

How Are Minority Languages Affected by Government Language Policies?

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ABSTRACT

Language policies are important and are imposed on minority languages around the world. Discussion about the effectiveness and morality of these policies can be found through scholarly articles and journals, and through the media. The purpose of this paper is to discuss whether it is moral to apply language policies that do not consider the linguistic diversity and linguistic rights of minority languages. In addition, this paper further explores the historical backgrounds of said policies, as well as present day policies and to analyse their virtue. Furthermore, this paper provides several recommendations to ensure linguistic diversity and that linguistic rights are preserved. The paper concludes with the argument that only ethical approaches to language planning by governments can ensure minority and Indigenous linguistic rights whilst also guaranteeing linguistic diversity in the world.

Introduction

Language policy (LP) is a controversial topic as its morality of aims and implementations have been questioned by many. Language policy and language planning are relatively new interdisciplinary fields (Baldauf, 2012) but not a new occurrence. The term 'language planning' emerged in the late 1950s. It was then developed as part of sociolinguistics and the sociology of language in the 1960s and 1970s. The term 'language policy' later on emerged and became an integral part of language planning, and together the field came to be known as language policy and planning (LPP). Language policy was initially preoccupied with language problems emerging from the splitting of European colonial empires after World War II (Romaine, 2021). Multilingualism in independent countries posed issues to planners, who believed they had solutions in the form of premeditated intercessions, which are typically enacted by governments and their government-authorized agencies.

During the 1980s and 1990s, language policies endured a series of definitive shifts as the language planning association of modernisation, progress and democratisation was deemed as simple-minded and overly enthusiastic. After developing one or more 'official' languages, some developing countries realised that their plans did not only solve social and political problems, but instead established new ones. Romaine (2021) stated that the notion that language could be planned and imposed upon had become progressively unfeasible and ethically dubious. She further added that researchers began to analyse some of the covert agendas and inadvertent consequences of language policies, particularly the ways in which language policies favour the elite groups and disregard others. After the collapse of Communism and the end of the Cold War, a revitalisation of new language policies had occurred in a world which was typified by the recurrence of smaller nations and regional languages, along with the development of multinational political frameworks, such as the European Union.

In the 21st century, language policies have been gradually more concerned with globalisation, especially the role of English as a dominant language and the endangerment of languages and migration. One example of language endangerment due to English domination is the case of the Maori language in New Zealand (Macalister & Webb, 2018). Maori is an indigenous language spoken by the Maori people of New Zealand. According to Ka'ai Mahuta (2011), the Maori language has been endangered due to the historical suppression

of the language by the New Zealand government, the dominance of English in education and media, and the migration of Maori speakers to urban areas where they adopt English as their primary language. She asserted that “the New Zealand Government has continually passed legislation that has been detrimental to the Māori language and furthered the Government’s agenda of cultural assimilation and language domination. The mechanism of the Government’s agenda of assimilation and language domination was the State education system. This was, therefore, the primary cause of Māori language loss” (p.196).

As pointed out by scholars (e.g., Gounder, 2016; Romaine, 2021), the challenge that policy making faces currently is to make a link between macro (national or government), meso (families, communities, multinational corporations, and other organisations) and micro (individual) levels of the policy making. Language policies are implemented around the world on a plethora of minority languages. Language policy scholars (e.g., Gounder, 2016; Romaine, 2021), note that although language planning is primarily concerned with the regulations of language, the nonlinguistic issues (demography, history, geography, politics, sociology, human rights etc.) often play a critical role in LPP. The issues of ecological and ethical validity warrant consideration of language policy analysis within the broader social, political, and linguistic environment (Gounder, 2016). As Stemper and King (2017) pointed out, language policy and planning should consider “the policies, both explicit and implicit, that influence what languages are spoken when, how and even by whom, as well as the values and rights that are associated with those languages”.

Literature Review

The literature review will first discuss various existing definitions of language policy. It will then describe different categories of language policy identified by research literature. After that, the context and framework of language policy and planning will be elaborated. Finally, the literature review will explore the ethical issues related to language policy and planning.

Definitions and Categories of Language Policy

Defining Language Policy

The term ‘language policy’ is very broad and there is no solid or widely accepted definition of this topic in research literature. Language policy scholars have argued that there is a relationship between language policy and the term ‘language planning’. Therefore, while the issues related to language policy are discussed, it inevitably incorporates the discussion of language planning. As pointed out by Johnson (2013), while some scholars (e.g., Kaplan and Baldauf, 1997) argue that language planning incorporates language policy, other scholars (e.g., Schiffman, 1996) claim that language policy incorporates language planning.

According to Trinick, May, and Lemon (2020), the use and meaning of the terms *language planning* and *language policy* are also frequently questioned in sociolinguistics. Trinick et al., added that since 1950s-1960s, when the field of language planning first emerged, the terms language policy and language planning have been interpreted and defined in various ways, and used “synonymously or in tandem” in a range of literature. Also, both language policy and language planning have often been referred to as the same idea in research literature (Cooper, 1989; Haarmann, 1990; Kaplan & Baldauf, 1997; Tollefson, 2016). Romaine (2021) also argued that the boundaries between language policy and language planning are also difficult to recognise, as the terms sometimes are referred to as synonymous. In other words, language policy is used sometimes as a synonym for language planning and sometimes it is referred to as the goals of language planning. Hornberger (2006) asserted that language policy and planning have now merged into one field often using the abbreviation LPP (henceforth, language policy and planning will be referred to as LPP).

