

# Language Planning and Policy in Africa, Vol. 1

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**LANGUAGE PLANNING AND POLICY**

# **Language Planning and Policy in Africa, Vol. 1**

**Botswana, Malawi, Mozambique  
and South Africa**

Edited by

Richard B. Baldauf, Jr and Robert B. Kaplan

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# Series Overview

Since 1998 when the first polity studies on Language Policy and Planning – addressing the language situation in a particular polity – were published in the *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*, 15 studies have been published there and since 1990 in *Current Issues in Language Planning*. These studies have all addressed, to a greater or lesser extent, 22 common questions or issues (Appendix A), thus giving them some degree of consistency. However, we are keenly aware that these studies have been published in the order in which they were completed. While such an arrangement is reasonable for journal publication, the result does not serve the needs of area specialists nor are the various monographs easily accessible to the wider public. As the number of available polity studies has grown, we have planned to update (where necessary) and republish these studies in coherent areal volumes.

The first such volume is concerned with Africa, both because a significant number of studies has become available and because Africa constitutes an area that is significantly under-represented in the language planning literature and yet is marked by extremely interesting language policy and planning issues. In this first areal volume, we are reprinting four polity studies – Botswana, Malawi, Mozambique and South Africa – as *Areal Volume 1: Language Planning in Africa: Botswana, Malawi, Mozambique and South Africa*.

We hope that this first areal volume will better serve the needs of specialists. It is our intent to publish other areal volumes subsequently as sufficient studies are completed. We will do so in the hope that such volumes will be of interest to areal scholars and others interested in language policies and language planning in geographically coherent regions. The areas in which we are planning to produce future volumes, and some of the polities which may be included are:

- **Africa** (2), including Burundi and Rwanda, Côte d'Ivoire, Nigeria, Tunisia, Zimbabwe;
- **Asia**, including Bangladesh, Malaysia, Nepal, the Philippines, Singapore and Taiwan;
- **Europe** (1), including Finland, Hungary and Sweden (in press);
- **Europe** (2), including the Czech Republic, the European Union, Ireland, Italy, Malta, and Northern Ireland;
- **Latin America**, including Ecuador, Mexico and Paraguay; and
- **Pacific Basin**, including Vanuatu and Fiji;

In the mean time, we will continue to bring out *Current Issues in Language Planning*, adding to the list of polities available for inclusion in areal volumes. At this point, we cannot predict the intervals over which such volumes will appear, since those intervals will be defined by the ability of contributors to complete work on already contracted polity studies.

## Assumptions Relating to Polity Studies

There are a number of assumptions that we have made about the nature of language policy and planning that have influenced the nature of the studies presented. First, we do not believe that there is, yet, a broader and more coherent

paradigm to address the complex questions of language policy / planning development. On the other hand, we do believe that the collection of a large body of more or less comparable data and the careful analysis of that data will give rise to a better paradigm. Therefore, in soliciting the polity studies, we have asked each of the contributors to address some two dozen questions (to the extent that such questions were pertinent to each particular polity); the questions were offered as suggestions of topics that might be covered. (See Appendix A.) Some contributors have followed the questions rather closely; others have been more independent in approaching the task. It should be obvious that, in framing those questions, we were moving from a perhaps inchoate notion of an underlying theory. The reality that our notion was inchoate becomes clear in each of the polity studies.

Second, we have sought to find authors who had an intimate involvement with the language planning and policy decisions made in the polity they were writing about; i.e. we were looking for insider knowledge and perspectives about the polities. However, as insiders are part of the process, they may find it difficult to take the part of the 'other' – to be critical of that process. But it is not necessary or even appropriate that they should be – this can be left to others. As Pennycook (1998: 126) argues:

One of the lessons we need to draw from this account of colonial language policy (i.e. Hong Kong) is that, in order to make sense of language policies we need to understand both their location historically and their location contextually. What I mean by this is that we can not assume that the promotion of local languages instead of a dominant language, or the promotion of a dominant language at the expense of a local language, are in themselves good or bad. Too often we view these things through the lenses of liberalism, pluralism or anti-imperialism, without understanding the actual location of such policies.

