

## Paradigm Shift in Language Planning and Policy

*Contributions to the Sociology of Language*

101

*Editors*

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# Paradigm Shift in Language Planning and Policy

Game-Theoretic Solutions

*by*

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To the teachers of CATA, the Anyi Literacy and Translation Center.

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To all those who give sacrificially to sponsor literacy classes in Anyi villages.



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*Dear Dr. Koffi,*

*As the senior acquisitions editor in linguistics/applied linguistics for Mouton de Gruyter in North America, I am attending AAAL next month. I noticed in the conference program that you will be offering a paper on "Paradigm Shift in Language Planning." This sounds like a great topic for a book. Have you thought about this possibility? If you are willing, I would enjoy speaking to you about it. What does your conference schedule look like? Do you have time for a coffee or drink? I will be in Denver from 3/20 to 3/25/09. I look forward to seeing you.*

Subsequently, we met twice, had lunch together, and talked about the book. We exchanged several e-mails about my progress until one morning, much to my bewilderment, I received an e-mail about her passing. I'm sad that Ms. Petree is no longer with us to see the final product of the book that she nudged me into writing.

My gratitude goes to Kim Koffi, my wife, who read this book and made sure that non-linguists like her can read it and understand it. She asked for clarification, made corrections, and suggested less convoluted ways to communicate some ideas. Two of my colleagues in the English Department at Saint Cloud State University, Rhoda Fagerland and Jack Hibbard, have carefully read the entire document and made insightful comments and suggestions. I have greatly benefited from their expertise in editing. I'm especially indebted to them because their help came at a time when they were swamped with grading papers for their own courses.

Many veteran language planners in West Africa have helped me a great deal. Though they lack impressive academic credentials, they are full of

common sense and practical solutions. I gained real life language planning experience when I was given oversight of language projects in Benin, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, and Togo. The six years that I spent in the language planning trenches showed me why my highvoluted "ivory tower" ideas about language planning were unimplementable. These seasoned language planners explained to me, not in words but through their deeds, that my theories were not doable because they failed to take account of logistical issues and "the human condition." If the solutions proposed in this book are implementable, it is due in a large part to the insights that I gleaned from them, and from my literacy and translation work among the Anyi people of Côte d'Ivoire. To all of them and to the many other people whose contributions to language planning have shaped my theory and practice, I say: "*M̃in da amɔ asɪ kpáa*," that is, "I lie you on the ground good," which is the Anyi way of saying "Thank You very much."



## Preface

*Paradigm Shift in Language Planning and Policy: Game-theoretic Solutions* addresses the language planning conundrum that francophones and lusophones in Sub-Saharan Africa face. It proposes workable and implementable solutions by taking into account the fears, aspirations, influence, and positions of the stakeholders in the mother-tongue education debate that is going on in those countries. The following is a chapter-by-chapter preview of the book.

Chapter 1 diagnoses ten important impediments that have frustrated language planning efforts across Sub-Saharan Africa. The book starts with a diagnosis because, as De Mesquita (2009:31) puts it, “In predicting and engineering the future, part of getting things right is working out what stands in the way of this or that particular outcome.”

Chapter 2 is devoted entirely to the inner workings of the Game theory. Since this theory is not widely known among linguists, a great deal of background information is provided. Two different models of the Game theory are used in tandem. Laitin’s (1992) Repertoire Model explains why it would be optimal for most contemporary Africans to have a linguistic repertoire consisting of  $3\pm 1$  languages. De Mesquita’s (2009) Predictioneer’s Model is used to predict the model of mother-tongue education planning that has the best chance of succeeding in francophone and lusophone Africa.

Chapters 3 and 4 apply the Game theory to the language games that were played in colonial Africa. Chapter 3 focuses on francophone and lusophone Africa while Chapter 4 deals with former Belgian, British, and German colonies. The game-theoretic calculations based on the influence, salience, and position of colonial authorities help explain why efforts toward mother-tongue education planning have stalled in former French and Portuguese colonies. When the weighted mean scores in these colonies are contrasted with those of former Belgian, British, and German colonies, it becomes clear why the latter are relatively better off using their mother tongues at school than the former.