In terms of the definitions of LPP, Wardhaugh (2006) defined language planning, as quoted by Weinstein (1980) as “a government authorized, long-term, sustained, and conscious effort to alter a language's function in a society for the purpose of solving communication problems” (p. 356). According to this definition, the role of government (the top-down approach) is vital for LPP. According to Kaplan and Baldauf (1997), government or government agencies play significant roles in language planning. They defined a language policy as “a body of ideas, laws, regulations, rules and practices intended to achieve the planned language change in the societies, group or system.” (p. xi). *[this will be discussed in detail in the next section]*

Categories of Language Policy and Planning

As pointed out by Trinnick et al. (2020), LPP has been categorised based on its underlying goals and the ways it operates within particular societies. Social context and situation vary, and the aims and outcomes of language planning can be influenced by the diversity in ethnic, linguistic, and political situations (Ricento, 2000). Four kinds of LPP activities have been identified in research literature: corpus planning, status planning, acquisition planning, and prestige planning (e.g., Kaplan and Baldauf, 1997; Cooper, 1989). It is important to note that as corpus planning and status planning tasks are undertaken by governments, these can be politically motivated (Darquennes, 2013; Trinnick et al., 2020). This is why understanding the nature and processes of the LPP activities is necessary to grasp different governments' political considerations behind LPP.

Corpus planning: Corpus planning is a process of language planning that involves the selection and development of language varieties for use in official contexts. According to Cobarrubias (1982), corpus planning is the change that is done in structure, vocabulary, morphology, or spelling of a language that has been selected as an official language of a speech community or a country. It can also refer to the adoption of a new script. In other words, corpus planning modifies the nature of the language itself, i.e., to change the corpus of a language as it was before. Darquennes (2013) added that corpus planning involves actions that plan to modify the corpus or variety of a language through the standardisation or elaboration of its vocabulary, grammar, and orthography. Corpus planning activities are usually done by linguists or language experts. Corpus planning may also involve the production of dictionaries, literacy manuals and writing-style and pronunciation guides (Ferguson, 2006). As Holmes (2013) pointed out, corpus planning is also known as codification or standardisation of languages. Notably, as pointed out by Trinnick et al., (2020), corpus planning can be motivated by political considerations as governments may apply ‘puristic ideology’ while creating new terms or lexicon which may lead to avoiding transliterations and elimination of many existing loan words or terms.

A country where corpus planning was done (which was motivated by government politics) is Indonesia. In the 1950s and 1960s, the Indonesian government implemented a language planning policy to make Indonesian (Bahasa) the only official language of the country and to reduce the use of regional languages (Sneddon, 2003). According to Sneddon (2003), this language planning policy was politically motivated as the Indonesian government wanted to create a unified Indonesian identity without considering the country's diverse linguistic and ethnic groups. Sneddon (2003) added that “During the Suharto era (1966–98), the government viewed standardisation and modernisation of the language as essential to its program of economic development. As a consequence, the nature of the language and the language-planning process came in for criticism from some who saw the language as too closely linked to the authoritarian Suharto government” (p. 7).

Status planning: Status planning in language policy is a process of language planning that focuses on the social and political aspects of language use. It is a way of managing language use in order to promote the status of a language or language variety. Status planning is an important part of language policy because it helps to ensure that the language of a country or region is respected and used in official contexts. Cobarrubias (1982) clarified that while corpus planning is concerned with the changing of structure or corpus of a language, status planning is rather concerned with the selected language's position with respect to other languages. Kaplan and Baldauf

(1997) added that status planning is a thoughtful process to assign the functions of languages and literacies within a particular speech community, especially, within the official domains of language use, e.g., government and education. Status planning may involve status choice of languages; for example, a government can select a particular language or variety as the official or the national language of a country. From this point of view, Kaplan and Baldauf (1997) clarifies, language status planning issues can be politically motivated because it requires the use of law, constitutions, and regulations regarding the official position of languages and their use in different social contexts of public administration. In Malaysia, for example, the government implemented a language policy to promote the use of Malay as the country's national language. Malay became the national language of Malaysia and the medium of instruction in schools according to the National Language Act of 1963/67 ("Malaysia Government", n.d.). The Malaysian government also implemented policies to encourage the use of Malay in government administration, the media, and other public sectors (Albury & Aye, 2016).

Acquisition planning: Acquisition planning is concerned with the teaching and learning of languages, and it involves the government education sector (Trinick et al., 2020). It involves the development of strategies to ensure that language learners have access to the resources they need to acquire a language (either national, official, indigenous or minority). This includes the development of curricula, the selection of appropriate materials, and the provision of appropriate instruction. It also involves the assessment of language proficiency and the development of appropriate assessment tools. Acquisition planning is essential for the successful implementation of language policy and for the successful acquisition of a language.