While some authors do take a critical stance, or one based on a theoretical approach to the data, many of the studies are primarily descriptive, bringing together and revealing, we hope, the nature of the language development experience in the particular polity. We believe this is a valuable contribution to the theory / paradigm development of the field. As interesting and challenging as it may be to provide a priori descriptions of the nature of the field (e.g. language management, language rights, linguistic imperialism) based on partial data – nor have we been completely immune from this ourselves (e.g. Kaplan & Baldauf, 2003: Chapter 12), we believe the development of a sufficient data base is an important prerequisite for paradigm development.

## **An Invitation to Contribute**

We welcome additional polity contributions. Our views on a number of the issues can be found in Kaplan and Baldauf (1997); sample polity monographs have appeared in the extant issues of *Current Issues in Language Planning*. Interested authors should contact the editors, present a proposal for a monograph, and provide a sample list of references. It is also useful to provide a brief biographical note, indicating any personal involvement in language planning activities in the polity proposed for study as well as any relevant research / publi-



cation in LPP. All contributions should, of course, be original, unpublished works. We expect to work with contributors during the preparation of monographs. All monographs will, of course, be reviewed for quality, completeness, accuracy, and style. Experience suggests that co-authored contributions may be very successful, but we want to stress that we are seeking a unified monograph on the polity, not an edited compilation of various authors' efforts. Questions may be addressed to either of us.

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## References

- Kaplan, R.B. and Baldauf, R.B., Jr. (2003) *Language and Language-in-Education Planning in the Pacific Basin*. Dordrecht: Kluwer.
- Kaplan, R.B. and Baldauf, R.B., Jr. (1997) *Language Planning from Practice to Theory*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.
- Pennycook, A. (1998) *English and the Discourses of Colonialism*. London and New York: Routledge.

## Appendix A

### Part I: The Language Profile of ...

- (1) Name and briefly describe the national/official language(s) (*de jure* or *de facto*).
- (2) Name and describe the major minority language(s).
- (3) Name and describe the lesser minority language(s) (include 'dialects', pidgins, creoles and other important aspects of language variation); the definition of minority language/dialect/pidgin will need to be discussed in terms of the sociolinguistic context.
- (4) Name and describe the major religious language(s); in some polities religious languages and/or missionary policies have had a major impact on the language situation and provide *de facto* language planning. In some contexts religion has been a vehicle for introducing exogenous languages while in other cases it has served to promote indigenous languages.
- (5) Name and describe the major language(s) of literacy, assuming that it is/they are not one of those described above.
- (6) Provide a table indicating the number of speakers of each of the above languages, what percentage of the population they constitute and whether those speakers are largely urban or rural.
- (7) Where appropriate, provide a map(s) showing the distribution of speakers, key cities and other features referenced in the text.

### Part II: Language Spread

- (8) Specify which languages are taught through the educational system, to whom they are taught, when they are taught and for how long they are taught.
- (9) Discuss the objectives of language education and the methods of assessment to determine that the objectives are met.
- (10) To the extent possible, trace the historical development of the policies/practices identified in items 8 and 9 (may be integrated with 8/9).

- (11) Name and discuss the major media language(s) and the distribution of media by socio-economic class, ethnic group, urban/rural distinction (including the historical context where possible). For minority language, note the extent that any literature is (has been) available in the language.
- (12) How has immigration effected language distribution and what measures are in place to cater for learning the national language(s) and/or to support the use of immigrant languages.

### **Part III: Language Policy and Planning**

- (13) Describe any language planning legislation, policy or implementation that is currently in place.
- (14) Describe any literacy planning legislation, policy or implementation that is currently in place.
- (15) To the extent possible, trace the historical development of the policies/practices identified in items 13 and 14 (may be integrated with these items).
- (16) Describe and discuss any language planning agencies/organisations operating in the polity (both formal and informal).
- (17) Describe and discuss any regional/international influences affecting language planning and policy in the polity (include any external language promotion efforts).
- (18) To the extent possible, trace the historical development of the policies/practices identified in items 16 and 17 (may be integrated with these items).

