BILINGUAL EDUCATION

JOSUÉ M. GONZÁLEZ

VOLUME

Crawford, J. (1996). *Endangered Native American languages: What is to be done, and why?* Retrieved February 1, 2007, from http://www.ncela.gwu.edu/pubs/crawford/endangered.htm

English Language Education for Children in Public Schools, Arizona Revised Statues (A.R.S.) §§ 15–751 *et seq.* (2004).

McKay, S. L., & Hornberger, N. H. (Eds.). (1996). *Sociolinguistics and language teaching.* New York: Cambridge University Press.

Ricento, T. (Ed.). (2000). *Ideology, politics, and language policies: Focus on English.* Philadelphia: John Benjamins.

Skutnabb-Kangas, T. (2000). *Linguistic genocide in education, or worldwide diversity and human rights?* Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Tollefson, J. W. (Ed.). (2002). *Language policies in education: Critical issues.* Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

U.S. Census Bureau. (1990). Table 1. Language use and English ability, persons 5 years and over, by state: 1990 Census. *1990 census of population,* CPHL-96. Washington, DC: Author.

U.S. Census Bureau. (2003). Table 1. Language use, English ability, and linguistic isolation for the population 5 years and over by state: 2000. *Census 2000,* Summary File 3, Tables P19, PCT13, and PCT14. Internet release date: February 25, 2003. Washington, DC: Author.

Wiley, T. G. (2005). *Literacy and language diversity in the United States* (2nd ed.). Washington, DC: Center for Applied Linguistics and Delta Systems.

Language Policy and Social Control

Language policy refers to official or quasi-official efforts to manage or regulate the use or form of a language within a community. Language policy encompasses the range of decisions that people make about language. The decision to make English the official language of India offers one example of language policy, and another is a decision for instruction to be in Tagalog at a local elementary school in the Philippines. The use of one language rather than others within a community establishes and maintains the high status of that language and its speakers, positioning others lower in the hierarchy, and contributing to the loss or maintenance of a language.

Language policy is directly linked to social control and the privileging of one group of people over others using language as a vehicle to do so. Though the loss of a language from the world's linguistic landscape is typically seen as a natural, evolutionary process over time, it is often a direct result of choices that people in power have made. The reality is that language policies are often concerted, politically motivated efforts to assert the power of one group of speakers over another.

Knowledge of the high-status language offers certain advantages to the people who speak it, such as easier access to school curricula or more lucrative jobs. History offers countless examples of the use of language policies to assert power and dominance, most obviously by governments in their efforts to create and enforce a national identity, as this entry describes.

Language Policies in Conquest, Colonization, and Nationalism

Throughout time, language has played a central role in conquest, colonization, and the formation of nations, as speakers of different languages are brought into contact amid power struggles, usually resulting in language spread. The spread of Latin during the Roman Empire, Arabic during Islamic expansion, and French during the 17th century offer instances of groups using language to promote their economic, political, or religious missions. Language has often been used to advance the goals of colonial leadership and, as a result, English has been promoted in East Africa, Russian in the former Soviet Union, and Japanese in Korea. Newly democratized or independent nations such as South Africa, Estonia, and Bangladesh have also relied on language policy to symbolize a reenvisioned national identity.

The colonization of the African continent offers many illustrations of the central role of language policy in wide-scale efforts to gain social control. French colonization in West Africa was characterized by efforts to assimilate Africans into French culture and thereby "civilize" them, and by a belief in the superiority of the French language. The exclusive use of standard French was formalized in the Brazzaville Conference of 1944, when a recommendation was made to designate it as the exclusive language of schools, and any use of local languages was forbidden. As a result, many local languages were lost.

Under apartheid, the official languages of South Africa were English and Afrikaans. In 1974, the government issued a decree that made Afrikaans, seen as the language of the oppressors, as a medium

of instruction for 50% of subjects from the last year of primary school to the last year of high school. The enforcement of this policy spawned the student uprising of 1976 in Soweto, to which the government responded violently. To reverse exclusive apartheid policies after the end of apartheid, a new constitution was formally adopted in 1996 that recognized 9 local languages in addition to English and Afrikaans. This has created a unique context in South Africa, which now has 11 official languages.

Not all new nations adopt multilingual policies, however, and most follow the one-nation, one-language ideology that took root in the early nationalist period. In the case of Israel, Zionist ideology actively and effectively promoted Hebrew monolingualism, upholding the symbolic, political connection between Hebrew and national identity. Historically, it was expected that immigrants to Israel would quickly learn Hebrew because it was necessary for their everyday lives and for their absorption and assimilation into Zionist culture. Normalization of Hebrew that revitalized the language from a primarily religious, written form into a modern, spoken language was essentially completed by 1914. By the time the state of Israel declared independence in 1948, 80% of the Jewish population claimed to know Hebrew, and more than 50% claimed to use it as their sole language. This language revitalization and subsequent shift to Hebrew took place within 50 years. With regard to social control, though this monolingual policy was viewed as essential for the state's unification, it has resulted in the marginalization of Arabic, as well as the loss of minority Jewish languages such as Yiddish and Ladino.