One example of a country that has implemented language acquisition planning is Singapore, which has a policy of promoting bilingualism in English and one of the country's three official mother tongues: Chinese, Malay, and Tamil. As elaborated in Gopinathan, (2005) and Gopinathan and Deng (2006), the Singaporean government has implemented various language acquisition policies to ensure that all citizens are proficient in both English and in one of the official mother tongues.

Prestige planning: Kaplan and Baldauf (1997, 2003) also discussed another type of LPP activity called 'prestige planning'. Prestige planning is a type of language planning that focuses on elevating the status or prestige of a language, often for social or political reasons. The goal of prestige planning is to increase the use and acceptance of a language by promoting its use in various domains, such as education, media, government, and business. According to Spolsky (2004), "prestige planning involves efforts to enhance the status of a language by creating more positive attitudes towards it, improving its standardisation, or increasing its domains of use" (p. 132). Prestige planning is often used to promote a minority or regional language that is not widely used or recognised in a particular area. One example of prestige planning is the promotion of the Irish language in Ireland. The Irish government has implemented various policies to increase the use and acceptance of Irish (aka Gaelic), such as requiring its use in public signage, increasing its use in the media, and making it a mandatory subject in schools (O Laoire, 2005). Table 1 below elaborates the LPP model.

Table 1. Model of Language Planning

Levels of language planning			
Approaches to goals	Policy planning	Cultivation planning	Macro-, meso-, micro-levels
Status planning (About society)	Goals	Goals	Awareness of goals
	Status standardisation Officialisation Nationalisation	Status planning revival Restoration Revival etc.	Overt covert planning

	Proscription		
Corpus planning (About language)	Standardisation Graphisation Grammatication Lexication	Corpus elaboration Lexical modernisation Stylistic modernisation Renovation Purification Reform Terminology unification Internationalisation	
Acquisition planning	Policy development Access Policy Personnel policy Curriculum policy Resources policy Community policy Evaluation policy	Acquisition planning	
Prestige planning (about image of the language)	Language promotion Official/government Institutional Pressure group individual	Intellectualisation Language of science Language of professions Language of high culture	

Note. From Kaplan, R., & Baldauf, R. (2003, p. 202).

Context and Frameworks of Language Policy and Planning

Actors Behind Language Planning

According to Kaplan and Baldauf (1997), the ‘actors’ behind language planning work within four basic areas: government agencies involved at the highest level, education agencies, quasi-governmental or non-governmental organisations, and other groups or influential individuals creating language policy (sometimes purposefully and sometimes unintentionally). Trinick et al. (2020) added that language planning can take place simultaneously at the macro-, meso- and micro-levels within a society. They clarified that macro-level planning usually involves top-down, national, government policies. Meso-level planning may also involve government policy, but its focus is much narrower (for example, language requirements for a particular business). The micro-level is the bottom-up level of planning which includes schools, community, individual households, and the language use of individual people.

Government agencies: Kaplan and Baldauf (1997) stated that “in the late twentieth century, most governments have become involved in the language planning business” (p. 5). They argued that governments in general have the power to legislate and the ability to promote, propose, and enforce planning decisions; therefore, government planning has a broader scope. Kaplan (1989) referred to these governments as top-down actors in LPP. Kaplan clarifies that these top-down planners are the people with power and authority who make language related decisions for the country or groups, and most cases these decisions are taken with little or no consultation with the actual language users and learners.

Education agencies: In any kind of official language policy and planning, education agencies are involved to some degree. According to Kaplan and Baldauf (1997), the education sector needs to be involved in several LPP decisions. First, it needs to select or decide which language is to be taught within the curriculum, the duration of instructions, and what level of proficiency is needed to meet the needs of society etc. Second, it needs to arrange the number of teachers that are required to meet the curriculum. Third, it needs to determine which group of student population will be exposed to language education, and plan strategies to gain parental and community support for the plan. Fourth, it needs to decide which methodology or methodologies will be used, the materials need to be used to support the methodologies, and to identify the resources and ways to prepare them. Fifth, it needs to decide the assessment system or testing process to measure student success, teacher performance and the system that has been adopted. Finally, the education agencies need to determine the ways and resources to support the language education system related to the LPP that has been adopted.

Non-governmental organisations (NGOs): Kaplan and Baldauf (1997) have identified a variety of non-governmental organisations which are heavily involved in language planning and in some way or another help with the LPP process. Such as: the British Council, the English-Speaking Union, the Alliance Francais, the Goethe Institute, the Japan Foundation, and the Korean Foundation.

Other groups or individuals: According to Kaplan and Baldauf (1997), this last category of organisations and agencies include those who get involved in language planning accidentally. For example, the United States Postal Service, the United States Immigration and Naturalization Service, and the International Olympic Commission make their own language policy. The United States Postal Service and the International Postal Union agreed that envelopes must be addressed in Roman scripts. The United States Immigration and Naturalization Service requires English as a basic literacy to complete all entry forms and condition for entry to the USA. The International Olympic Commission determines the language that might be used in international athletic competitions. The context of LPP and those who are involved in the LPP process are elaborated in Figure 1 below.

