

Language Planning Policy

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Abstract

First and foremost, language planning policy (LPP) in its larger sense is an aspect of a national resource development planning. It is believed that the relevant way of introducing any change within society is through a wise LPP. Undoubtedly, modern societies are aware that the good planning of an entire language mill will have a successful outcomes on the educational, economic, political, and cultural spheres; that is to say, it will produce a beneficial grist that contribute to the betterment of life. Hence, the scope of the present study is to elucidate the principal arenas and areas of Language Planning Policy (LPP). It aims at presenting frames or lenses that contribute to draw the main steps that underlie a successful LPP.

Key words: Language Planning Policy, Status Planning, Corpus Planning, Acquisition Planning, Prestige Planning, stages of LPP.

1. Introduction :

Language policy and planning are among the many instruments available for helping to shape the character and direction of a society. It is very important to understand its scope, stages, and structural frameworks in order to make it effective in a particular society, in this case Algeria. Government leaders often resort to planning as a rational and co-ordinate state action to solve problems and reach goals that are for the best interest of the collectivity. As the vehicle of culture and co-existence, it is not surprising that language too has become the target of planning by policy-makers. The UNESCO invites governments, educational institutions, and professional associations to multiply their efforts for the preservation and the promotion of all languages in all situations individually and collectively through a sound LPP.

2. Language policy :

Naturally enough, the symbolic value of language in establishing ethnic identity, the very centrality of it to social life as a medium of social integration and collective interaction, the value of language as a strategic means of access to power and influence, and to create a homogeneous articulation between the local and the global, all produce conditions where people want to acquire, preserve and promote the language. Accordingly, an effective way of dealing with the conflicting language issues is through a language policy which is considered as a subservient element in the history of any nation, Marcel Diki- Kidiri stated, "The proper history of each country and its local sociolinguistic conditions are usually

valued upon the energetic decisions or absence of decisions in case of a language policy” (2004: 24)

Most countries have communities that speak different languages. It is surely because of this that governments show a strong need to identify one or more languages to be national or official languages. However, it is interesting to stress on the role of non-government agencies such as institutions, committees, individuals and groups. In addition, language policy is objectively designed to maintain ethnic diversity, thus, it reflects various voices and interests. Language policy is a set of nationally agreed principles which enables decision makers to discuss language issues in a rational, comprehensive, and balanced way.

3. Language planning :

It is the conscious and human deliberate manipulation of the linguistic resources of a society to achieve certain educational, political, and economic ends. Language planning is a widespread phenomenon in today’s world, particularly in the organization and development of multilingual states and recently decolonized territories.

Because of the increasing complexity of societies and the demands raised by minority groups in the world to establish linguistic equality careful and systematic language planning has become necessary and compulsory to take part in modern state building. Further, language planners are involved in the selection of official or national languages; development of writing systems; preparation of dictionaries, promotion of literacy, and standardization; modernization and technological enrichment of both majority and minority languages.

Once an agency or government has decided on the selection of a language or languages, it gives the task of planning to a language academy, or a language regulatory body. Thus, language planning can be defined as the practical implementation of language policy across all the possible domains of language use referred to in language policy. François Grin describes language planning as:

“A systematic, rational, theory-based effort at the societal level to modify the linguistic environment with a view to increasing aggregate welfare. It is typically conducted by official bodies or their surrogates and aimed at part or all of the population living under their jurisdiction (2000: 18)

A few comments about this definition are presented. First, it is:

- **Systematic :**

The use of this adjective means that language planning is assumed to be organized according to a certain method and aims at certain goals, which may be overt or covert. Language planning is systematic means that it is undertaken in an organized, step-by-step way. Second, it is:

- **Rational:**

Language planning is a rational exercise, based on reasoning and factual material and subject to objectivity. In addition, rationality, first, requires deciding which languages will be used for which official functions; that is to say, which official functions have to be performed, and then decide which languages would be most appropriate for those functions. Second, it requires that planners will be fully informed about all the linguistic facts, such as the precise sociolinguistic realities of the situation which needs to be

transformed, the exact goals they are expected to achieve, and the resources available to them (Bamgbose, 2000). Third, it is:

