than exclusive (excluding) decisions, particularly initially, both with respect to the selection of a standard dialect and with respect to the corpus planning undertaken on its behalf. (pp. 349-350)

I would argue that this call for flexible and inclusive standards should also apply to Afrikaans and South African English. Josef Schmied, for example, argues that "generally accepted language behaviour" should be taken as a guideline for codifying a new written standard for English in East Africa (1989: 131).

Fishman argues that "market research" methods (such as "pilot testing") are effective ways to assess the probable reception of new terms by their proposed users and to ensure that as far as possible there is consensus about their adoption (1991: 348).

To conclude, corpus planners should not stigmatise non-standard varieties and should develop a flexible written standard through consultation with the speech community for which it will serve as the standard.

Conclusion

I have argued that a future government will have to take into account various social groups' opinion about language and language in education, because people will not passively accept policies which they perceive to be against their own interests and desires. I have rejected analyses of policy-making which see the state as inevitably an oppressive, all-powerful machine. I have suggested that contempt for popular intelligence and agency and a belief that people need to be guided to make the right decisions are inimical to democratic policy-making.

Edward French's comment is apposite here:

The process of change seems to be inhibited by the survival of notions which embed unexamined attachments to centralised, authoritarian and social-engineering notions of social and educational change. (1990: 7)

I have suggested that flexible policies responding to local situations and demands are more democratic than centralised policies relying on coercion and statutory legislation.

I have also argued that taking a long-term view on language policy allows us to think of how power relations and forms of participation might change over time.

CHAPTER 5

BILINGUAL EDUCATION: THEORIES AND PRACTICES

The administration had to rely on missionary co-operation for information and especially for scientific legitimization of choices. Missionaries were expected to deliver the theory fitting colonial practice. In the debates we find, therefore, that each advocate for a specific solution of the "language question" invoked linguistic laws ... and "universally accepted" pedagogical principles. (Fabian, 1986: 78)

The previous chapters discussed the theoretical and political premises behind particular language policy stances. In this chapter the focus narrows to language-in-education policy, in particular to research on bilingual medium of instruction policies. I will begin by discussing the research done internationally on bilingual education. I will then look at which research has been drawn upon in the South African context and what research has been done here. Following this I will consider attempts to construct curricula for language teaching. Finally I will examine the implications for classroom practice of different medium of instruction options.

International research

The conditional mode

Rosalie Pedalino Porter has recently criticised bilingual education research from a positivist viewpoint:

the most serious flaw in bilingual education studies is that they report on what a group of children in a particular school accomplished, not on a comparison of two groups of children who are provided different programs. (1990: 62)

Neither do they control for pre-treatment differences (p. 71). Because of these limitations, it is very difficult to attribute differential academic achievements to a particular bilingual programme, rather than to contextual or individual factors.

CB Paulston makes a similar point in her review of the data on bilingual education:

Virtually all the research on bilingual education treats the bilingual education programs as the independent or causal variable, as the factor which accounts for certain subsequent results... [There is] no experimental study ... which looks at language medium of instruction as an intervening or dependent variable, i.e. as a variable which is either a factor modifying the effects of the independent variable, or which is the result of certain conditions. (1992: 9)

The importance of the context explains the apparently contradictory research evidence "for" and "against" bilingual education. Paulston cites three different studies of immersion programmes (where a group of children are taught all subjects in a second language): the Chiapas, Mexico study, the St Lambert, Canada study and the Culver City, USA study, all of which took place in the early seventies (Paulston, 1992: 11).

The Mexican study found that initial enliteration in a second language (Spanish) had detrimental effects on the Indian language-speaking children's academic performance. Both the St Lambert and the Culver City experiments (where English-speaking children were immersed into French and Spanish school environments respectively) found that initial enliteration in a second language improved the children's academic performance.

These contradictory findings illustrate the importance of contextual factors. The factors which seem most relevant are the different position of different social groups in relation to political power, economic power and status (pp. 12-14) and related classroom conditions such as the level of teacher training and the resources available (pp. 20-21).

The NEPI Report cautions against "drawing simplistic conclusions about the connection between failure at school and language in education policies" (NEPI, 1992: 59) and notes that, in South Africa:

with such great disparities in basic resource provision, it is not possible to single out the effects of the different medium of instruction policies on students' success or failure. (p. 32)

For example, when Sean Coughlan asked Ciskeian teachers to identify and rank their main problems "Using a foreign language such as English in the classroom" was rated only 17th, after problems such as large classes, salaries, buildings, resources and poverty (Coughlan, 1993).