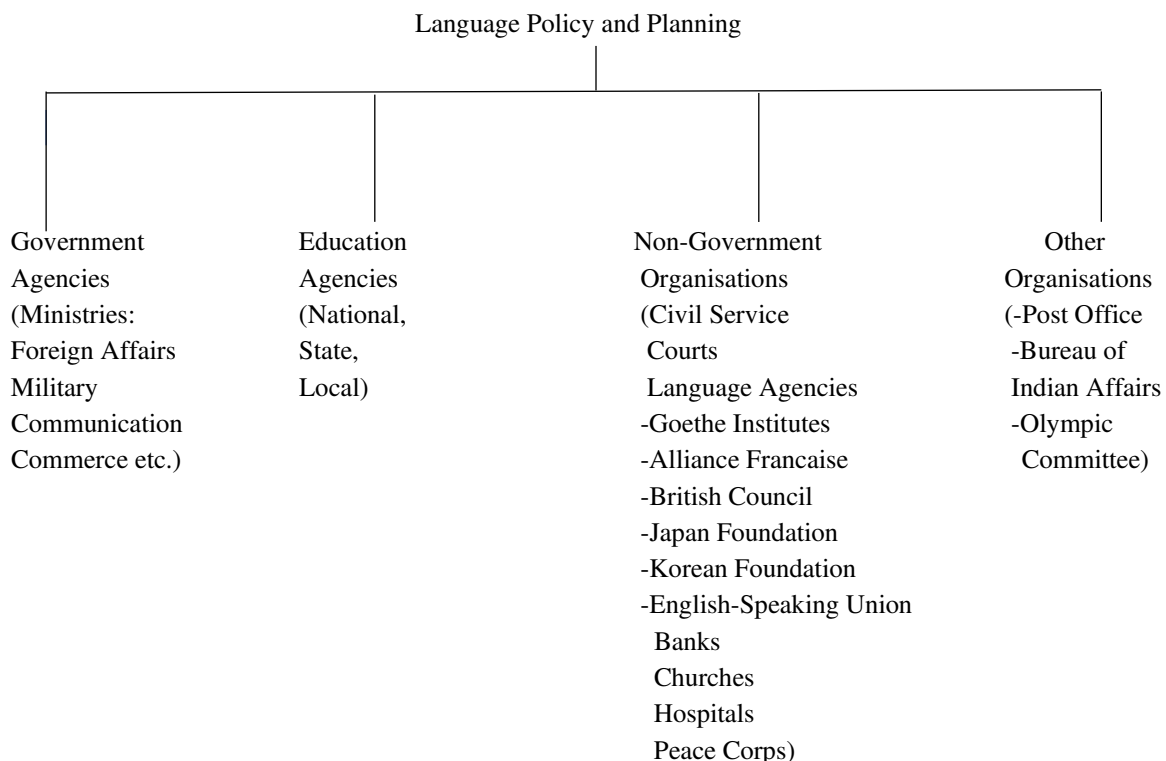


Figure 1. Context of language planning process

Note: Adapted from Kalpan and Baldauf (1997)

The following table elaborates the descriptive framework of the ways different planning processes are done from the top-down and bottom-up levels.

Table 2. Descriptive Framework of Language Policy and Planning

Language planning processes	Examples of micro-level analysis (involves ‘bottom-up’ level of planning)	Examples of macro-level analysis (involves ‘top-down’ national government policies)
Status planning	Multilingual discourse practices in classrooms and schools Implicit language policies in families Translation and interpretation in the police, court and other state institutions	Monolingual ideologies of language in official policy statements Constitutional provisions for official multilingualism Political self-determination in minority-language communities
Corpus planning	Codification Functional and terminological elaboration Linguistic purification programs New varieties of English and other languages of wider communication	Language documentation Multi-modal literacies The rise of new Indigenous literatures
Acquisition planning	Content of curriculum, textbooks, and materials Standardised testing and washback Indigenous pedagogies in schools	Movements for Indigenous curriculum and pedagogies International cooperation among linguistic-rights movement

From Trinick et al. (2020, p.17)

It is clear from the discussion above about the LPP context and framework that although there are NGOs, educational agencies, and other organisations that play a role in LPP, it is the government that has the most power and impact in it. While NGOs can play a significant role in promoting linguistic diversity and advocating for the rights of minority languages, the government remains the most dominant player in language policy and planning. According to Spolsky (2004), governments have the power and authority to shape language policies, allocate resources, and implement language planning programs. They can establish language institutions, create language policies, and regulate language use in public domains. NGOs can contribute to language policy and planning by raising awareness about linguistic diversity, promoting multilingualism, and advocating for language rights. They can provide language services, develop language materials, and organise language events that promote linguistic diversity (Skutnabb-Kangas, 2008). However, NGOs' influence on language policy and planning is often limited by their resources, access to decision-makers, and legal framework (Hill, 2019). It is the governments who have the power and authority to allocate resources, create language policies, and regulate language use.

Governments’ Motivations Behind Language Policies and Planning

Cobarrubias (1982) has described four ideologies behind the motivation of actual decision-making in language planning in a particular society: these are *linguistic assimilation*, *linguistic pluralism*, *vernacularization*, and *internationalism*.

