

## MULTILINGUALISM AND LANGUAGE PLANNING

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### **Summary**

After describing the emergence of language contact research and briefly clarifying the notion of ‘multilingualism’ this contribution explores the historical dimension of language planning as a social phenomenon. Subsequently, attention is paid to the development of language planning as a discipline and the terminological and content-related ambiguities related to it. To illustrate the both fascinating and difficult interplay between multilingualism and language planning attention is paid to aspects of corpus, status and acquisition planning in language minority settings within the European Union. To conclude, research trends in the field of language planning are being sketched.

### **1. Introduction**

Although language contact between individuals and groups is as old as the Babylonian confusion of tongues, language contact research first obtained a secure position in applied linguistics in the 1970s through the development of the social sciences. Emerging disciplines such as the sociology of language, sociolinguistics, the ethnography of communication, social psychology and the ecology of language elaborated upon important stimuli given by Uriel Weinreich and Einar Haugen. Stressing the social dimension of language and thus the fact that ‘language contact’

rather entails contact between speakers and/or language communities than contact between languages on an abstract level, these disciplines made abundantly clear that any analysis of multilingual behavior is useless without a consideration of the ecological dimension of the given situation. Especially in language planning as a field of study as well as a societal activity the interplay between structural elements of language and the social context in which the language operates draw attention to the fact that language is primarily a social construct. This chapter will elaborate on this view in subsequently dealing with multilingualism, language planning and the interplay of various forms of language planning in language minority surroundings.

## 2. Multilingualism

With the influx of research on multilingualism in the 1970s and the birth of contact linguistics as a discipline at the Brussels Research Center on Multilingualism in 1977 the intrinsic scope of the concept widened. Today multilingualism appears as an open-ended concept. One of the distinctions that often facilitates any discussion on the topic of multilingualism is the one between individual and societal multilingualism. Individual multilingualism concentrates on the multilingual individual, and studies, e.g., aspects related to a person's degree of multilingualism and the organization of the multilingual brain. Societal multilingualism primarily concentrates on the interplay between language on the one hand and political, economic, social, educative, cultural and other determining forces in society on the other hand. Of interest here are, e.g., the presence of more than one language on a state's territory or within multinational organizations and companies, the adaptation of educational systems to multilingual surroundings, strategies that are or need to be developed to counterbalance and/or enforce the situation of asymmetrical multilingualism that naturally characterizes every language contact situation, and situations in which language conflict plays a prominent role.

Research on societal aspects of language contact has shown that language contact almost inevitably leads to language conflict, although linguists have also demonstrated language conflicts in so-called monolingual language communities. Language conflicts arise from the confrontation of differing standards, values and attitude structures, and strongly influence identity image, upbringing, education and group consciousness. Efforts to the solution of language conflicts or societal language problems can be considered the core business of language planning.

While the introduction of language planning as a field of study mainly dates back to the 1960s, language planning as an activity is probably as old as mankind. Historical examples of language planning activities serve as the background of many recent quests for an overall language planning theory.

## 3. Language Planning in Historical Perspective

A description of language planning in historical perspective is often linked to the language unification and purification activities of the *Académie française* that was established in 1635. In 17<sup>th</sup> century Europe such language unification and purification activities were, however, not limited to France. In baroque Germany, e.g., such rather

loosely founded language academies as the *Fruchtbringende Gesellschaft* (founded in Weimar 1617 to the example of the Italian *Accademia della Crusca*), the *Aufrichtige Tannengesellschaft* (founded in Straßburg in 1633), the *Teutschgesinnte Genossenschaft* (founded in Hamburg in 1642), and the *Pegnitz Schäfer* (also: *Hirten-und Blumenorden an der Pegnitz* or *Pegnesischer Blumenorden*, founded in Nürnberg in 1644) tried to protect and/or free the German language from foreign influences. With the exception of the *Pegnesischer Blumenorden* that still is regionally active, all of these language academies ceased to exist in the course of the 17<sup>th</sup> century. The reasons for this are societal and political: the political fragmentation of Germany, its entanglement in and the after-effects of long-lasting conflicts such as the Thirty Years War (1618-1648) hindered the establishment of a central language academy or cultural institution and retarded the standardization of the German language as it had been instigated by Martin Luther in the early 16<sup>th</sup> century. The fact that Germany was largely divided and found itself in an enduring political turmoil also largely explains why for a long time it did not participate in colonial adventures to the example of such centrally organized and united powers as France and Spain.

In the early days of Spain's colonial adventures the Spanish grammarian Antonio de Nebrija urged the Spanish queen Isabella of Castilla in 1492 to allow the Spanish language to accompany Spanish rule in the conquest of the New World. Looking at the present situation in the New World it seems that Nebrija's wish of Spanish language spread has largely been fulfilled. Surely this example should not give the false impression that language spread was the main goal of the colonization efforts of medieval Spain. The actual outcomes of colonization (by Spain or other European powers), however, show that the primary political and economical motives were accompanied by and/or resulted in the spread of the colonizer's language that served both as an effective tool in accomplishing ideological (religious) motives and as one of the main symbols of political power. As a means to confirm and enhance political power the colonizer's language was often installed in education. A typical example is the replacement of Arabic by French in schools in those parts of Northern Africa that in the 19<sup>th</sup> century were controlled by France.

