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## **Language planning and language policy in the ecological perspective**

**ABSTRACT.** The paper deals with the issue of language planning and policy both in the historical as well as the ecological perspective. The problem of linguistic diversity protection and maintenance in opposition to monolingual global world is explored.

**KEYWORDS:** language planning and policy, language ecology, multilingualism, linguistic diversity, global language, natural language protection, translanguaging.

### **1. INTRODUCTION. LANGUAGE PLANNING AND LANGUAGE POLICY. DEFINITIONS OF LPP**

Generally speaking language planning constitutes a deliberate effort to influence the function, structure or acquisition of a language within a given speech community. Language planning and associated with it language policy as activities are probably as old as mankind while as a field of study the introduction of language planning and policy dates back to the 1960s. Research comprising the issue of language contact was first introduced to applied linguistics in 1970s through the development of the social sciences. Disciplines emerging at that time such as the sociology of language, sociolinguistics, the ethnography of communication, social psychology and the ecology of language elaborated upon stimuli given by Weinreich and Haugen (Darquennes, Nedle 2011).

Presently there exist a multitude of definitions determining language planning and language policy (LPP). McArthur (1992) defines LPP as a trial

of taking control over the use and status as well as the structure of a given language. Language Planning and Policy (LPP) comprises official activities of a government of a given country or a union of countries (e.g. the European Union). These actions are oriented to promotion of a language that would become an official language of a given country or a union of countries.

Certain definitions of LPP, especially those associated with the field of education relate to the issue of the possibly best organization of foreign languages teaching that would lead either to bi- or multilingualism. Phillipson and Skutnabb-Kangas (1996a) state that language policy constitutes a sort of an identity barometer on: local, national and supranational levels and also it is an indication of how educational systems and societies as entireties act either in encouraging or submitting ways both to promote language and identity. The above mentioned authors presented in their article a description of the two paradigms of language policy framed by Tsuda (1994; in: Phillipson, Skutnabb-Kangas 1996a) which can be characterized in the following way:

1. A "Diffusion of English Paradigm" distinguished by the following features: capitalism, science and technology, modernisation, monolingualism, ideological globalisation and internationalisation, transnationalism, Americanisation and unification of world culture, linguistic-cultural-medial imperialism.
2. A "Language Ecology Paradigm" described by the following characteristics: recognition of human rights, equality in communication by means of different national and ethnic languages, multilingualism, sustainability of linguistic-cultural diversity, defence of national sovereignty, promotion of foreign languages teaching.

In turn, Kaplan, Baldauf and Baldauf (1997) determine the notion of language planning as a deliberate activity aiming at influencing the function, structure and language acquisition within the confines of a given speech community.

The definition of language planning formulated by Mühlhausler (2003) is determined as binding in this article and it is presented in the following citation:

In an ecological approach language planning is seen as a process which is a part and closely interrelated with a large range of natural and cultural ecological factors. It is focused on the question of maintaining maximum diversity of languages by seeking to identify those ecological factors that sustain linguistic diversity. Linguistic diversity in turn is seen as a precondition of maintaining cultural and biological diversity. The ultimate aim of ecological language planning differs from most conventional approaches to language planning

both in its aims (diversity rather than standardisation) and the aims required (community involvement rather than specialist management) (Mühlhausler 2003: 306).

## 2. EVOLUTION OF LANGUAGE PLANNING AND LANGUAGE POLICY (LPP)

Evolution of LPP as a scientific issue was first investigated by Ricento, a scholar of the University of Texas, USA in 2000 which was reflected in the author's article "Historical and theoretical perspectives in language policy and planning" published in *Journal of Sociolinguistics* 4/2.

In accordance with Ricento's views (2000), the scientific field of LPP came into existence after World War II (i.e. after 1945). Following Ricento's approach to the previously mentioned area of scientific research, three types of factors that influenced the development of this branch of linguistics will be treated by the author of this article as primary ones. These are the following:

- a. Macro socio-political factors (e.g. processes and events occurring at the national level such as: formation of a statehood or its collapse, wars, peoples' migrations, globalisation processes).
- b. Epistemological (Ricento 2000: 197) factors will be considered to be the paradigms of carrying out scientific investigations and determining certain fields of knowledge (e.g. structuralism and postmodernism in humanities in social sciences or neo-Marxism in economics).
- c. Strategic factors comprising, among others the ones which designate the border between scientific investigations and reasoning.