Linguistic assimilation is the process in which a minority group adopts the language and culture of the dominant group in a society. Cobarrubias (1982) elaborated that linguistic assimilation is the belief that everyone, regardless of their vernacular or mother tongue, should learn the dominant language of their society. This can occur through a range of social, cultural, and political pressures. For example, in the United States, many immigrants have assimilated to English as their primary language and have adopted cultural norms and customs that are considered mainstream in American society (Portes & Rumbaut, 2014). The United States not only applied the policy internally to immigrants but also externally in Guam, where they suppressed Chamorro until 1973. They also applied assimilation policy in the Philippines, where instruction in the schools had to be in English during the period of the United States' rule of that country. The United States also applied its similar 'assimilationist ideology' in Puerto Rico until the 1940s. Daoust (1998) asserted that in some cases, in the process of linguistic assimilation, "linguistic minorities are given little or no rights". Daoust elaborated that revolutionary eighteenth-century France had such a goal when the government planned to abolish the French jargons and other minor varieties spoken in France. Standard French was exclusively used in Primary schooling, and French was declared the only language of the law. Another example of linguistic assimilation is Russification of the former Soviet Union where in 1938, based on a federal law, all non-Russian schools had to teach Russian as a second language (Daoust, 1998). Later, after 1958, the government allowed schools to choose language of education; however, the Russian language remained mandatory in all schools, alongside the national languages.

Linguistic pluralism, on the other hand, refers to the coexistence of multiple languages within a society or community. This approach emphasises the importance of respecting linguistic diversity and promoting multilingualism. According to Cobarrubias (1982), it can be complete or partial, i.e., more than one language can be used in all or only some aspects of life in a society. Examples are countries like Belgium, Canada, Singapore, South Africa, and Switzerland. In Belgium, for example, "French is officially recognized in the south, Flemish in the north, German in the east, and Brussels forms a bilingual French-Flemish district" (Daoust, 1998; p.4). In Canada, there are two official languages - English and French - and many other languages are spoken due to the country's multicultural policies (Theberge, 2021).

Vernacularization is a process in which a language adapts to the local context and incorporates words, expressions, and structures from the regional dialects or local languages. For example, the official language of Spain is Spanish, but different regions of the country have their own dialects, such as Catalan, Galician, or Basque (O'Reilly, 2019). These dialects have influenced the speaking of Spanish in those areas, leading to vernacularization (Woolard, 1998). According to Cobarrubias (1982), vernacularization can be the restoration or elaboration of an indigenous language and its adoption as an official language, e.g., Bahasa Indonesia in Indonesia; Tok Pisin in Papua New Guinea; Hebrew in Israel; Tagalog (renamed Filipino) in the Philippines; and Quechua in Peru.

Internationalism refers to the use of a common language, usually English, as a means of communication between people of different nationalities and cultures. This approach acknowledges the importance of cross-cultural communication and globalisation, e.g., English in Singapore, India, the Philippines, and Papua New Guinea. Also, in many international organisations, such as the United Nations, English is used as the main language of communication (Crystal, 2003). Cobarrubias (1982) elaborated that internationalism or internationalisation is adopting a widely used nonindigenous language either as an official language or as language of instruction. According to Cobarrubias, this policy has been adopted by several post-colonial countries, for example in Cameroon both French and English are official languages and in Haiti, Creole is recognised as an official language alongside French. Daoust (1998) added that in some multilingual countries, a most commonly

used language is thought to be the solution for communication problems between people of wider communities, and also that it is a way to avoid choosing between two or more competing national languages.

Impacts of Governments' Language Policies and Planning on Minority and Other Languages Around the World

Impacts of Governments' Official Attitudes Towards Language Minorities

Cobarrubias (1982, 2012) made significant observations regarding the official attitudes of governments towards language minorities. According to her, governments' language policies impact minority language rights and language planning issues are mostly politically motivated. Cobarrubias observed that official attitudes of governments towards minority languages in many countries are often inadequate or discriminatory. She argued that governments often fail to recognise and respect linguistic diversity, and due to governments' politically motivated language policies, minorities face significant challenges in achieving language equality. Yadav (2013) also asserted that "Language and politics are interrelated.

Politics determines the language policy of a country. Language policy causes success or failure of the national politics" (p. 197-198). In the same line, Holmes (2013) also claimed that political power plays a crucial role behind language policy.

Cobarrubias (1982) mentioned 5 official attitudes of governments on minority languages:

1. Attempting to kill a language
2. Letting a language die
3. Unsupported coexistence
4. Partial support of specific language functions
5. Adoption as an official language

Attempting to kill a language: This attitude involves actively discouraging or even outlawing the use of a minority language, often in favour of a dominant language. Examples include historical policies such as forced assimilation or cultural genocide, where minority languages were suppressed or even prohibited. One example of this attitude can be seen in the historical policies of the United States towards Native American languages. The US government actively discouraged the use of indigenous languages and attempted to assimilate Native Americans into American culture, often through the forced removal of children to boarding schools where their languages and cultures were suppressed (McCarty, 2011; Ruiz, 2008).

Letting a language die: In this attitude, the government takes a passive approach and does not provide any support or resources for the survival of minority languages. As a result, the language may eventually disappear due to a lack of speakers and use. An example of this attitude can be seen in the case of Yiddish in Israel. In Israel, Hebrew was adopted as the official language and Yiddish was not supported or recognised, leading to a decline in the number of Yiddish speakers and the eventual disappearance of the language (Fishman, 1989).