- **Theory-based effort :**

It is based on theories about two important factors, namely, language and planning, and the interrelationship between language and social life. As regards the language, the features which need to be considered are the nature of the linguistic system and the nature of language knowledge (grammatical, sociolinguistic competence), the way in which languages are used in the communication process, its role as an instrument for the transfer of information, its social functions in facilitating the socialization process (acquiring values, attitudes, perceptions and norms), and its symbolic function (for instance in identity construction). The second constituent factor is the planning activity. Fourth, it modifies the :

- **Linguistic environment :**

It may be understood as the body of language planning. It has several aims either to increase use of a minority language in actual life, to develop foreign language skills in schools, or even to eliminate the use of certain languages. Fifth, it increases

- **Welfare**

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The goal of all language planning is to increase welfare. Welfare is seen as something that only individuals can define for themselves. In addition, welfare is not just a matter of material consumption. It can also include cultural welfare such as a feeling of safety in one's identity or the preservation of makers of cultural heritage. Sixth, it is conducted by

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- **The state :**

This means that the state intervenes through deliberate language manipulation. It is important to state that this manipulation is understood here not in terms of political power play between actors holding conflicting views, but in terms of a discussion between different solutions, each of which has advantages and drawbacks. Besides, language planning implementation is a difficult task, since it is difficult to change people's ways of language use, language norms, language attitudes and beliefs. Thus, it needs strong backing by political leaders through the formalization of policies in legislation. Seventh, language planning is directed at:

- **Solving language problems :**

The focus of language planning is to work out the socio- economic, educational, political and cultural comfort of society. Again, language planning devises complex national problems. Because the term language policy and planning provide a unified conceptual rubric, the analysis of its coalescence is compulsory because they each play valuable roles in clarifying social linguistic ambiguities.

1.4. Language planning and Language policy: division or accommodation :

The distinction between language policy (i.e. the plan) and language planning (i.e. plan implementation) is important for linguists. The two terms have frequently been used interchangeably and relatedly. According to Appel and Mysken, "Language planning is in fact, part of, or the factual realisation of a language policy: a government adopts a certain policy with regard to the language(s) spoken in the nation and will try to carry it out in a

form of language planning. Any case of language planning is based on a certain language policy" (1990: 50)

Several policy analysts and sociolinguists have classified both terms in one terminological area called language planning policy (LPP) as a power related field. Both of them work in a complementary operation in devising strategies to solve language problems and this is after all its *raison d'être*. Undoubtedly, this will enable us to foster the view that bridging the gap between the two terms will create a collaborative realm capable of dealing with language problems and disputes.

5. LPP Orientations :

Orientation in LPP, according to Ruiz, refers to "a complex of dispositions toward language and its role, and toward languages and their role in society" (1990, 16). It is the philosophical backbone to carry out the entire planning, therefore, different orientations lead to different policy decisions. Yet, there are three language orientations: language - as - problem, language- as- right, and language- as- resource.

5.1. Language – as Problem :

Under the orientation of language – as a problem, "language is seen as an obstacle standing in the way of the incorporation of members of linguistic minorities into the mainstream" (Hornberger, 2003: 24). It is important to keep in mind that the language problems are never merely language problems, they represent more general social issues, and conversely, the outcomes of the treatment have "a direct impact on all spheres of social life" (Karam, 2000:180). Foreign language (FL) cases are also mentioned under this orientation; as a matter of fact, during the Chinese and Iranian revolution, English education was banned in both countries because FL was seen as a symbol against their goal to pursue national unity.

5.2. Language - as Right :

It considers each language as a basic human right. Hornberger has pointed out "the right of linguistic minority members to speak and maintain their mother tongue is defined as a human civil right" (2004: 24). Thus, the use of a language is regarded a basic fundamental for people within their countries.

According to Kymlicka (2000), it is important to preserve the structure of cultural communities in order to preserve meaningful choices about the good for the individual since the state operates within a linguistic and a cultural context. Thus, in order to give individuals fair equality of opportunity to realize their own conception of a good life, the state must try to provide equally effective support for the structures of each component ethnolinguistic community making up the country.