Recognising the need to look at the context that policies operate in, the NEPI writers draw up a list of necessary conditions which need to exist for each policy option to be successful. Unfortunately they do not explore the broader conditions relating to the distribution of power and status in future forms of social organisation. Instead their discussion is more limited, seeming fragmented and technical (NEPI, 1992: 75-88).

The Threshold Hypothesis

Cummins and Swain's Threshold Hypothesis has had an enormous impact on bilingual education theory and practice world-wide (Porter, 1990: 60) and in South Africa. The Threshold Hypothesis proposes that a minimum level of conceptual/academic skills is needed in the first language before a child can perform academically in a second language. This is also known as the linguistic interdependence hypothesis. The hypothesis draws on research done by Skuttnab-Kangas and Toukomaa in Sweden on linguistic minorities (Cummins, 1984: 25).

Cummins and Swain make a distinction between two types of linguistic ability. The first type of ability is seen as heavily dependent on the context and relying on shared social knowledge. They term this "Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills". The second type of ability is seen as having a reduced reliance on context and is linked to abstract reasoning skills. This is termed "Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency" (pp. 26-7).

There seem to me to be several problems with the Threshold Hypothesis. The Threshold Hypothesis takes on board Vygotsky's contention that thought is only possible through language (Luckett, 1990: 32) and extends it to argue that, for the initial stages of formal schooling, thought is only possible through the child's first language. As in the discussion of de Kadt's paper (1992) (chapter 1), there seems to be a confusion between language as a system and particular languages.

The oppositions that the Threshold Hypothesis relies on between "concrete/abstract", "context-dependent/context-independent" are problematic. The claim that academic discourse and content matter are disembedded from a particular context and particular social relations is one that I would dispute (Gee, 1990). As with all dichotomies, these terms are loaded towards one of the terms, "context-free", allowing the user of the terms to speak of children being "stuck" at one level or as having "progressed" to the "higher" level. It is essentially a deficit model. "Threshold" was a popular metaphor in

1960's and 1970's development discourse. For example, writers theorised about a literacy "threshold" (a percentage of the total population becoming literate) which would lead to economic "takeoff". It is an appealing metaphor because it suggests a simple cause and a simple solution.

Thirdly, insufficient attention has been paid to the context in which the foundational Skuttnab-Kangas and Toukoma research originated. Some members of the Finnish-language community in Sweden wanted Finnish-language schooling for their children. One of the arguments they used was that children who received all their education in Swedish would grow up being able to speak neither Swedish nor Finnish "properly". The term "semilingualism" was coined in this debate to suggest the inability to communicate in any language. In Fishman's terms, this was a nationalist debate about political and economic groups which expressed itself in a concern with authenticity, purity and the emphasising of boundaries between groups (1972). From a linguistic point of view there is no evidence whatsoever for the notion of semilingualism (Paulston, 1992: 30).

Skuttnab-Kangas and Toukoma were sympathetic to the Finnish-language parents' demand for bilingual educational provision and their research aimed at demonstrating the need for such provision. This last point shows that most educational research has a political agenda in that it aims to promote particular policy choices over others. It is problematic to take research "findings" out of their original context as if they represented universally valid objective facts.

I have no alternative theory of the development of academic language skills in a second language to offer in place of Cummins's Threshold Hypothesis. However, I thought it necessary to problematise this hypothesis because of the ease with which it becomes a cognitive deficit model.

South African research

The Human Science Research Council's Threshold Project

The HSRC's influential Threshold Project on black primary education (Macdonald, 1990) makes extensive use of the Threshold Hypothesis (pp. 171-73). The Project's title uses the word "threshold" in two ways. First of all, it refers to Cummins and Swain's Threshold Hypothesis. Secondly, it refers to the sudden changeover from

mother-tongue medium of instruction (henceforth MoI) to English MoI at the end of standard two that has been the norm for children in Department of Education and Training (DET) schools in South Africa.

The report argues that at the time of this changeover, children have not learnt enough English vocabulary and structures to be able to read the current English-medium textbooks, understand English used as a medium of instruction or produce the written work demanded by the syllabus. The high drop-out rate at the end of standard three is cited as evidence of the difficulties presented by the new medium of instruction.

Macdonald et al argue for creating a better "fit" between the English language skills learnt by the pupils and the demands made of them in using it as a medium of instruction. Because they accept the Threshold Hypothesis linguistic interdependence thesis, they argue for establishing skills in the mother-tongue before doing so in English.