Unsupported coexistence: This attitude involves accepting the existence of minority languages, but not providing any official support or recognition. This means that minority languages are often marginalised and relegated to informal or private settings and may not be taught in schools or used in official documents.

Partial support of specific language functions: Here, the government provides some level of support for the use of minority languages in certain contexts, such as education or cultural events. However, the language may not be recognised as an official language, and support may be limited in scope and resources.

Adoption as an official language: This attitude involves recognising the minority language as an official language of the country, alongside the dominant language(s). This means that the language is given legal status and may be used in official documents and settings, such as courts or government agencies. This approach typically involves significant resources and support for language revitalisation efforts.

Examples of Countries Where Government Language Policies and Planning Impacted the Minority Languages Negatively

This section will provide some examples of countries from Africa, North America, Europe, Asia, and the Middle East where government LPP neglected the minority language rights as well as having affected the minority and indigenous languages negatively.

Sub-Saharan Africa

In the 1960s, many countries in sub-Saharan Africa gained independence from European colonial powers. With the emergence of new nations, the governments felt the need to establish a sense of national identity, including language. Kaplan and Baldauf (1997) narrated that “Colonial boundaries and practices had left them with a legacy of a linguistically heterogeneous population, a population with a limited literacy base which was in general also under-educated, and the wide-spread use of a foreign language- the language of the former colonial power- for administrative purposes.” (p. 7). In this context, language planning became an important part of nation-building, and many governments actively participated in promoting and standardising a national language. One significant example is Tanzania, where the government established Swahili as the official language of the country. It was decided based on the belief that a shared language could help promote unity and national identity among the country's diverse ethnic groups. Similarly, in Nigeria, the government established English as the official language as a unifying aspect among the country's many ethnic groups (Bamgbose, 2000).

The involvement of governments in language planning in sub-Saharan Africa was not without controversy as many governments' language policy ignored the minority language rights. Referring to Adick (2013), David-Erb (2021) asserted that “In sub-Saharan Africa, the question of which language(s) to use in instruction has been per-haps the most ubiquitous and long-lasting educational debate since independence, and even dates back to colonial and missionary times.” (p.437). It was argued that the promotion of a national language led to the marginalisation of minority languages and cultures (Skutnabb-Kangas, 1989, 2008). It was also pointed out that the emphasis on standardisation and formal education in the chosen language could hinder the development of more colloquial and diverse forms of language (David-Erb. 2021). As elaborated by Adick (2013), cited in David-Erb (2021) in Burkina Faso, French is used in formal schools and in non-formal educational institutes, they teach their students in an indigenous language. Children of school age attend formal schools and adults with low literacy skills and other disadvantageous group receive non-formal education. David pointed out that this separation is impractical and bars citizens from enjoying their linguistic rights as students at formal schools earn certificates that benefit them to progress within the education system, but the certificates that the students receive in non-formal education do not allow them to progress to further education institutions or public service employment.

USA and Canada

The United States and Canada have a long history of language policy and planning that has negatively impacted indigenous minority languages. From the forced assimilation policies of the 19th and early 20th centuries to more recent English-only laws, these policies have had a profound effect on the survival and vitality of indigenous languages in the US. Some of the most damaging policies were the Indian Boarding School System in the USA and Residential School System in Canada. In the USA, it operated from 18th century to late 1970s and in Canada it operated from 1880s to the closing decades of 20th century (Hanson et al. 2020). Native American and Canadian Indigenous, First Nations, Métis and Inuit children were forcibly removed from their families and sent to boarding schools where they were forbidden from speaking their native languages and were punished for doing so. The goal was to assimilate these children into mainstream American and Canadian culture, which resulted in the loss of many indigenous languages and cultures (Hanson et al. 2020). Another policy that had

negative effects on indigenous languages was the English-only movement of the 20th century. This movement in the 1980s and 1990s wanted to establish English as the only official language of the US. This movement was particularly destructive to indigenous languages because many of these languages were already endangered, and the lack of support for bilingual education and language revitalisation programs made it even more difficult for these languages to survive (McCarty, 2013).

France

In France, French is the only national language, and the French government does little or nothing for any other language (Caland, n.d.). There are regional languages in France such as Breton, Basque, Occitan, Flemish, Catalan, Corsican, and Franco-Provençal. But most French speaking people and French government assume that French is rightly the only language of France. As reported by Irujo (2021), Antoine de Rivarol - an author, his work *On the Universality of the French Language* in 1783, defended that French was superior to the rest of the European languages because of its “genius” or “inner spirit”. Irujo added that several other authors later argued that it was a “patriotic duty” to eliminate the rest of the languages spoken in the French Republic. These ideas were later on instilled into politics during the French Revolution in ways that not speaking French was considered an act of treason. According to Irujo (2021), “The foundations of the French State’s language policy were laid between June 1793 and December 1794, a despotic and unconstitutional period in which no less than twenty norms were approved that seriously affected the existence of the national languages spoken in the Republic”. Basque citizens were not allowed to speak the Basque language (Trask, 1995). Irujo further added that Basque citizens had to face prison and torture to use their language, and they realised that using their language was dangerous. Eventually, Basque citizens stopped using their mother tongue as they felt it was not useful.