5.3. Language – as Resource :

It regards languages of communities as important resources, where " the importance to the nation of conserving and developing all of its linguistic resources is emphasized" (Hornberger, 2004 : 88) .The fundamental idea behind this orientation is to foster multi-

culturalism, and tolerance to other cultures among people, which would lead to peace as an outcome. There is no denying that this orientation is the ideal end of the goals that all LPP would pursue. Some language analysts suggest that the three attitudes in question represent stages in a progressive paradigm shift. In their view, 'language as a problem' is an ideological mistake; 'language – as right' is better, but it still too passive and conservative; whereas 'language as a resource' is the truly progressive paradigm that can be dealt with. Other language commentators stress that these perspectives are not mutually exclusive, that all three are constantly in play in most language situations.

6. Stages in LPP :

According to the model proposed below, each stage of the LPP process is significant

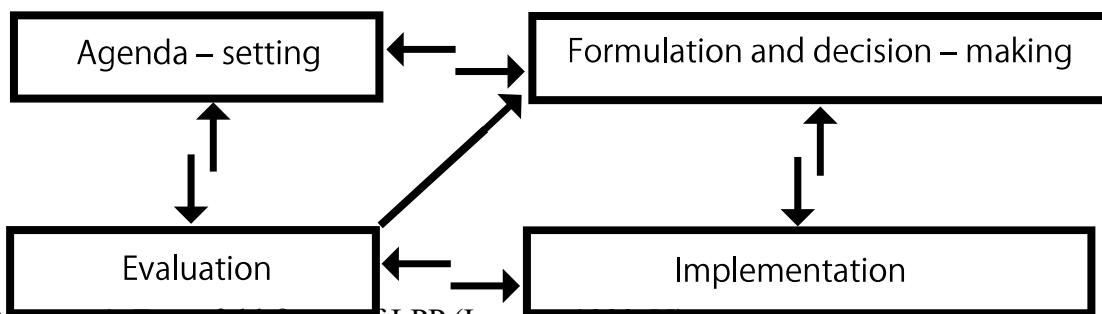


Diagram 1. Four-fold stages of LPP (Ingram, 1990:55).

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The first stage is LPP agenda – setting which is triggered when language problems are identified.

Language problems are then acknowledged and identified and their nature is clearly defined. The language problems are recorded in an agenda for discussion, and the strategic solutions are formulated as a part of government policy. The second stage is the formulation of LPP and the articulation of decision – making choices. The policy formulation refers to language choice, i.e. how to work out solutions to the language problems and how to select people who are expected to carry out the implementation tasks. The implementation phase is about the execution of the LPP determination, while evaluation, ascertains whether the policy is successful or not.

7. A structural Framework for LPP: Types and Approaches :

As this enquiry is concerned with identifying and characterizing a successful LPP a set of structural descriptive categories are required for this purpose. Furthermore, LPP activities are generally categorized into four types : Status Planning (SP) which concerns the uses of a language , Corpus Planning (CP) which concerns the structure of a language , Acquisition Planning (AP) which concerns the users of a language , and Prestige Planning (PP) which concerns the image of a language . Further, an important distinction is made between policy and cultivation approaches to LPP, each of the four policy types identified above can be realized through these approaches. The policy approach is seen as attending to the establishment of a linguistic norm, while the cultivation approach is seen as attending to the extension of its functions. The following sub – sections consider the four LPP types and their associated approaches and goals.

7.1 *Status Planning :*

Status Planning (SP) refers to the processes of the selection and use of languages in relation to education, administration, mass media, trade, and international relations. Depending on the linguistic make – up of the society, language status may focus on issues such as which local languages to choose. Language choice may be also between local languages on one hand and international on the other. Yet, the policy – oriented goals of SP concern the formal roles of languages in society are referred to ‘the selection and allocation of norms’, this include the officialization, and nationalization, whereas, the cultivation – oriented goals concern the functional roles of languages such as language revival, language maintenance, and interlingual communication. The language choice is generally associated with wide social, cultural, and psychological factors in response to relevant sociolinguistic functions of the languages and the sociolinguistic needs of the people .Thus, SP has a fundamental to play in the redistribution of linguistic resources and the maintenance of minority and community languages.