The writers believe that future language in education policy in South Africa will follow the present model of mother tongue enliteration followed by a transition to English as the sole medium of instruction (pp. 164-7). Their main concern is with how this transition can be made as smooth as possible. They suggest that this be done through revision of the curriculum (creating a less content-overloaded syllabus), training all teachers about language teaching and phasing in the new medium of instruction over several subjects.

NEPI (co)options: additions and subtractions

The NEPI *Language Report* (1992) and the entire NEPI report series represents an attempt by "progressive" educationists to influence current and future educational policy-making in the restructuring of education.

The theoretical underpinnings of the Report are Western - the writers refer to Tollefson's theory of language planning (p. 9) and Cummins' Threshold Hypothesis (p. 101), both of which I have critiqued. Synthesising theories and models derived from one context and transferring them to a completely different context in this way is problematic (Harlech-Jones, 1987: 72).

The Report presents seven possible options for MoI policy. It claims to be neutral as regards these policies, to be simply outlining the options rather than advocating any one

(1992: 61). However, the conclusion of the Report makes several quite clear statements which indicate which are their preferred options.

The mother tongue throughout option is dismissed as it would be unpopular with African parents. The English throughout option is ruled out by appealing to Cummin's and Swain's research (referred to above) which "suggests that initial literacy and basic concepts are more effectively mastered in the L1 [mother tongue]" (p. 89). In the previous section I showed how research points to the importance of the context in this matter.

Options in which two languages are used as MoI throughout the school system are dismissed on the grounds of unpopularity and redundancy:

Long-term bilingual MoI for all children is not likely to find favour with parents. They may see such a model as quite unnecessary, if pupils and teachers have one MoI that they can use. (p. 90)

This dismissal of bilingual MoI models seems to contradict their statement that "whatever the policy it should facilitate additive rather than subtractive bilingualism" (NEPI, 1992: 89). Significantly, though this statement is preceded by the remark:

Encouraging individual bilingualism or multilingualism should not be assumed to depend on the use of more than one language as MoI. It can be achieved in other ways. (p. 88)

This remark is not explained and can only be understood in the context of a debate within NEPI about the implications of the terms "additive" and "subtractive bilingualism".

This debate surfaces when one compares two versions of Kathy Lockett's paper on "National Additive Bilingualism". The first "public" version is a NEPI-authorized paper presented at the 1992 English Academy conference (Lockett, 1992b). Lockett's original text was modified by NEPI for the conference. The second version of the paper, in the *South African Journal of Applied Language Studies* (Lockett, 1993), reinstates the full original text. The differences between the two versions are slight, but significant.

For me, the use of the terms "additive" and "subtractive" bilingualism in the South African context is confusing. I think these terms are most clearly applicable in the case of language shift of minority language individuals in a dominant language context. "Subtractive bilingualism" would characterise the language experience of the immigrant child whose second language takes over nearly all communicative functions so that the mother tongue is either imperfectly learnt or forgotten. Subtractive bilingualism, for me implies a loss of facility in the mother tongue. Additive and subtractive bilingualism as I understand them characterise a situation where there is a dominant language group and a language minority which is granted the right to maintain its language (additive bilingualism) or is encouraged or forced to assimilate (subtractive bilingualism).

In many African countries, including South Africa, instead of a single majority language group there are several large language groups and many smaller ones. In most of these countries a situation referred to as "diglossia", or the functional separation of two languages, exists (Serpell, 1989: 94). The colonial language is used for the "higher order" domains (so called because of the political power and prestige associated with them) of government, law, broadcasting and schooling. The indigenous languages are used with family, community members and peers. In this diglossic situation the individual does not experience a language shift because she belongs to a significant mother tongue community and because the second language is a minority language in the country.

Thus the debate about additive and subtractive bilingualism in South Africa is not a debate about "maintenance" versus "transitional" bilingualism for African language speaking students, but a debate about the relative status of languages. What is at stake is whether language in education policies will attempt to increase the status and range of functions of indigenous languages alongside the use of English as a lingua franca (additive bilingualism) or whether they will perpetuate the low status of these languages by confining their use to basic education and various informal functions (subtractive bilingualism). It is in this sense that Luckett uses the terms. She argues that, to achieve "language equality", a bilingual throughout policy (English and an African language) is necessary for all pupils (Luckett, 1993: 48). Her comments on this issue were "subtracted" from the first version of the paper because her stance favours bilingual MoI options rather than the gradual transition to English MoI option preferred by NEPI.