Nepal

Nepal is one of the most linguistically diverse countries in the world with 126 ethnic groups and 123 languages (Yadav, 2013). Eight languages are considered as major and they are: Nepali, Mithali, Bhojpuri, Tharu, Tamang, Newar, Magar, and Awadhi. However, although Nepal is a country of linguistic diversity, Nepali is recognised as the most important language and the remaining 100 plus languages are considered as minor (Yadav, 2013). Yadav (2013) elaborated that one nation-one language policy was adopted by late king Mahendra and his followers. They declared Nepali as the national language of Nepal and promoted the use of only Nepali in education, administration, media, court, and publication. Thus, Nepali was imposed on the non-Nepali speakers of Nepal. Hence, many of the 123 languages suffered due to this language policy. After Nepal adopted democracy in 1990, the constitution of Nepal recognised every language as national language but not the official language. At present, the national mass media include some minority languages and news is read in Nepali, English, Maithali, Bhojpuri, Tamang, Newari, Limbu, etc. in radio and television. However, as Yadav adds, as Nepal has given importance to Nepali language due to political favour, the conflict between the majority and minority languages still persists in Nepal. Minority language users are using their languages only as a symbol and unless Nepal creates federal states based on language community, the minority/minority dichotomy in the language policy in Nepal will not be solved (Yadav, 2013).

Philippines

Philippines is one of the most ethnically and linguistically diverse countries in Southeast Asia with more than one hundred ethnic groups and over 170 different languages (Symaco, 2017). As reported in Symaco (2017), under the Americans and the foundation of Philippines Commonwealth, in 1935 the constitution took the initiative to adopt one of the languages as a national language of the country. The Institute of National Language (INL) then proposed Tagalog to be the national language of the country. After Philippines gained independence in 1946, Pilipino (now Filipino) was declared the national language (Holmes, 2013). Holmes (2013) reported that Pilipino was so closely based on Tagalog and as Tagalog is the ethnic language of one particular group, it

was never collectively accepted as the national language. While there are around twelve million native speakers of Tagalog, Cebuana and Ilocano, the two other indigenous languages, have over ten million and over five million speakers respectively. Holmes (2013) further adds, Tagalog was later labeled as Filipino to gain wider acceptance from people but there has been dissatisfaction among the people of Philippines to date on the selection of Tagalog as the national language which displays favouritism towards a particular ethnic group. The choice of Tagalog, according to Holmes (2013), “reflected the political and economic power of its speakers who were concentrated in the area which included the capital, Manila” (p. 107).

Iran

Iran is a multilingual country with over 80 million people. Many minority languages are spoken in Iran along with Persian, which is the official language of the country. As reported by Ghanbari and Rahimian (2020) there are 75 minority languages in Iran and out of which 61% is Persian-speaking, 16% Azeri, 10% Kurd, six% Lur, two% Baluch, two % Arab, two % Turkmen and Turkic tribes, and one % speak other languages. Ghanbari and Rahimian (2020) added that in 1921, after seizing power, Reza Shah took a strong purist standpoint towards the Persian language and tried to glorify the pre-Islamic Iranian culture through his “Persianization and secularization” plans. Citing Aghajanian (1983), Ghanbari and Rahimian (2020) asserted that the Pahlavi’s modernisation caused the migration of non-Persian communities to industrial cities in Iran, and this led to a socio-economic inequality among Iranian minority communities. Holmes (2013) claimed that Iran still struggles to achieve national unity, as Farsi, the language of the largest and most powerful group, is considered a threat to the languages of the minority ethnic groups. Holmes (2013) adds, while in principle, the minority ethnic languages are protected by the Iranian Constitution, in reality, these minority languages are not taught in schools, and the speakers of the largest minority language, Azeri, are shifting to Farsi in a number of domains. In Tabriz (a city in north-western Iran which also serves as the capital of East-Azerbaijan province) too, Farsi has the official status, and it is the dominant language in the public domains in Tabriz, which according to Holmes (2013) displays the importance of Persian and the irrelevance of Azeri to the Iranian government.

These above-mentioned examples are some of the many cases in the world where minority and indigenous languages suffered and have been suffering linguistic inequalities and endangerment due to many governments’ discriminatory and politically motivated LPP.

Recommendations

Language Policies and Planning Need to Consider Ecological Perspective

As language belongs to people and it is part of their socio-cultural identity and existence, the language policy makers should consider the ecological perspective to analyse and employ language policy and planning. According to Hornberger (2002), the ecological approach considers that “languages, like living species, evolve, grow, change, live, and die in relation to other languages and also in relation to their environment” (p. 33). As also cited by Wu (n.d.), “it also emphasises the impact of interactions between languages, their users, and the socio-political contexts of their users within the language ecology on language policy” (Haugen, 1972).

Language Policies and Planning Should Be Community-led and Bottom -Up in conjunction with Top-down Approach

As Kaplan and Baldauf (1997) correctly stated, the people for whom the language planning and implementation is done, should have a say in the actual planning and implementation of it. LPP should include participation of the people and community. In other words, for successful LPP to protect or revitalise any minority or indigenous

language, it should be done from bottom up and at the micro level. Referring to Hornberger (1996), Trinick et al. (2020) asserted that “Indigenous language revitalisation can only truly succeed if the community of users are significantly involved in the development” (p.12).