Chapter 5 is a case study which applies Game-theoretic methodology to Côte d’Ivoire. This country was chosen for study for three reasons. First, Côte d’Ivoire has made far less progress in planning its indigenous languages than all its counterparts in Sub-Saharan Africa. Second, the

ethnolinguistic landscape of the country is so complicated that if the proposed solutions can work there, chances are that they will work elsewhere in Africa. Third, I grew up in Côte d'Ivoire and have been collecting relevant sociolinguistic data on the country for more than a decade. As a result, I have reliable data to back up my claims.

Chapter 6 tackles the thorny issues of language of education planning in cosmopolitan African megacities. Laitin's Repertoire Model is used to classify megacities into three groups. Some cities are defined as ethnolinguistically homogeneous. Designing a language of education policy for such cities is relatively easy because city dwellers need to know only one language to communicate throughout the city. Some cities are categorized as having ethnolinguistic dominance, that is, an indigenous language is the dominant language of the city. Designing a mother-tongue education plan for schools in such megacities is challenging because of competing ethnolinguistic loyalties. However, these challenges pale in comparison with the last group of megacities that are characterized by ethnolinguistic equilibrium. These are megacities in which no indigenous language is dominant. Using Abidjan as a prototype of such megacities, I propose a model of language of education that is based on language family rather than on the demographic weight of the speech communities found in the megacity.

Chapter 7 shows how all the languages spoken in any given country can and should be planned: some for formal literacy, others for informal literacy. Cooper's (1996) methodology of "*Who plans what for whom, when, where, how, and why*" is used to suggest a fresh new approach to literacy planning in rural areas. This chapter draws from my many years of experience in rural literacy planning and sheds some light on the logistical problems that stand in the way of success. Furthermore, the Predictioneer's Model is used to compare and contrast four widely used approaches to adult literacy. The model that holds the most promise for rural areas in Sub-Saharan Africa is identified and discussed.

Chapter 8 deals with the economics of language and uses Côte d'Ivoire as a case study to show that planning multiple languages for use in schools is not more expensive than planning a single language. Two experiments reported by Bamgbose (2004:15) and Ladefoged (1992:811) show that this is economically feasible. In the first, it was shown that the cost of publishing in multiple African languages can be kept relatively low by creating a master document whose texts are translated into other languages while keeping the design, graphics, and layout the same. The second experiment showcases how Uganda has successfully taught six local languages in its schools. On the basis of these findings, I contend that 17 regional LWCs

can be planned and taught in secondary schools in Côte d'Ivoire on a shoe-string budget and for profit. Furthermore, I use enrollment data from 2010 to show that planning multiple languages can turn the vast linguistic resources of Côte d'Ivoire into a multimillion dollar economic bonanza.

Chapter 9, the final chapter, takes the view that language planning need not be only the responsibility of big government, big business, or deep-pocketed development agencies. I review historical data to show how individuals, through their personal efforts and sacrifices, have successfully planned languages. In the pantheon of illustrious language planners of past centuries, I chose to highlight the strategies used by St. Stefan for Komi, Eliezer Ben Yehuda for Hebrew, Samuel Ajayi Crowther for Yoruba, Johann Ludwig Krapf and Johann Rebmann for Swahili, Alexander Mackay for Luganda, Robert Moffat for Setswana, Alfred Saker for Duala, and Die-drich Westermann for Ewe. The study of these language planners shows that for language planning to be successful three of four indispensable ingredients – translation, lexicography, literacy, and newspapers in the local languages – must be present.