Their favouring of a gradual transition to English MoI option is evident in their discussion of the World Bank's 1988 advocacy of a model:

which uses L1 and L2 MoI transitionally, as a stage in progress towards monolingual MoI in a language of wider communication. This is probably the model which would be most widely acceptable. (NEPI, 1992: 90)

I found that NEPI's analysis of policy options, whilst helpful in distinguishing between several possibilities, did not assist the reader in forming judgements about the most suitable MoI policy for existing and future contexts. The presentation of the advantages and disadvantages of each option and of the conditions necessary for each option to succeed is inconsistent as well as limited. "Unmet conditions" for one option are also often unmentioned "unmet conditions" for other options.

When they are arguing for their own position they say that parents who favour other options will have to be "informed" in order to choose the 'pedagogically correct' option (43), but when they argue against the bilingual throughout options they appeal to parents' opinions:

Parents, learners, and many teachers are more interested in the practical pedagogical aspects of medium of instruction than in the matter of redressing historical imbalances or promoting societal bilingualism. (p. 90)

What I find very valuable in the Report is its acknowledgement that any language policy developed for MoI needs to allow for differentiation and should be designed to be flexible over time, with built-in evaluation and revision.

Alternative evaluations

Given their commitment to language planning and policy-making from the bottom up, some education non-government organisations have begun to run private small-scale bilingual programmes. The *Language Report* speaks of the need for such small-scale alternative programmes which will "allow for constant monitoring and careful description and evaluation of how they work in practice" (1992: 59).

In this section I discuss two examples of evaluations of small-scale alternative programmes. The bilingual programmes were run at the Vuyani Educare Centre

pre-school and the St Mary's, Paarl primary school (the latter was initiated by the National Language Project). Both these programmes have been reported on in the *Language Projects' Review/Bua!*. Both reports are written by people who were involved in motivating for and setting up the bilingual programmes.

The Vuyani Educare Centre was an independent pre-school whose policies were decided on by the parents (Luckett, 1990: 29). At the establishment of the pre-school bilingualism in both English and Xhosa was seen as an important goal. The parents hoped that the children would become bilingual through informal interaction with each other and through a bilingual medium of instruction policy, with teachers alternating languages on a daily basis. What actually happened was that English became the dominant medium of instruction and the English-speaking children failed to learn Xhosa.

In analysing the failure of this bilingual project, Luckett identifies many different problems. The first set of problems can be subsumed under the heading "resources". The pre-school found it difficult to find fully bilingual teachers and the teachers lacked training and confidence in second language teaching. It also experienced difficulties in finding suitable books and other materials in African languages.

The other problems experienced were of a more general nature. There was a lack of communication and understanding between staff members and between staff and parents on policy. This was partly due to the newness of the project. It was also due to differing expectations and assumptions that arose from people's very different life experiences.

Most importantly, however, the original bilingual policy did not take "sufficient cognisance of the unequal status of the two languages" (p. 29). It seems that many parents and staff were only concerned with whether or not the children learnt English. They argued that given the lack of economic and educational rewards for speaking an African language, all the available time should be spent on teaching through the medium of English. Given the present unequal status of the two languages, Xhosa-speakers find it more necessary to learn English, than English-speakers find it to learn Xhosa.

Luckett suggests that a successful bilingual programme would have to address all of these problems openly and actively.

This is something that Gerda de Klerk's report on the St Mary's, Paarl primary school bilingual programme signally fails to do (de Klerk, 1993). In a sense it seems unfair to compare the two reports because Lockett's was written as part of a conference paper and with the benefit of considerable hindsight, whereas de Klerk is writing for the new-style, more "accessible" *Bua!*, about an ongoing programme barely a year old.

However the same issue of *Bua!* contains several long articles dealing with bilingual education in an abstract and hypothetical fashion many of which have already appeared in previous editions in similar guises.

The St Mary's report is short and descriptive in a fragmentary way. The new school language policy is for mixed English and Afrikaans medium of instruction. Because the majority of the pupils and teachers have Afrikaans as a first language, Afrikaans is used more than English. Xhosa is being taught as a subject to teachers as well as pupils and Xhosa-speaking pupils are not discouraged from speaking Xhosa whilst at school, as was the case previously.