There are some examples of the countries where governments respected the minority and indigenous languages and provided the proper rights those languages deserved. In other words, the government led LPP had positive impacts on the people and the minority languages of those countries or communities. Norway for example revised the constitution in 1988 to provide greater autonomy for the indigenous Sámi language (Trinick et al., 2020). Trinick et al. (2020) reported that the formal recognition of Sámi language benefited most the people of Finnmark, a regional area in the northernmost part of Norway where most of the Sámi people live. The recognition of Sámi language “led to the subsequent establishment of a Sámi Parliament in Finnmark in 1989, while the Sámi Language Act, passed in 1992, recognised Northern Sámi as its official regional language”. The Sámi Language Act also ensured the language is used in the Sámi Parliament, the law courts as well as all levels of education.

The combination of top-down and bottom-up approaches in LPP is also evident in other international contexts, in particular, with respect to Indigenous language revitalisation (Hornberger, 2008). Trinick et al. (2020) also reported that the Canadian government recognised the Arctic province of Nunavut (where 22,000 Inuit people live) and it became the first formal subdivision of territory in Canada. This facilitated Inuit people to work in provincial administration and the local Inuit language, Inuktitut is used as the co-official language with English and French. Inuktitut thus became the first Indigenous language of Canada to be the working language of a provincial government.

Similar examples come from the South American countries like Peru, Ecuador, Bolivia, Colombia, Guatemala, and Mexico where more than 30-40 million Indigenous people reside. In these countries community-based, grass-roots Indigenous organisations have also been included in the design and implementation of Intercultural Bilingual Education (IBE) programmes (Trinick et al., 2020). These bilingual education language policies, which are inclusive of Indigenous languages, helped maintain the minority and Indigenous languages. These examples of positive language policies by government thus demonstrate a need to have a balance between top-down and bottom-up LPP.

Language Policies and Planning Should Ensure Equal Education for Minority and Indigenous Languages

Some of the ways to ensure equal education for minority and Indigenous language are listed and discussed below.

Minority Languages Should Be Used for Bilingual Education

This implies that the minority or Indigenous languages should be used as the medium of instruction in the schools. This bilingual education model will include the most used minority or the Indigenous language from the community or country to be taught with the main or the official language. According to Bulusan (2019), some Asian countries advocate bilingual education in minority languages by using minority languages as medium of instruction which seem to facilitate better learning. One example of a country in Asia that has allowed minority language as a medium of instruction is China where they implement the minority language ‘selectively’ (Bulusan, 2019). In this model, schools allowed to teach mother tongue with the condition that English is not neglected.

Minority Languages Should Be Taught in Schools

In cases where it is not easy or not possible to select one minority or Indigenous language (e.g., in multilingual communities/countries) as medium of instruction, governments should consider making the minority language(s) as learning courses or subjects in school curriculums. This will ensure maintenance of the mother tongues of the local minority or Indigenous people. The ministry of education can ensure to train teachers in those target languages to create syllabi and instructional materials in and for the minority languages. Citing Smith (2003), Bulusan (2019) provided the example that in Malaysia, a special panel of experts were assigned a task to create instructional materials and teacher training to teach the Kadasunduzun (a minority language in Sabah). Bulusan added that the Department of Education in the Philippines also provides “in-service training for teachers who teach mother tongue based multilingual education (MTB-MLE)” (p. 239).

Ensuring Immersion Education for Minority Languages

In immersion education all academic subjects would be taught in the target minority or Indigenous language. This can provide opportunities to children who speak English or any other major languages as mother-tongue to learn a minority language. This can also ensure minority and Indigenous language maintenance and revitalisation. As Trinick et al. (2020) also asserted, Indigenous immersion education is the best way to support Indigenous language revitalisation.

Language Policies and Planning Should be Ethical

To be able to use our mother tongue is our human and democratic rights. Neglecting minority languages is thus neglecting linguistic rights as well as denying the access to education and equal opportunities. Governments thus have an ethical responsibility to recognise and respect linguistic diversity and to promote the linguistic rights of minorities.

According to Cobarrubias (1982), linguistic diversity is an essential component of cultural diversity as well, and by ensuring linguistic rights we can contribute to social and cultural integration and cohesion. Therefore, an ethical approach to language planning can ensure linguistic diversity, promote linguistic rights, and guarantee that language policies are designed to benefit all members of society, regardless of their linguistic background.

Summary and Concluding Remarks

This dissertation discussed in detail the impact of government language planning and policies on minority languages. The definitions, types, and the framework of language policies have been discussed in the light of existing research literature. Based on results of the literature review and case studies of different countries, it has been concluded that government language policies have a significant impact on the survival and maintenance of minority languages. With examples, this essay demonstrated that government language policies in many countries were politically motivated and were discriminatory to minority and Indigenous languages. It has been argued that language policies in the name of national unification and language purification have harmed many minority and Indigenous languages. In many places in the world, some of the minority and Indigenous languages have been purposefully eliminated. The dissertation concluded with recommendations that official attitudes of governments towards language minorities should be ethical and governments should respect the linguistic diversities and guarantee linguistic rights irrespective of their peoples’ linguistic and socio-political background.

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