### **Part IV: Language Maintenance and Prospects**

- (19) Describe and discuss intergenerational transmission of the major language(s); (is this changing over time?).
- (20) Describe and discuss the probabilities of language death among any of the languages/language varieties in the polity, any language revival efforts as well as any emerging pidgins or creoles.
- (21) Add anything you wish to clarify about the language situation and its probable direction of change over the next generation or two.
- (22) Add pertinent references/bibliography and any necessary appendices (e.g. a general plan of the educational system to clarify the answers to questions 8, 9 and 14).

# Language Policy and Planning in Botswana, Malawi, Mozambique and South Africa: Some Common Issues

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## Introduction

This volume brings together four language policy and planning studies related to southern Africa<sup>1</sup>. (See the 'Series Overview' at the start of this volume for a more general discussion of the nature of the series, Appendix A for the 22 questions each study set out to address, and Kaplan *et al.* (2000) for a discussion of our underlying concepts for the studies themselves.) In this paper, rather than trying to provide an introductory summary of the material covered in these studies, we will want to draw out and discuss some of the more general issues raised by these studies.

Botswana, Malawi, Mozambique and South Africa represent a cluster in several senses:

- They are geographically proximate roughly along a north–south axis. They share common borders; that is Malawi shares a border with Mozambique, and Mozambique and Botswana share a border with South Africa.
- They are members of the Southern African Development Community (which integrates a total of 14 countries).
- They share a number of African languages among them.
- They share a number of common educational, social and economic problems.
- Three of them have English as a colonial language; one has Portuguese, but also uses English as an additional language.
- They all have autochthonous languages, some in common with one another, which require planning development.
- All are members of the Commonwealth of Nations group.
- All of them have a common concern in terms of languages of religion.
- All of them recognize the existence of a gap between official policy and actual practice.

There is also a major sociolinguistic and language planning and policy divide that separates them: South Africa with its greater population and resources, and the politicalization of language as a marker of ethnicity which began under the previous apartheid regime, has attracted much more scholarly interest and hands-on involvement by the government. As a result, there is a much larger published literature for South Africa than there is for Botswana, Malawi and

Mozambique. A search of the relevant literature produced about 20 references each – related to language policy and planning – for the latter countries while more than 300 were found for South Africa. A selected list of recently published further reading – material not cited in the monographs that follow – is provided by country at the end of this paper.

## Ideologies and Myths

Language policy and planning invariably occur in an environment circumscribed by language ideologies which emerge in specific historical and material circumstances (Blommaert, 1999; Pennycook, 1998); that is, such ideologies emerge out of a wider sociopolitical and historical framework of relationships of power, of forms of discrimination, and of nation building. Issues and debates concerning language commonly dominate discussions in the mass media, in government, and in a variety of other venues of public discourse. Language ideologies, while they are certainly not universal, are reflected in a number of prevalent myths pertaining to language education and, because language education is often the major or even sole mechanism for the instantiation of language policy, it is useful perhaps to state at least some of these myths:

- There is one, and only one, 'correct solution' to the choice of language(s) in education, and one and only one, 'correct solution' to the sequencing of instruction for purposes of initial literacy training and content instruction for all multilingual polities.
- Anyone who can speak a given language can successfully teach or teach via that language.
- Creoles are not real languages; consequently no Creole can be used as the medium of instruction.
- If a major goal is to develop the highest degree of proficiency and subject matter mastery via some language of wider communication, the more time spent educating the child via that language, the better.
- While time on task is a major issue, the ideal time to start language instruction is roughly at puberty (at middle school) because starting earlier would suggest that primary school children will not have completed the development of their feeling and sense of value in their first language (based on English text transmitted by letter to Kaplan from Namba Tatsuo referring to Ohno, Susumu, Morimoto Tatsuo and Suzuki Takao (2001) *Nippon, Nihongo, Nihon-jin* [Japan, Japanese language, Japanese Volkgeist]).
- In multilingual polities (and even in those which are not multilingual), it is too expensive to develop materials and to train teachers in a number of different languages (after Tucker, 2001: 333).
- There are clear boundaries between each of the autochthonous languages in a polity and each requires separate development so that it can be taught (but see Djité, 2000; Heugh, 2003).
- Autochthonous languages are incapable of dealing with modern concepts and it is therefore necessary to use a language of wider communication – English, French, Portuguese – as the primary vehicle for education (Breton, 2003).
- In multilingual polities – ones having a large number of autochthonous

languages – it is necessary to use a language of wider communication for educational purposes to reduce ‘tribalism’ and group conflict (Breton, 2003).