Disappointingly, the report makes no attempt to evaluate the programme, to analyse the situation or to draw any conclusions. The report is entitled "Te min Xhosa" ("Too little Xhosa"), a quote drawn from an Afrikaans-speaking pupil's comments on the new school language policy. Despite the prominence given to this quote (as a title and typographically) the report does not try to explore the specific problems that the NLP and the school staff are experiencing in promoting Xhosa proficiency. The lack of attention given to their own programme at St Mary's suggests that this programme is experiencing difficulties which the NLP fears might undermine their advocacy of multilingual education programmes.

To conclude, if small-scale educational projects are to inform national debate and policy they need to be carefully evaluated by non-partisan researchers. Special projects are also of limited use if the conditions which produce academic success are not replicable on a wider scale.

Translations: rhetoric into reality

The Nationalists' Curriculum Model for South Africa

As I noted in Chapter 2, the present government is the only body which has issued detailed proposals for language curricula, in their Education Renewal Strategy

document (1992), which contains a Curriculum Model for South Africa. This model builds on some of the proposals in the De Lange *Language and language instruction* report (De Lange, 1981). The De Lange report complained that levels and goals in language teaching were too vague, and that teachers should be given more guidance about what was expected of pupils and for what reasons (pp. 60-111).

The Curriculum Model proposes that at least two languages be studied as subjects throughout school, except for the first and last year, where only one language is compulsory. Following the De Lange report, it makes a third language compulsory for three years in the middle-school phase (NEPI, 1992: 39). I am giving the gist of the model here, but it is actually an extremely complicated model, with six different phases in twelve years, with each phase having its own range of compulsory and optional languages. Such a complicated model might be difficult to implement in practice.

The Curriculum Model represents several important shifts in government thinking on school language policy. For example, it does not stipulate that the medium of instruction in the first few years should be the mother-tongue. Parents and schools are offered a choice of medium of instruction options, as discussed in chapter 2. In addition, African pupils would only be required to study Afrikaans for three years instead of the present twelve (ten for homelands pupils). This move illustrates the government's desire for a regional "trilingualism" which would preserve the status of Afrikaans.

The Curriculum Model replaces the distinction between "first", "second" and "third" languages with an equally hierarchical, but more flexible, distinction between "basic", "ordinary" and "advanced" levels. Learning a language at the "basic" level is defined as learning to communicate orally in that language, for day to day colloquial interaction. Learning a language at the "ordinary" level means that the goal is to develop an "adequate" ability in that language and, more specifically, to be able to cope with its use as a medium of instruction. Finally, the "advanced" level signals a well-developed academic and oral proficiency in the language. This level only appears in the higher secondary phase.

On the one hand it seems sensible to acknowledge that a mother-tongue speaker's proficiency in a language will in most cases outstrip that of a non mother-tongue speaker and to take this fact into account when devising curricula and assessment (van den Berg and King, 1992). On the other hand, the use of "levels" such as those in the Curriculum Model could reduce pupils' motivation ("we're only doing Basic Xhosa")

and serve as gate-keeping mechanisms to higher education. This question of criteria and assessment in language learning in a complex multilingual situation seems to me to be crucial, although it is largely overlooked in the NEPI Report and in the work of the NLP.

Tracing the outlines of bilingual education

Here I look at what the calls for a thoroughly bilingual or multilingual medium of instruction entail for the classroom in practice. I will first consider what I will call "formal" models of bilingual education and then move on to consider less formalised approaches.

One suggestion that is often put forward is that two teachers teach the same class, with each teacher using predominantly one language. It is argued that this creates a more natural language use situation, whereby the pupils associate the language with the person (Luckett, 1990). However, this proposal is impractical because of teacher shortages and financial constraints. In team teaching each teacher would need to be receptively bilingual (able to understand and read the other language), to be able to follow the flow and content of the lesson.

A second suggestion often made is that different subjects could be taught through different languages. Neville Alexander has proposed this model, with parents deciding on which subjects should be taught through which languages (Heugh, 1993a: 7). What might happen is African languages are used for "unimportant" subjects (such as physical education). Also pupils might make subject choices based on their linguistic preferences, which both artificially defines their academic path and allows them to avoid learning both languages. In this model, the individual teacher would not have to be bilingual.

The other models that I will consider all rely on the individual teacher being fully bilingual. In the first case, the teacher could alternate languages on a daily basis. In the second case, the teacher could repeat all the information and instructions in both languages. Here there is a danger that the pupils will only listen to and use the language that they understand the best. In the third case, the teacher could integrate the use of both languages, so that an understanding of both is necessary to follow the lesson. Kathleen Heugh of the NLP favours this last model (Heugh, 1993a: 7).