7.2. *Corpus Planning :*

To provide a comprehensive definition of corpus Planning (CP) that encompasses the full range of activities, identifies clearly the targeted groups, and defines the methodological approaches is a gigantic task. Nevertheless, Cooper’s definition presents a significant model as it captures the main activities of CP. Indeed, he argues that CP could be associated with “Activities such as coining new terms, reforming spelling, and adopting new script. It refers, in short, to the creation of new forms, the modification of old ones or the selection from alternative forms in a spoken or written code” (1989, 13)

If one looks back in history, it can be realized that the language practices mentioned above are not new linguistic activities. Indeed, it has been a linguistic practice for many years. One can; for instance, mention, among others, the language planning process undertaken by Sabino Arana, who created many of the cultural symbols of Basque nationalism, was responsible for the development of the first standardized variety of Basque. Furthermore, in England, CP matters are addressed usually by universities, independent publishers of dictionaries, or scientific and technical terminology committees. In contrast, in France, CP is dominated by vigorous government involvement and Cardinal de Richelieu.

Besides, the policy – oriented goals of CP deal with graphisation, which is the development or the creation of a writing system for unwritten languages. It proceeds after a language or a variety of a language is selected, and it involves the writing down of orthography and spelling system. Then, standardization or codification is a matter of elevating one model (pronunciation, lexicon, and grammar) of a language for acceptance as the norm for usage. It aims at creating harmonious communication and understanding between speakers of the same community. Thus communication is possible across the Arab world and North Africa because Modern Standard Arabic is shared by the Arabic speech community no matter in which country they live. The cultivation- oriented goals deal with modernization or elaboration of a standard for the selected language. This process may involve terminology and style development.

7.3. Acquisition Planning or language – in – education planning :

It is closely associated with language learning or literacy skills development as well as literature production and language use in the media. Acquisition planning (AP) is not restricted only to the teaching of official or foreign languages (FLs) but may include the teaching of minority and indigenous languages. It is directed at language education programs and language teaching for various purposes. Yet, policy – oriented goals include curriculum and personnel policy, methods and materials policy, and resource and evaluation policy. However, cultivation – oriented goals include language maintenance, shift, and reacquisition of languages. The choice of a language in the educational system confers power and prestige on the language concerned through its use in formal instruction. AP has developed important tools such as schools for language acquisition purposes.

7.4. Prestige Planning :

Prestige planning (PP) or image building is the fourth range of LPP. Haarmann (1990) ensured that the absence of the necessary PP measures in the 1920s and 1930s explains clearly the failure of CP and SP in the former Soviet Union. Besides, he believes that SP and CP are subsumed under the umbrella of PP when he stated, “In language planning, all activities which are directed at the structure of a language (its corpus) and at its status appear in the light of prestige values which form a network of evaluations and attitudes” (2000: 105).

Thus prestige and positive image of a language are essentially associated with the attitudes of the recipients of the policy rather than those who plan or design for languages. Indeed, as stressed by calvet (1999), those who use the language are the real choosers because the speakers are the real people who shape the future of the language and bring its prestige to higher level. Yet , the policy – oriented goals of PP are achieved through official promotion by governments , institutional promotion by agencies , pressure groups promotion by groups , and individual promotion through the activities of individuals (Haarmann , 2004 : 121) . Whereas, the cultivation – oriented goals of PP are associated with the enhancement of the prestige of a language through its use in higher domains such as the sciences, professions, diplomacy and literature.

8. Conclusion:

The basic tenets, parameters and mechanisms of LPP’s realm enable conceptualize the complexity and worth of the discipline. It is complex since it is woven around different principles and moving towards unavoidable criteria and it is worth and relevant since it formulates subservient mechanisms for effective LPP. In the light of the findings, it can be said that the primary focus of LPP is language, which is of immense significance for humans. Language is certainly the most fundamental means of communication in all societies. It is not only used for identity and unity between groups but, through language, ideas are exchanged, feelings expressed, culture spread, and worldview shared.

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