- It is important to teach languages of wider communication (especially English) widely in schools as a means of boosting the economy and life chances (Kaplan & Baldauf, 2003, especially Singapore, Chapter 8).

## Issues and Problems of Methodology

Before looking at some of the explicit issues raised in the monographs themselves, it is important to mention briefly some of the issues and problems that studies developed in this genre raise. While providing a set of framing questions (See ‘Series Overview’, Appendix A) for these polity monographs has its advantages in terms of consistency and coverage, it also creates a number of tensions of which readers should be aware.

### Issues of resources

It is important to point out that, in some of the polity studies, so little sociolinguistic work is actually available, and the economic and social conditions are such (e.g. the civil wars currently raging or recently concluded in a number of African polities), that contributors are significantly constrained. In many polities, Côte d’Ivoire (Djité, 2000) for example, conditions and the state of academic research (i.e. not only the work published about the polity, but access to journals and recent books, computer facilities, time to do research, adequate salaries let alone, funds for travel and research projects, etc.) are such that many of the 22 questions suggested for these studies simply could not be adequately addressed. Moving from research to practice, it is also a matter of reality that, among the enormous number of competing demands on governmental coffers, language policy and planning does not always rank high. In some African states, the costs (monetary, human, and temporal) of civil war, rapidly varying commodity prices, human resources shortages, the AIDS epidemic, etc.) are so great that the relative priority of language planning is necessarily lowered (but, see Kaplan & Baldauf, 2003, especially Chapter 3 (pp. 31–46), for an example of political will overriding fiscal constraints). These factors mean that there are constraints on resources that significantly impact on any notion of an ‘ideal’ monograph that might be produced.

### Framing context

Beyond the 22 questions that authors have been urged to examine, we have urged each of the contributors to frame their study by taking an ecological stance (see, e.g. Kaplan & Baldauf, 1997; Mühlhäusler, 2000), but that turned out not to be entirely satisfactory because each of the contributors is in fact a specialist in the context of linguistic issues *in the polity in which s/he worked*; that is, the polity specialists were not always extensively cognizant of problems occurring across an ecological perception of language spread, but rather were constrained by the political boundaries within which they worked. It was, perhaps, unrealistic of us to expect a wider perception. However, while the ecological stance did not inevitably materialise across political boundaries, there is evidence in the various

studies of the ecological perspective within the several polities studied. It is precisely to achieve a broader ecological view that areal volumes of the sort being undertaken here were conceived. We hope the further references at the end of this article will also contribute to providing that ecological view.

### **Perspectives: The Self vs the Other**

Pennycook (1998) provides a critical analysis of English and the discourses of colonialism, especially the tension between views of 'the Self' and 'the Other', between the 'insider' and the 'outsider', the emic and the etic. His primary focus of analysis is on colonialism – both historic and in its Eurocentric neo-colonialist forms – and the positive manner in which Europeans portrayed themselves versus the colonised others. Following from this he points out that there is a need to look 'more contextually ... at the sites and causes of the development of colonial discourses on language...' as there is a 'constant negotiation of colonial language policy images of the Self and the Other' where 'culture and language were always being produced, developed and redefined' (1998: 128). While this dichotomy and interaction between the Self and the Other – which Pennycook illustrates with Hong Kong as an example – is evident in the monographs presented in this volume, it is also characteristic of the tension in perspectives that individual authors bring to their studies.

Some participating individuals, some of whom we consciously and intentionally invited, had actually worked in the language planning and policy environment in their respective polities. An outcome of our intentional plan (in inviting some contributors) and our unintentional plan (in accepting unsolicited contributions) resulted in an unanticipated problem. One volume of the previously published studies was criticized on the grounds that an author did not take sufficient cognizance of political issues underlying policy and planning (Stroud, 2001). But, when one is involved in putting 'theory' onto practice, we think this is an inevitable problem. To the extent that anyone has worked actively in the development and promulgation of policy and in the ensuing plans, s/he has necessarily been captured by the system doing the policy development and the planning; each such individual has been co-opted by the process. We do not, however, wish to create a false dichotomy; not all of our contributors were caught in this 'insider' trap. Some contributors have been able to look at the issues from the 'outside,' and have been fully cognizant of the political and social problems created by the policy/plans that have been developed. But, had we chosen only individuals more clearly aware of the political and social issues, then those individuals, generally working outside the formal system, would not have known as much about what the system was actually doing; such scholars would have been outsiders to the internal workings of the system. This is not to claim that contributors (and indeed the editors) are unaware that language policy is significantly a political activity (Baldauf & Kaplan, 2003); rather, we simply acknowledge that authors having had differing degrees of direct involvement in the language policy and planning which they describe are caught up in their own images of the Self and the Other. The result is that political and social issues are differently perceived in the various polity studies.