At the moment many African teachers who are meant to use English as the sole MoI actually use a lot of their mother-tongue in lessons. This either takes the form of translation (repeating information and instructions in both languages) or of the functional integration of both languages. Both these practices are subsumed under the label "code-switching" (Adendorff, 1992). Although these practices are widespread, the educational authorities (and sometimes teachers and parents) view them negatively. If translation is too heavily relied upon, then pupils are unlikely to learn to construct and decode meaning in the second language. However, many language specialists feel that the reality of code-switching in classrooms should receive official sanction and code-switching practices which promote bilingualism should be identified through research and encouraged (NEPL, 1992: 90; Adendorff, 1992).

Discussions of bilingual medium of instruction practices tend to focus, as mine has done, on the teacher rather than on the linguistic interaction between the teacher and the pupils. For example, Adendorff's study of code-switching in Natal classrooms analyses in detail the language used by the teacher without ever considering what language(s) the pupils used to ask questions and to respond to questions (1992). In considering the different ways of encouraging bilingualism in classroom practice, we need to keep pupils in mind as agents not just as passive recipients of language.

Teacher training institutions have an important, yet under-researched, role to play in training bilingual teachers. Without bilingual teachers, there is no chance of bilingual policies being implemented. The Department of Education and Culture has removed the requirement that teachers pass English and Afrikaans proficiency tests. Now teachers are required to be competent in any two languages, with this competency being assessed by the training institutions (DEC, 1993: 23). However, the extensive infrastructure that supported the English and Afrikaans proficiency system is not in place for the African languages. For example, there are generally no posts in African language methodology in university teacher training institutions. The University of Cape Town School of Education is currently trying to establish such a post (Doug Young, personal communication). It is essential that resources be made available so that greater numbers of teachers are trained to teach African languages as subjects and so that all trainee teachers are given the opportunity to develop some familiarity with an African language.

Many of the debates about bilingual education assume that children have a single identifiable mother tongue, which is the language that they speak at home and in their neighbourhood. Sarah Slabbert has problematised this assumption for South African

multilingual contexts, where children may speak several different languages and varieties depending on their interlocutors and on the circumstances (1993). She implies that in these multilingual areas children should not be separated into different classes or schools on the basis of their purported 'mother tongue'.

She suggests that "medium of instruction does not have to be regulated strictly, it can be fluid, it can all depend..." (p. 7). This flexible approach to medium of instruction policy emphasises that the particular sociolinguistic context should be taken into account instead of the application of across the board formulae. I will return to the question of classroom practice in my recommendations in the final conclusion.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have looked at bilingual education theory. I have shown how there is very little consensus on what bilingual education policies are most appropriate for different situations. Language in education policies need to be looked at in the context of the education system as a whole, which is in turn linked to the social, political and economic situation.

I have critiqued the Threshold Hypothesis and argued against the use of the term "subtractive bilingualism" in the South African context.

I have argued that although "alternative" bilingual or ESL programmes are often appealed to by lobbyists, these special projects are often not replicable on a national scale. In addition, many of the evaluations of "alternative" programmes are carried out by the designers of those programmes themselves, which is obviously undesirable.

Finally, I have tried to imagine what different language in education policies might look like in practice. Of importance here were the curricular questions of goals and levels objectives in language learning and different models of bilingual medium of instruction. I also contrasted formal models with an approach which emphasised flexibility and responsiveness to particular sociolinguistic contexts.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION: LOOSENING OUR TONGUES

In this concluding chapter I briefly review some of the assumptions held by language planning advocates and my reservations about these assumptions. Then I make predictions and general recommendations about language-in-education policy in the short-term in the Western Cape. Finally, I end with a cautionary note.

Review of assumptions and reservations

Language policy is seen by both Afrikaner nationalists and some progressive educationists as the key to political and economic power. I will summarise the assumptions that they make about language and language policy and indicate some of my reservations about these assumptions. These arguments are traced in detail in the previous chapters; what follows is, therefore, rather a crude summary.

The Nationalist Afrikaans lobby sees language, ethnicity and culture as equivalent. This triangle has been the basis on which they have constructed their political identity and political structures and on which they expect and desire others to construct their political identities and structures. Because they have linked linguistic and political identity in this way, the Nationalists' political anxieties regarding the future are translated into an insistence on the retention of Afrikaans as an official language at the national level and an endorsement of "multilingualism" and "language rights".