Judging from the colonial policy, the treatment of language minorities within their own European territory and the release of such documents as the edict of Villers-Cotterêts (1539) with which all non-French idioms were banned from public administration it is hardly an exaggeration to characterize the French view on language from an historical point of view as rather monistic. As such it sharply contrasts with the language view that is characteristic of the cisleithanian part of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy (1867-1918), i.e. that part of the Monarchy to the west of the river Leitha. As is amply explained in Austrian and German literature the Hapsburgs treated languages on an egalitarian basis, especially also on the level of administration and education. The polyglot tradition of the cisleithanian part of the Hapsburg Monarchy therefore is not only a rich source of information on the functioning of language planning and language policy. It might also function as a useful point of comparison for language planning and language policy in the European Union as it exists today. The diachronic study of language planning has the potential to enrich synchronic views on the phenomenon and can without any doubt continue to contribute in a substantial way to a consistent language planning theory.

#### 4. Language Planning as a Discipline

One of the first to systematically tackle the phenomenon of language planning was Einar Haugen. By his own account Haugen launched the term language planning in linguistics after having heard Uriel Weinreich using it in a seminar at Columbia University in New York. Initially Haugen, who had been influenced by the Norwegian language planner *avant la lettre* Ivar Aasen (1813-1896), relates language planning mainly to normative work in the field of orthography, grammar and the lexicon in speech communities that have a non-homogeneous linguistic character. He also links language planning to proposals for standardizing or reforming languages as well as to language cultivation. By using the term ‘language cultivation’ (a translation of the German term ‘*Sprachpflege*’) Haugen recognizes the pioneering work of the Prague School in the field of language planning. The Prague School’s use of this term mainly focused on problems of standard norm and codification and by doing so expanded the notion as it was earlier established in Russia by Vinokur and others. What Haugen elaborated upon in the field of language planning is the social dimension that, although recognized, was not worked out in the writings of the Prague School. With reference to notions of social planning Haugen rather broadly links the social dimension of language planning to the establishment of language-related goals, policies, and procedures for a language community.

A systematic approach to the social dimension of language planning, however, only fully expanded after Heinz Kloss had subsumed both the *intra*-linguistic and *extra*-linguistic components of language planning as they featured in the work of Haugen under the terms ‘status planning’ and ‘corpus planning’. In Kloss’ opinion corpus planning is the modification of the nature (or: corpus) of the language itself. Status planning, on the contrary, has nothing to do with the structure or form of a language, but more with the positioning of language *vis-à-vis* national governments. Closely related to corpus and status planning are Kloss’ concepts ‘*Abstandsprache*’ (abstand language / language by distance) and ‘*Ausbausprache*’ (ausbau language / elaborated language). Whereas the former concept focuses on innerlinguistic features to describe language distance the latter deals with codification and functional spread as factors influencing language development.

The ‘bipartitions’ made by Kloss between corpus planning/status planning on the one hand and *Abstandsprache/Ausbausprache* on the other hand have featured prominently in language planning literature from the end of the 1960s onwards. In the early language planning literature much attention was devoted to mechanisms of language planning in developing countries where the societal revaluation of indigenous languages was flanked by their graphization and standardization. Researchers also tried to merge different theoretical approaches to language planning. Most successful in merging complementary approaches was Haugen, who combined his own insights based above all on Scandinavian and Czech literature with the distinction as made by Kloss between corpus and status planning.

The scientific views of Einar Haugen, Heinz Kloss and other language planning theorists such as Joshua Fishman, Jiri Neustupný and Jyotirindra Das Gupta continue to influence current language planning researchers. It has to be noted, however, that the

subdivision of language planning into corpus planning and status planning has been enlarged by a third notion, i.e. acquisition planning, that was mainly spread through the work of Robert L. Cooper and also features prominently in the work of Richard Baldauf and Robert Kaplan. The present view on corpus planning by and large still resembles the one of Haugen and Kloss, since it further mainly implies the standardization and/or elaboration of the lexicon, grammar and the orthography of a given language. A minimal shift of emphasis has occurred in the interpretation of status planning due to its close relationship to acquisition planning as the third type of language planning. Status planning aims at changing the societal status and the functional range of a given language without necessarily aiming at an increase of the people actually using this language or language variety. The increase of the number of users of a given language is the primary goal of acquisition planning. The three types of language planning are interrelated and even partially overlapping. Especially the line between status planning and acquisition planning is rather thin since, for example, efforts put in increasing the number of users of a given language will mostly lead to a change in status of that language. And since any codification and elaboration of an idiom is heavily intertwined with social determinants it is obvious that also the line between corpus planning and status planning is highly permeable.

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### **Biographical Sketches**

**Peter Nelde** (1942-2007) was Professor and Chair of German and general linguistics at the K.U. Brussels (Belgium) and visiting professor in Nijmegen (the Netherlands) and Vienna (Austria). In 1977 he founded the Research Center on Multilingualism and acted as its director for 30 years. His main research areas were multilingualism, contact linguistics, language policy and language planning. Peter Nelde was a member of the editorial board of several linguistic periodicals such as *Multilingua* and the *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*. He also was one of the editors of *Sociolinguistica. International Yearbook of Sociolinguistics* (Niemeyer) and the editor in chief of *Contact Linguistics. An International Handbook of Contemporary Research* (de Gruyter, Vol. 1, 1996 & Vol. 2, 1997).

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