In the broader context within which we work (i.e. as editors of *Current Issues in Language Planning*), we believe, with perfect hindsight, that serendipitously,

such a selection of contributors will exactly serve our larger intent – to help to develop a basis for theorising the discipline. The specialists, working from the inside, know (and do) report on *who did what, to whom, when, and for what purpose* in great detail. Given a series of polity monographs such as those presented here, we continue to believe that the other focus of *Current Issues in Language Planning* – the two ‘issues’ numbers each year focusing on topics like language ecology (CILP, 2000, 1: 3), language revival (CILP, 2001, 2: 2&3), post-colonialism (CILP, 2002, 3: 3), language rights (CILP, 2003, 4: 4) – will serve to bring to bear a leavening influence on the collected data. These numbers will pay greater attention to the political and social problems inevitably apparent in the policy studies themselves.

## Discrepant Policy and Reality

Given the lack of resources and other difficulties described in the previous section, and the myths about language that still persist in the communities, it does not come as any surprise that all four of the studies in this volume show a significant discrepancy between the playing out of language matters in the polity and the policy/plan that has been put in place in that polity. In several instances, the ‘official’ policy/plan is diametrically opposed to reality; languages are mandated that are barely spoken in the polity, and the evidence strongly suggests that ‘official’ policy/planning is driven by political rather than by linguistic forces. It is possible, for example, that a language is ‘officialised’ in the hope that aid funding from the European (often former colonial) power would come into play. Examples of these discrepancies are particularly evident in the relationship between the ‘colonial’ languages of wider communication and the autochthonous languages.

## English

In **Malawi**, English is the official language; Chichewa in some form (spoken by about fifty per cent of the population) is the national language, and twelve other indigenous languages (and their varieties) are spoken. As Kayambazinthu points out, ‘...language planning practices (past and present) present an interesting case study of pervasive ad hoc and reactive planning, based more on self-interest and political whim than research.’

In **Botswana**, English is the ‘officialized’ language together with Setswana which (in some form) is spoken as a first language by some 80 per cent of the population. The Constitution is essentially silent on language issues, except that two sections specifically state that the ability to speak and read English is required to serve in the House of Chiefs and in the National Assembly. (In 1998, Setswana was formally authorized to be spoken in the House of Chiefs and in the National Assembly.) However, Setswana is not so much a language as a language-complex; the eight ‘major tribes’ use eight mutually-intelligible varieties of Seswana. In addition, there are eleven other tribes that speak varieties close to Setswana, and eight tribes that speak languages unrelated to Setswana. As Nyati-Ramahobo notes, ‘There is *tension between policy formulation and implementation*, and an imbalance in social justice.... While pressure from civil-society has



led government to make progressive policy decisions, there is no intrinsic motivation for their implementation....'

In **South Africa**, recently shrugging off apartheid, eleven of its estimated 25 languages have now been 'officialized' in the Constitution. Nine of those eleven languages are African languages; the remaining two are Afrikaans and English. The government has compiled a liberal language policy. Kamwangamalu shows that *there is a mismatch between the language policy and language practices* – the former promoting multilingualism, the latter demonstrating a trend toward English monolingualism at least in virtually all of the higher domains.

### Portuguese

In **Mozambique**, Portuguese is the 'officialized' language, mandated in the Constitution; the remaining twenty languages are all Bantu languages. The nation is only ten years removed from a devastating 16-year civil war. Its current language policy (in the 1990 revised Constitution) requires that 'the state shall value the national languages and promote their development and their growing usage as vehicular languages and in the education of citizens.' Lopes points out that '...the status of Bantu languages [in comparison with Portuguese] and the present efforts to develop and promote them in society have a long way to go.' In sum, there is *a substantial gap between official policy and linguistic reality*.