There have been other examples and evidence of the connection between language policy and social control; the 1976 Soweto uprising was not the only time that language policy has been a touch point for violence and resistance to domination. When Pakistan gained independence in 1947, and the national government established Urdu as the national language, Bangla speakers in the eastern part of the country resisted. The police responded violently to a strike in 1952, killing several students. This led to greater resistance and, ultimately, when the first constitution of Pakistan came into effect in 1956, it recognized Bangla as a state language. Bangladesh became independent from Pakistan in 1973 and declared Bangla its official language.

The struggles described previously are about far more than just language. They are also about how society manages diversity, culture, power, identity, and mainly, how it treats the people who are the speakers of different languages.

Language Policy and Gatekeeping

The power of language policy as a mechanism for social control stems from the fact that language policy often functions as gatekeeper, giving access to some and denying others, in arenas such as civic participation, economic mobility, and educational opportunity. In civic affairs, language choices can be used to constrain the ability of people who do not speak the dominant language(s) to take part in elections and political discourse in general, and in some places, citizenship is only granted to speakers of the dominant language. For example, Estonia gained independence in 1991 after 50 years of Soviet rule, and established Estonian as the official language. In a backlash against the preceding "Russification" period and Russian speakers who had entered the country during that time, a law passed in 1992 requires knowledge of Estonian to gain citizenship.

In the United States, English literacy testing has historically provided a legal means for discrimination in civic participation and citizenship. Although it has been illegal since 1870 to prohibit male citizens over the age of 21 from voting, southern states adopted literacy tests as a way to bar Blacks from participation. This practice was ongoing until the passage of the Voting Rights Act of 1965. Although this law banned literacy tests for voting, literacy testing has remained a requirement for naturalization as a U.S. citizen since 1917.

Although the government initially accepted literacy in any language for citizenship, this changed in 1950 when federal law established literacy in English as a condition of naturalization. Language policies such as these bar certain groups from civic participation and citizenship, illustrating how language policies and practices can be used for social control.

With regard to economic mobility, knowledge of high-status languages is directly correlated with income and socioeconomic status. Most jobs require knowledge of the dominant language, and in some workplaces, speaking a minority language is even forbidden. In an example of a workplace language policy, Rose Associates, a building company in New York City, sent out a memo in 2007 forbidding building workers from speaking languages other than

English in all public areas as well as on the radio as a company policy and common courtesy. This policy demotes languages other than English to lesser status and curtails the opportunities for workers with limited knowledge of English to advance professionally.

In Pakistan, English provides access to jobs within the government bureaucracy and the major industrial and business sectors. However, only students of the elite private and public schools have the opportunity to learn English. Likewise, in Israel, both Hebrew and English proficiency are directly correlated with socioeconomic status. For example, knowledge of both is necessary to pass the Bagrut, a higher education matriculation exam, and for most White-collar employment. This disadvantages Arabic speakers, who speak Hebrew as a second language and English as a third language after Hebrew. Results of the national achievement exams consistently show that Jewish students outperform students in the Arab sector in English. Given that both Hebrew and English are necessary for higher education and extremely beneficial in the job market, Arab students are being systematically denied equal access to opportunity.

As evident from these examples, education has historically been a primary way that powers around the world have implemented their language policies. In schools, language policies can contribute to minority language loss or, correspondingly, academic disparities because of language; in this way, schools often participate in the marginalization of minority language speakers. The Chinese government requires Han Chinese culture and language in Tibetan schools as a form of domination, which places Tibetan students at a disadvantage and limits their ability to access the curriculum. In Kazakhstan, Soviet language education policy led to dramatic language loss, and the "Russification" of schools under Soviet rule created the situation in the mid-1980s whereby 40% of Kazakh youth were unable to read their native language. New language policy is reversing that trend by strongly emphasizing the Kazakh language in education; however, now this new language policy poses an equal threat to Russian in today's Kazakhstan.

As a result of the imposition of English-only policies in public schools in the United States, the languages of immigrant families are typically lost by the second or third generation and replaced with English. Decisions to impose English as the only language of instruction have reflected popular attitudes toward particular ethnic groups and the relationship between the United States and the students' country of origin, as in the case of Japanese Americans just after World War II or the treatment of Puerto Rican Americans. The extreme losses of Hawaiian and Native American languages in the United States resulted from intentional education policies, which actively sought to replace these minority languages with English as part of wider efforts to Americanize and control these groups. Perhaps the most egregious language policy in the United States was a state law in Louisiana that made it illegal for slaves to use their native languages while they worked. The same law also forbade the teaching of English to slaves.