I have argued that language, ethnicity and culture are not equivalent and that these terms refer not to stable and unitary phenomena but to complex and changing social constructions.

Educationists promoting the extension of African languages in government and education argue that language policy constitutes a crucial mechanism for disadvantaging the majority of African language-speakers. They argue that, materially, the dominance of English and Afrikaans in business, education and political forums and processes blocks their progress in these spheres. In addition, African language-speakers are

disadvantaged culturally, because they come to perceive their own language and culture as inferior.

I have argued that although language policy has been used to further sectarian interests in this country, its role was a minor one compared with that played by repressive legislation in other spheres. It seems to me that language policy by itself will not bring about political and economic changes. I would question the assumption that African language-speakers perceive their own language and culture to be inferior, which is disproved by responses to attitude surveys - see for example, Harlech-Jones (1989), Mparutsa et al (1992) and Dube (1992).

A key assumption is that the ruling class (whether black or white) wants a language policy which will disadvantage the majority of African language-speakers and entrench their own power. It is argued that the African majority do not call for increased use of indigenous languages in politics and education because of the historical Afrikaner Nationalist equation of language and political identity and also because they accept the high status of English. It is also argued that small groups need to conscientise the majority and put pressure on the ruling class to adopt more progressive policies. However, this argument reaches an impasse because the ruling class is seen as very powerful, even to the extent that it can determine how people see their own situation (through the workings of "ideology").

Advocates for the promotion of African languages seem to have what Fishman terms "inappropriate goals" (1991: 13), that is, they insist on the necessity for immediate massive transformations, even when their own analysis of society makes any such transformations seem unlikely. These unrealistic goals may lead to a loss of public sympathy for their cause and to defeatism and despair on the part of the advocates themselves. Fishman suggests that more localised, realistic and longer-term views are called for.

Multilingual advocates believe that language policy can be a tool to encourage greater multilingualism, which would then lead to greater cultural and political unity, often spoken of in terms such as "nation-building". They sometimes assume that learning an African language will allow English and Afrikaans-speakers to interact with speakers of that language on an equal social basis. I have questioned whether socio-political inequalities and tensions can be resolved through using one language rather than another.

Advocates for the promotion of African languages have usually not been speakers of those languages. I have looked at the reasons behind this phenomenon and suggested that the promotion of African languages needs to have a broader base if it is to have credibility.

In terms of education, most multilingual language policy advocates follow Cummins' argument that children can only develop cognitive skills and linguistic skills successfully through their mother tongue (Cummins, 1984). Thus they argue that the mother tongue should be the medium of instruction in early education. They argue that the mother tongue should be retained in more than token form as a medium of instruction in secondary education, because dropping it would perpetuate its low status.

I have discussed some of the arguments against Cummins' hypothesis. I have also problematised the assumption of a single mother tongue or home language in multilingual urban contexts, following Slabbert (1993). These reservations led me to recommend language-in-education policies which are flexible and responsive to the context (see below).

Both the Nationalist language lobbyists and the multilingual advocates seem to believe that legislation and compulsion are the most effective ways to retain or to alter the status of a language. In contrast, I have argued that the most successful and most democratic policies will be those which are "facilitatory and enabling rather than compulsory and punitive" (Fishman, 1991: 82) and which are differentiated to take account of existing sociolinguistic contexts.

Whilst I was writing this dissertation the Negotiating Forum adopted a vaguely-defined language policy of eleven official national languages (November 1993). In my analysis of this policy, I argued that its vagueness was due to the fact that it was a compromise between various competing interests and to the ANC's reluctance to regulate language behaviour. This view is confirmed by the newly-released ANC document, the Centre for Education Policy Development's "Language Policy in Education" (January 1994), which explicitly rejects the use of regulation in language in education policy.

Unfortunately, this document was issued too late to be considered in depth in this thesis.

Language policy in education in the Western Cape - speculations and recommendations

Here I will follow Fishman's advice about approaching language policy in a realistic and differentiated way by looking specifically at language-in-education policy in the short-term future in the Western Cape. I will first predict what I think is likely to happen and then end with some general recommendations.

Regarding general language policy the region will probably have three "official" languages: Afrikaans, English and Xhosa. It seems unlikely that there will be a coherent and formalised national language-in-education policy for the next 5-10 years. It appears that regional authorities will be to a large extent responsible for these decisions. These regional authorities will only be formed after a general election and the process of transforming and amalgamating the various education departments' bureaucracies will probably be slow.