### Discrepancy analysis

This brief summary distorts the situation because it ignores the effects of the presence of other languages in each of the polities as well as the ecological issues. In all of the polities discussed, the role of English needs to be considered; there is popular pressure to learn it in Mozambique, and a comparable popular pressure to diminish its influence in Botswana, Malawi and South Africa. In South Africa and Mozambique, there is a recognized need to consider Asian languages present in the immigrant population. And there is a growing need for a pan-African means of communication for economic and political purposes.

Consequently, a 'standard' language constitutes a purely ideological construct. The existence of such a construct creates the impression that linguistic unity exists, when reality reflects great linguistic diversity. The notion of the existence and dispersion of a 'standard' variety through a community suggests that linguistic unity is the societal norm; it also suggests a level of socio-economic and socio-political unity that in the African states is contrary to the reality of linguistic diversity (often reflected in socio-economic and political diversity). The (often legal) obligation to use a codified standard is likely to cause frustration among minority-language and dialect speakers, since the standardised language is for them non-dominant; minority-language and dialect speakers probably use a contact variety, likely to be at considerable variance from the 'standard' variety (e.g. Popular French vs. Standard French in Côte d'Ivoire).

Language-in-education planning efforts in many polities ... reflect the cultural views of the West. These views are collectively known as the 'plumbing' or 'conduit' or 'telegraphic' conception of communication – i.e., the translation of messages that exist in the sender's mind into speech signals (coded in linguistic form) which are converted back into the original



message by the receiver. Thus, there is a perceived need to identify a single, 'standard' code, to assure that this single code is optimally regular, simple, and 'modern' and to assure that there are optimal channels (postal services, road networks, rail networks, air services, telegraphs, telephones, newspapers, radio, television, the world-wide web, etc.) along which the signal can flow. The problem is that this metaphor is not a reliable description of how human beings communicate (Mühlhäusler, 1996: 207–208).

Furthermore, some confusion has developed between the meaning of the term *standard* (language) and the notion of *standardised* (education). As noted, a standard language is believed to be necessary for national unity. (The evidence for such a belief is, by the way, far from conclusive.) However, if the existence of a standard language presses the educational system to standardise educational practices, another discontinuity is created; educational systems are supposed to enhance independent thinking and creativity – necessary to social and economic development. It is undesirable to evolve an educational system that turns out students who are identical in their knowledge, skills, and thought processes. This problem is also evident in the polities studied.

## Conclusions

In sum, while language-in-education planning is widespread across the polities discussed here, it seems clear:

- That language-in-education policies are rarely anchored in national language policies;
- that language-in-education policies are frequently ad hoc and sometimes driven by market forces;
- that language-in-education policies are subject to sudden and radical changes in direction in accord with unstable political agendas, and
- that the general condition of language-in-education policy is often fragmented and frequently simply ineffective – even wasteful of resources.

We hope that this first areal volume will better serve the needs of specialists. It is our intent to publish other areal volumes subsequently. We will do so in the hope that such volumes will be of interest to areal scholars and others interested in language policies and language planning in geographically coherent regions. (See the Series Overview elsewhere in this volume for more detail on our future plans.)

## Note

1. The studies in this volume were previously published as follows: **Botswana** *Current Issues in Language Planning* (2000) 1, 243–300; **Malawi** *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development* (1998) 19, 369–439; **Mozambique** *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development* (1998) 19, 440–486 and **South Africa** *Current Issues in Language Planning* (2001) 2, 361–445. Authors were offered the opportunity to update their studies – to take into account major changes – with an addendum, but none thought it necessary to do so.