Although nations typically use language policies to promote one language at the expense of others, as evident in these examples, many countries now have policies designed to protect and promote regional and ethnic languages, which will preserve the vitality of these languages over time. South Africa exemplifies this—by raising nine local languages to official status in its new constitution, the government contributes to maintaining these languages. Language policies can be adopted that conserve minority languages and offer opportunities to the people who speak them. As postapartheid South Africa shows, linguistic diversity need not be viewed as a threat to national identity, but can instead be seen as a national resource. Likewise, more accepting language policies can enable and encourage civic participation and can contribute to equalizing economic and educational opportunities for all people. For this reason, language policy research in recent years has primarily advocated the adoption of language policies that create opportunities and are inclusive rather than exclusive.

Kate Menken

See also Language Dominance; Language Education Policy in Global Perspective; Languages and Power; Language Shift and Language Loss; Languages in Colonial Schools, Eastern; Languages in Colonial Schools, Western

Further Readings

Baker, C. (2006). *Foundations of bilingual education and bilingualism* (4th ed.). Clevedon, UK: Multilingual Matters.

Bartlett, L., Menken, K., Seghers, M., & Adely, F. (2003). *Human development and language policy.* New York: United Nations Development Programme.

Heugh, K. (1999). Languages, development and reconstructing education in South Africa. *International Journal of Educational Development, 19*(1999), 301–313.

Kaplan, R. & Baldauf, R. (1997). *Language planning: From practice to theory.* Clevedon, UK: Multilingual Matters.

Liebowitz, A. (1969). English literacy: Legal sanction for discrimination. *Notre Dame Lawyer, 45*(1, Fall), 7–67.

Leibowitz, A. (1971). *Educational policy and political acceptance: The imposition of English as the language of instruction in American schools.* Washington, DC: ERIC Reports.

Shohamy, E. (2006). *Language policy: Hidden agendas and new approaches.* London: Routledge.

Skutnabb-Kangas, T. (2000). *Linguistic genocide in education—Or worldwide diversity and human rights?* Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Spolsky, B. (2004). *Language policy.* Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Spolsky, B., & Shohamy, E. (1999). *The languages of Israel: Policy, ideology, and practice.* Clevedon, UK: Multilingual Matters.

Tollefson, J. (1991). *Planning language, planning inequality: Language policy in the community.* London: Longman.

Language Registers

Users of most languages alter the way they address others according to social backgrounds, intentions, geography, gender, and age. Other factors, such as occupation, may also influence register. When we speak, we sometimes shift registers to communicate effectively and appropriately with others. When we speak of *language registers,* we are generally referring to the variations that speakers or writers use in their language when addressing interlocutors other than in the expected mode or level of formality. Register shifts may be horizontal or vertical. *Horizontal shift* implies language variations used within the same group as the speaker's. *Vertical shift* relates to the degree of formality, ranging from frozen to intimate. Register is a broad concept; it may imply variations in all aspects of language, including phonology, morphology, semantics, syntax, and pragmatics. Shifts may involve both verbal and nonverbal elements. This entry describes why people shift language registers, theories of language registers, variations in language use, and implications for second-language users.

Why We Shift Language Registers

When we use language, we must consider a number of factors: who we are, who we are speaking to, the relationship between us and the other person or people, the context we find ourselves in, the purpose of our communication, and the rules for communication in that specific context. Based on our analysis of these, and other factors, we make choices relative to vocabulary, pronunciation, intonation, velocity of speech, gestures and posture, syntax, proximity, and eye contact. We consider whether to tell a joke and even how we should appear physically—type of clothing and accessories, perfumes or colognes, makeup, or hairstyle.

In short, we shift language registers in appropriate ways to follow the social rules, relate to others in some way, and make sure that we accomplish our purpose as communicators. We may want to get a job, invite someone out on a date, share a secret with a friend, explain a lesson to a group of students, write a short story, show that we are part of a group, share findings of a research project at a conference, give a guided scripted tour at a local park, or write a polite letter of complaint to a service provider. If we do not communicate in the right way, our message may not come across correctly, we may offend the person or people we are addressing, or we may detract from our message because the listener focuses attention on our inappropriateness. When language users do not know how and when to shift, they will face communication difficulties that could, in turn, lead to other types of problems—issues with relationships, work-related problems, or poor grades, among other things.

Theories of Language Registers

As with most language phenomena, *language register* is defined in different ways by different people. Thomas Bertram Reid, in 1956, is credited with the first use of the term, which then became more commonly used in the 1960s by linguists who wanted to speak or write about variations in language according to user and related to the interaction of different variables. Michael Halliday has written about user selection of language variations according to the setting. He defines three variables that influence the variation selected: field (subject matter), tenor (relationships), and mode (type of communication being spoken or written). Rodney Quirk and colleagues distribute register shifts across a formality scale that includes very