Against this background, I predict that the current "official" policies are likely to remain in place in the Western Cape for some time. Former Department of Education and Training primary schools will continue to teach through the medium of Xhosa for the early years followed by a shift to English. English-medium and Afrikaans-medium schools will continue to teach through those media respectively. Afrikaans looks likely to remain a compulsory subject, because, as the Nationalist lobby will argue, it is widely-spoken in the region as a whole. I think that Xhosa as a subject will be offered and taken up as an option in more and more previously "white" and "coloured" schools, but it seems unlikely that it will be made a compulsory subject.

In addition to these "inherited" policies, classroom practice will be affected by ongoing developments at several levels. The Department of National Education continues to develop and disseminate syllabi which serve as models for the various education departments. Textbook publishers are trying to gauge needs and guess future policies and the books which they produce help to shape classroom language education practices. Schools experiencing demographic change develop their own policies to respond to pupils' linguistic needs (for example, bridging programmes, extra-mural English lessons).

Teachers in formerly "white" or "coloured" schools who now have Xhosa-speaking pupils in their classes often feel helpless and frustrated in the face of language difficulties encountered by these pupils. The teachers sometimes argue that it is not

their responsibility to deal with these difficulties, and that the pupils should either not be admitted to the school or that they should be given special programmes by specialist language teachers (Abrams, 1993: 5). There is a desire for an answer which will come from "outside".

The policy of absolute segregation of schools based on mother-tongue has to be rejected, because of the ethnic exclusivity and unequal distribution of resources which it implies. The other solution, that of intensive specialised support for both teachers and pupils, requires expertise and money that is not available in most contexts.

Language-in-education policy cannot be seen in isolation from broader educational practices and structures or from educational and social practices within particular schools. Teachers' helplessness in regard to the linguistic problems faced by their pupils reflects their lack of say about most aspects of their work.

The recommendations that I would make regarding language in education policy thus begin with more general recommendations about allowing teachers and pupils to articulate their experiences and needs. My suggestions have been informed by a discussion with Anne Schlebusch, who is preparing an MPhil dissertation on the experiences of Xhosa-speaking pupils in non-DET schools in the Western Cape.

More communication is needed between teachers and policy-makers so that official policies, curricula, syllabi and assessment practices are all developed in consultation, rather than unrealistically imposed from above. Teachers' input on these matters should be facilitated at the school, regional and national levels. Linked to this would be a re-evaluation of the goals and methods of teaching, so that content-overloaded syllabi and rote learning of technical terms would be replaced by an emphasis on understanding.

More communication is also needed between teachers and pupils so that pupils' experiences, needs and attitudes with regard to language-in-education are understood. Teachers should be careful not to impute cognitive or linguistic "lacks" to pupils simply because they do not share the teacher's home language.

A relaxing of attitudes towards languages is needed, so that pupils and teachers feel free to mix and play with different languages in the classroom. Code-switching and dialect use in spoken interaction should be accepted. A flexible approach to medium of instruction would allow students and teachers to decide what language(s) to use for particular activities.

Teacher training institutions should devote more resources to African languages, both in order to increase the number of trained Xhosa-as-subject teachers and to increase the linguistic resources of teacher trainees whose first language is English or Afrikaans.

I have argued throughout this dissertation that language policy should be facilitatory and enabling rather than coercive, because coercion disregards people's own assessment of their situation and generates negative feelings. We need to make sure that languages-as-subjects are available in schools, but they should be optional rather than compulsory.

Once adopted, policies need to be continually evaluated by all parties concerned so that lessons are learnt from previous successes and failures and changing needs can be identified. Much research needs to be done about how teachers and pupils can be drawn into the process of forming language-in-education policy responsive to different contexts. Earlier in this dissertation I have mentioned the need for more detailed sociolinguistic research into African languages in South Africa.

Not the last word

The way people use language is complex and cannot be adequately reduced to a formula. Similarly, there are many ways of approaching the question of language planning and policy in South Africa. In this dissertation I have probed the contradictions and impasses in my own thoughts and the writings of others about language policy. In typical academic discursive style, I have assumed the "authority" which easily accompanies authorship, placing myself "above" the issues and people that I write about. Let me here explicitly state that, despite these discursive conventions, I see this work as a tentative and subjective contribution to the language policy debate.

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