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# The Language Situation in Botswana

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This monograph provides an overview of the language situation in Botswana.<sup>1</sup> It describes the language profile of the country, including the number of languages and dialects spoken, the number of speakers of each language and the various roles each language plays in society. The paper provides a historical development of language-in-education policies. The objectives of learning, methods of assessment and language use in the media also are examined. The third part of the monograph describes language planning and implementation efforts and the agencies involved in the planning process and the development of legislation. There is tension between policy formulation and implementation, and an imbalance in social justice. Majority communities are treated as minority communities based on the language(s) they speak. While pressure from the civil society has led government to make progressive policy decisions, there is no intrinsic motivation for their implementation. Non-governmental organisations are encouraged by these positive policy decisions but their efforts are frustrated by covertly negative attitudes to change from the leadership. There is a need for commitment from the leadership to support the preservation of all languages spoken in Botswana. Currently an assimilationist model permeates the social, economic, political and cultural aspects of life in Botswana.

## Introduction

The monograph has elements of a descriptive study and a case study, in that it describes the language situation in Botswana. Specifically, it describes the language profile of Botswana, the spread of Setswana, language planning and policy activities and both formal and informal efforts to promote and preserve the languages of the country. Data utilised for this work were collected from January 1989 to September 1990. This data collection process covered language planning activities since independence, mainly in the period between 1977 to 1990, when government was in the process of implementing the recommendations of the first National Commission on Education (NCE 1). The Commission had reviewed the education system from independence until 1976. It completed its work in 1977 and its recommendations, contained in the *Government White Paper No.1 of 1977: National Policy on Education*, were endorsed by Parliament in August of the same year (Republic of Botswana, 1977). Data for this monograph were further updated between June 1996 and May 1998. This was after the completion of the work of the Second National Commission on Education (NCE 2). This Commission reviewed the education system between 1978 and 1991. The subsequent endorsement of its recommendations, contained in the *Government White Paper No.2 of 1994: The Revised National Policy on Education (RNPE)*, came out in 1994 (Republic of Botswana, 1994). These two documents provide language policy directions as part of the overall education policy. The study also has utilised data that were collected for the *Directory of Language Bodies in Eastern and Southern Africa* coordinated by Kamanakao Association on behalf of the International Development Research Center, Nairobi office, from January to

September 1999. The study therefore presents the language situation in Botswana as it was up to October 1999.

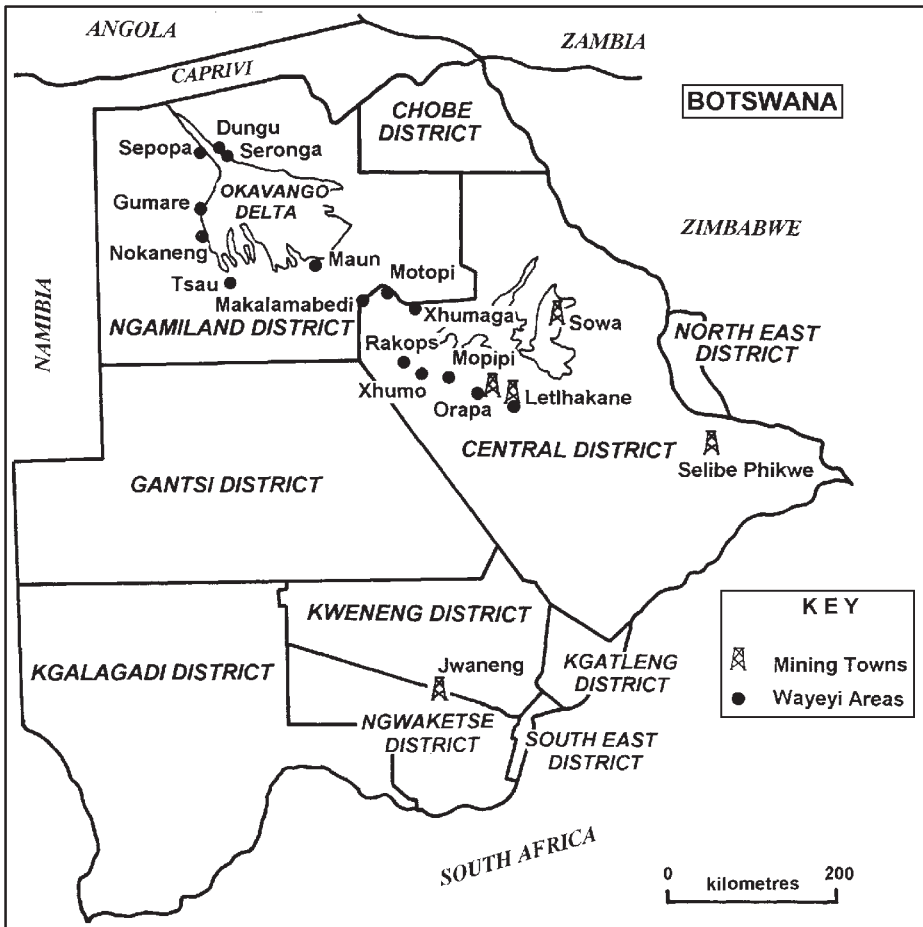
Formal interviews with policy makers and practitioners in the schools provided the data for the formulation and implementation of the language policies in education and society. Observations from social domains, social services, the media and the Government Printer's Department provided data for the implementation of the language policy in society and the use of Setswana and English by the government. An analysis of policy documents and literature in the areas of language planning, bilingual education, literacy, religion, the media and historical accounts has provided baseline data on language policy formulation and implementation by both government and non-governmental organisations. The editors of *Current Issues in Language Planning* have provided a format for the presentation of this data to facilitate comparability with other polities.