Finally, a word or two should be said about the use of certain terms and abbreviations in the book. Terms such “indigenous” and “illiterate” have acquired a negative connotation with some people, but not with others. I do not assign any negative meaning to these words when they are used in this book. I have used “ancestral,” “local,” “autochthonous,” and “mother tongue” as synonyms for “indigenous.” Similarly, I have substituted “pre-literate” and “non-literate” for “illiterate.” Nevertheless, the terms “indigenous,” and “illiterate” still appear in the book. Acronyms are unavoidable these days. A list of the ones used in the book is provided on page xvii to help readers identify them quickly.



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## Abbreviations

Aaa	American Anthropological Association
ACALAN	African Academic of Languages
AIM	Assimilationist Immersion Model
BMS	Baptist Missionary Society
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
CMS	Church Missionary Society
DIM	Dual Immersion Model
FBO	Faith-based Organization
FEA	French Equatorial Africa
FESTAC	Festival of Black Arts and Culture
FIM	Full Immersion Model
FWA	French West Africa
GO	Governmental Organization
HDI	Human Development Index
IMF	International Monetary Fund
ISP	Interest Salience Position
LPAA	Language Plan of Action for Africa
LWC	Language of Wider Communication
MM	Maintenance Model
NGO	Non-governmental Organization
NLWC	National Language of Wider Communication
RLWC	Regional Language of Wider Communication
SIL	Summer Institute of Linguistics
TIM	Transitional Immersion Model
UBS	United Bible Societies
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Education Cultural Organization



# **Chapter 1**

## **Ten deadly impediments to language planning in Africa**

### **Introduction**

Over the past 50 years, theorizing about language planning and policy has been very successful as evidenced by the sheer volume of books and scholarly journal articles devoted to the subject. Seminal works by early luminaries have enriched our understanding of the interface between politics, economics, sociolinguistics, and language planning. However, success in academia has not been accompanied by an equivalent level of success for most nation-states in need of language planning. This has led to the coining of the phrase “catastrophic success” to describe the chasm that exists between the theory and the practice of language planning. As a matter of fact, many indigenous African languages are not better off now than they were 50 years ago, despite more than half a century of sustained scholarship on language planning. The goal of this introductory chapter is to single out the ten deadliest impediments to successful language planning in Africa. Though the focus is on Africa, it is reasonable to believe, based on published articles and books, that these impediments are not idiosyncratic to Africa alone. The impediments in question are the following:

- 1.1 Excessive theorization
- 1.2 The glorification of the language of wider communication (LWC) model
- 1.3 Faulty assessment of ethnolinguistic loyalty
- 1.4 Elite hypocrisy
- 1.5 Unaddressed parental concerns
- 1.6 The low marketability of African languages
- 1.7 The “dependency” syndrome
- 1.8 The rigidity of mother-tongue acquisition models
- 1.9 The alleged prohibitive cost
- 1.10 The “manifesto” syndrome

The diagnoses made in this chapter will serve as the catalyst for a paradigm shift which will be developed fully in subsequent chapters where specific solutions will be proposed.

### 1.1 Excessive theorization

Myers-Scotton (2006:376) and Cooper (1996:41, 56–7) offer two diametrically different perspectives on why academic language planning has failed to achieve practical results. According to the former, it is ironic that language planning, a sub-discipline of Applied Linguistics, has thus far failed to find an implementable solution to language planning problems. She explains the failure as follows:

Yet a third irony is that language policy and planning is a subject widely discussed and debated in numerous publications by academics from a wide variety of disciplines, such as sociology, anthropology, and linguistics, as well as language pedagogy. This flurry of interest in language policy was especially strong in the 1960s and 1970s following the independence of a number of new nations in Africa and Asia, amid idealism about the possibility of language planning along democratic lines ... Once again, language policy drew academic interest in the late twentieth century and receives even more today. Now, however, the reason seems to be more a set of problems than a set of opportunities. The irony of all this academic interest in language policy and planning is that the theories and analyses of academics do not seem to count much when policies are decided by governmental bodies – at least they **haven't had much impact in the past**. [Emphasis in the original]