### 2.1. Decolonisation, structuralism and pragmatism

Decolonisation and formation of new statehoods (macro socio-political factor), structuralism dominating in social sciences (epistemological factor) and the belief that language problems (at least in Western Europe) can be solved by means of planning, especially in the public sector (strategic factor) constitute three main elements of the first phase of LPP (cf. Ricento 2000: 197). At the beginning of the 1960s, linguists started developing vigorously the scholarly field of structuralism with particular emphasis put on linguistic typologies and sociolinguistics which created opportunities of making good use of linguistic interrelationships occurring among people in an absolutely new way. In 1966 Haugen worked out an absolutely innovative model of language planning and policy and Kloss (1968) introduced a typology of

multilingualism (Ricento 2000: 198). At the turn of 1960s and 1970s the following scholars: Rubin, Fishman, Jernudd, Ferguson and Das Gupta (1977) made a considerable contribution to the scientific field of LPP. These scholars focused their attention on the choice of such a national language that would serve the processes of modernisation and national formation (Ricento 2000: 198). The consensus the West European sociolinguists achieved was of that kind that they agreed that the most popular European languages (i.e. English and French) should be used in formal as well as in specialist spheres of human life and the so-called "local languages" should serve "other purposes" (Ricento 2000: 198). In the late 1960s and early 1970s the West European sociolinguists expressed the opinion that linguistic diversity caused difficulties in national development, and contrarily – linguistic homogeneity created favourable conditions for modernisation and Westernisation.

In its early period the aims of LPP often reflected either the unification tendencies of a nation, a religious, political or some other kind of group, or democratisation tendencies (Rubin 1971: 307–310, Ricento 2000: 199). Language was determined as a source of values and that's why it was subject to planning (Jernudd, Das Gupta 1971: 211; Ricento 2000: 200).

## **2.2. Failure of modernism. Critical sociolinguistics**

The second phase of scholarly investigations in the field of LPP took place in the 1970s and 1980s. During this phase of LPP development many scholars concentrated on political, economic and social findings concerning language contact. Sociolinguists of that period focused on investigating the status and interrelations occurring between speech communities in selected contexts. The second phase of the development of LPP as a scientific field may be described as the period of increasing awareness of internal limitations and negative effects created by theories and models of language planning. The choice of European languages – English and French as the so-called "neutral media" contributed largely to favouring political, economic and social interests of the marginal minority using these languages (Ricento 2000: 200).

## **2.3. Postmodernism.**

### **The human right to speak national languages**

The third phase of the development of the scientific field of LPP dates back to mid- 1980s and it still continues to this day. Mass migrations of large human populations could be observed in this period. The sense of na-

tional/ethnic and linguistic membership began to be renewed. The multinational coalition in Europe, The European Union in which local and regional languages compete with the supranational ones, like English, French and German was extended at that time. Simultaneously with the geographical and political changes occur the transformations associated with the globalisation of capitalism. In 1997 Phillipson introduces to linguistics the notion of "linguistic imperialism" which comprises the abbreviation of various activities, ideologies and structural associations within "...the asymmetrical North/South relations where the language effectively coordinates all the activities in the following spheres of life: cultural, economic and political" (Phillipson 1997: 239; Ricento 2000: 204). According to the analysis presented by Ricento (2000) languages have become tools by means of which an unequal distribution of power and material goods between some groups of interest has been promoted. With reference to the above presented approach to language, Skutnabb-Kangas (1986) coined the notion of "linguicism" which expressed some kind of prejudice the essence of which was estimation of one's wealth, educational level, social status and even one's character on the basis of the choice of a language made by a given person and the way that person uses the language, thus not allowing the social and economic growth of those who do not learn the language of Modernism - English in the former British and American colonies. As a result of "linguicism" the language marginalisation process occurs which eventually leads to the death of thousands of indigenous languages. According to Ricento (2000: 204) healing from "linguicism" and "linguistic genocide" (i.e. killing of natural languages) can be achieved by promotion and acceptance of the human right to possess his/her own national/ethnic language. The formerly mentioned promotion should be carried out on the level of states as well as the international level in a form of universal rules obligatory for all the inhabitants of the world (Ricento 2004).

Ricento (2000: 206) calls for implementation of a new LPP paradigm, based on language ecology which Phillipson and Skutnabb-Kangas (1996b: 249) express so that it is founded on the principle of linguistic diversification all over the world and is accompanied by the simultaneous promotion of multilingualism and foreign language learning.