## Background

Botswana is situated in the centre of Southern Africa. It shares borders with Zimbabwe, to the east, Namibia to the west and part of the north, South Africa to the south and Zambia to the north (Map 1). It is landlocked and most of its goods come through South African seaports. It straddles the Tropic of Capricorn in the Southern African plateau (Republic of Botswana, 1997: 8:3). Botswana is about 1000 m above sea level and the land area is 582,000 km<sup>2</sup> (222,000 sq. miles), about the size of Kenya or France.

Most of Botswana is flat with a few rocky outcrops and undulations (Republic of Botswana, 1997: 8:3). In the north-west district is the Okavango Delta, an area of wetlands measuring 16,000 km<sup>2</sup> (6106 sq. miles) (Tlou, 1985), with a variety of wildlife and birds. To the west is the Kalahari desert also blessed with wildlife. In the central part of the country are the Makgadikgadi salt pans. All of these areas attract tourists. The climate is often described as arid or semi-arid as the country is situated close to the high-pressure belt of the southern hemisphere. The minimum rainfall ranges between 250 mm in the south-west and 650 mm in the north-east. Most rains come between December and March. There are mainly two seasons: winter (May to July) and summer (August to April). Minimum temperatures range between 33 degrees Celsius in January and 22 degrees in July (96–74° F). Maximum temperatures range between 43 degrees and 32 degrees Celsius (116–74° F).

Botswana's economy is largely supported by the mining industry. At independence, Botswana was considered one of the poorest countries of the world. However, in 1967, diamonds were discovered at Orapa, one of the largest known kimberlites in the world, and later at Letlhakane and Jwaneng. Copper and nickel were also discovered at Selibe-Phikwe. Currently Botswana has three diamond mines, two copper and nickel smelters, a coal mine, soda ash and a salt extraction plant. Mining has transformed the economy to one of the fastest growing in Africa. Available data indicates that in 1994/95 mineral resources contributed 34% of the gross domestic product (GDP) and 74.9% of the country's export earnings. It also contributed over 50% of government revenues (Republic of Botswana, 1997). The beef industry has contributed to the economy as well. For



**Map 1** Botswana's location in Southern Africa and other features (Wayeyi areas, mining towns)

instance, in 1994/95, it contributed 3.7% of the GDP, a decline from the record 40% before the mining era. Most of the beef is sold to the European Union. The population of Botswana remains rural and a large part of it depends on agriculture for its living, mainly subsistence farming, crop production and cattle rearing. Agriculture also contributes about two per cent of formal employment. Other sources of revenue are manufacturing, tourism, transport and construction. There are efforts to diversify the economy to reduce dependency on diamonds. These efforts include encouraging foreign investments in areas such as manufacturing and tourism.

Before the advent of the British to Botswana, the system of governance was through chieftainship. Each tribe had a chief with absolute powers (Somolekae & Lekorwe, 1998). Some tribes, which lived in smaller groups, would have a leader for each group with absolute powers, whom they would refer to as chief or elder. Chieftainship is hereditary from the male line in most Setswana speaking tribes. The chief's eldest son would inherit the position. In matrilineal tribes, such as the