### 3. NATURAL LANGUAGE AS INSTITUTION

In his article "Remarks on sustainability of natural languages in the cultural-institutional perspective" Puppel (2009a) expresses his opinion that language as a cultural phenomenon can be treated as an institution. Lan-

guage treated as an institution may be defined as a mutual influence of the following essential parameters: "militancy" - activity, "trade-offs" - meaning a mutual exchange aiming at achieving a compromise, "utility"- being useful and "display" - being exposed (Puppel 2009a). Ontology and dynamics of natural languages, like every institution are characterized by the formerly mentioned four features. Besides, all the contemporarily existing languages may be acknowledged as coexisting within the confines of "global language arena" (Puppel 2009a: 275), in short called NaLGA ("Natural Language Global Arena", Puppel 2009b). Within the scope of NaLGA natural languages compete to win the most powerful position "vis a vis" other natural languages. In reference to what has been said above, every language treated as an institution should be perceived as being "imperial" (Puppel 2009b) or it might be characterised by tendencies to achieve the autocratic, i.e. aggressive position under certain conditions which generally are of socio-psychological nature and determine the general tendency of competition of every language within the frame of NaLGA (Puppel 2009a: 275). The previously mentioned features occur in every language's life in continuously changing proportions in such a way that at different moments of a given language's life a given language may be described as one with either active features prevailing ("militancy dominant" ones), or the exchange features aiming at achieving compromise ("trade-offs dominant" ones) or features being a sign of a language's usefulness ("utility-dominant" ones) or the features proving that a given language has a tendency to self-exposure ("displays-dominant" ones/ Puppel 2009a).

The above mentioned attributes of a language treated as institution do not have a balanced distribution. That is why, following S. Puppel's (2009a: 277) reasoning it is stated that the formerly mentioned attributes make a considerable contribution to the general ecology of a language institution by forming either the active ecology marked with eagerness to use power - "militancy ecology" or the ecology marked with exchange features in order to achieve compromise - "trade-offs ecology", or ecology characterized by usefulness features - "utility ecology", or ecology marked with exposure tendencies - "display ecology". Altogether the above mentioned attributes are characteristic of the so-called ITI - "Imperial Tetragon of Institutions" (Puppel 2009a).

The competition between natural languages may be either positive or negative in its course. The negative course of the competition may lead to death of languages of weaker robustness in favour of those characterized by stronger robustness. In case of the positive course of language competition, a natural language may be strengthened to such a degree that it might take over the hegemonic role and become a global language.

#### 4. PROTECTION OF NATURAL LANGUAGE DIVERSITY

The important question "Why should we care about language loss" anyway?" may be asked in the light of the fact that today many individuals, especially those representing the industrialized and commercialized world are of the opinion that the presence of a single language (i.e. global monolanguage) would be most ideal for doing business the world over as well as for the cultural, educational and political unification of the world's diversified and quarrelsome human population. This dramatically simplified approach should, however be counterbalanced by the strong expression of concern over the dismal possibility of replacing all the existing natural languages, large and small, with a global monolanguage, which has been articulated by many of the leading experts in the field of natural language planning, preservation and revitalization (Puppel 2009a: 104).

The issue of natural language diversity protection has been discussed widely by the Polish scholar S. Puppel in his numerous scientific publications. The scholar focused on natural language diversity as well as natural language protection. Worth mentioning here are the following works of S. Puppel: Engl.: "The issue of natural language perception in the following triad: national language - neighbouring language - global language on the example of the triad: Polish language - English language - German language in the ecological perspective: a trial of typology", Puppel, Puppel 2005, (Engl.: "Natural languages protection", Puppel 2007b), Engl.: „Interlingualism or translanguaging? Intercommunication or transcommunication? Remarks in the context of natural languages coexistence within the confines of global cultural-linguistic-communicative community", Puppel 2007a, „Remarks on the sustainability of natural languages" (Puppel 2008), "The protection of natural language sustainability - fancy or duty?" (Puppel 2009a).

Also the well-known English scholar and linguist Crystal (2000), a widely-known "crusader" for protection of natural languages expressed in his book his deep concern for natural language preservation. He included his thoughts and ideas associated with the presented above issue in the following statements:

1. Languages are interesting subjects in their own.
2. Linguistic diversity enriches the human ecosystem in the sense that over 6800 presently existing languages provide unique models for describing the world.
3. Since languages are expressions of ethnic identity, a community without its own language is like an organism without a heart.
4. The particular natural languages are repositories of the unique histories of the communities that speak them.
5. All languages are the sum total of human knowledge and wisdom and the sense that each language provides a unique slant on how the human mind works framed in different ethnobiological conditions (Puppel 2009b: 105).

Worth stressing here is the fact that in January, 2009 the Polish Episcopate of the Roman Catholic Church in their letter entitled "Bezcenne dobro języka ojczystego" ("Priceless value of the national language") addressed to the congregation of believers expressed the Church's great concern for the maintenance, renewal and further development of Polish language.

## 5. CONCLUSIONS

The scientific field of LPP is still at the development stage and needs research and seeking of new ways of solving the problems it has been facing. The author of the article is convinced that translanguaging (Puppel 2007a) introduced instead of presently dominating interlingualism would be the proper way of achieving the ecolinguistically balanced solutions within the scholarly field of LPP and might lead to the formation of new paradigms of foreign language teaching and learning as well. There seems to be a great challenge for scholars of present times.

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