A little over a decade into the language planning enterprise, Fishman (1974:98–9) warned about four “recurring doubts” that could derail it. He summarized these doubts as follows: 1) the recurring doubt about the gap between target plans and demonstrable attainments, 2) the recurring doubt about the vulnerability of language planning due to ever changing administrative structures and priorities, 3) the recurring doubt about excessive ideological pressure placed on linguists, and 4) the recurring doubt about the fallacies and limitations of the human mind and spirit. In spite of these serious reservations about the efficacy of language planning, Fishman encouraged practitioners to press on, telling them that “there is no need for language planning to feel crestfallen with respect to its own modest achievements to date.” This exhortation was undoubtedly interpreted by many to mean that success in language planning need not be measured only by practical achievements. In other words, even if the achievements on the ground are modest, language planners can still claim victory at a scholarly level. As a result, no one seems particularly bothered by the fact that nearly 60 years of writing and publishing on the subject has not changed the

reality in many African countries one iota. In this respect, language planners are not much different from their colleagues in theoretical linguistics who are not troubled at all if their insights do not help solve real life language situations. Pinker (1994:52) provides the following story to illustrate the huge divide between theory and practice in linguistics:

One of the most fascinating syndromes recently came to light when the parents of a retarded girl with chatterbox syndrome in San Diego read an article about Chomsky's theories in a popular science magazine and called him at MIT, suggesting that their daughter might be of interest to him. Chomsky is a paper-and-pencil theoretician who wouldn't know Jabba the Hutt from Cookie Monster, so he suggested that the parents bring their child to the laboratory of the psycholinguist Ursula Bellugi in Lo Jolla.

The difference between academic language planning and theoretical linguistics is that, as this example illustrates, Chomsky was able to refer the woman to another specialist. Who does a theoretical language planner turn to when a language problem surfaces? No one, because language planning is meant to be a specialized area within Applied Linguistics that can solve language problems! In light of this reality, it is befitting to use the phrase "catastrophic success" in relation to language planning. Indeed, the successful cases that are often paraded in the literature cannot be credited to academic language planners. The historical factors that elevated Bahasa in Indonesia, Philippino in the Philippines, Malay in Malaysia, and Swahili in Tanzania predate contemporary scholarship on language planning by a century or more.

Unlike Myers-Scotton, who interprets excessive theorization as an impediment to successful language planning, Cooper (1996:41, 56–7) blames the lack of achievements on the absence of a robust theory of language planning. He contends that, because of these lacunae, individuals have engaged in language planning in a piecemeal fashion, without an overarching set of principles to guide them:

As for being based on theory, we have yet to move beyond descriptive frameworks for the study of language planning. We have as yet no generally accepted language planning theory, if by theory we mean a set of logically interrelated, empirically testable propositions. ... Without a theory of language planning, we have no principled means of determining what variables should be included in descriptive, predictive, and explanatory studies of a given case. Each investigator must make this determination on a more or less ad-hoc basis. But ad-hoc studies serve as a preliminary step in the formulation of theories. ... In language planning we are still at the stage of

#### 4 *Ten deadly impediments to language planning in Africa*

discovering behavioral regularities. Before we can discover regularities, we must first decide which variables it will be most useful to describe. Descriptive frameworks can help us to make such decisions.

Cooper's book, *Language Planning and Social Change*, is meant in part to address this deficiency by bringing practice in line with theory. However, there is little reason to be optimistic that this epistemological approach will bear any fruit. Contrary to Cooper's position, academic language planning has failed to change the reality on the ground not because practice has preceded theory but rather because excessive theorization has been done on the basis of scanty evidence. From an epistemological point view, Kaplan and Baldauf's book, *Language Planning: From Practice to Theory*, seems more reasonable because they are trying to build a theory on the basis of sixty years of accumulated experience. Though this is a laudable undertaking, it will be argued in 1.2 and in subsequent chapters that their book still falls short of providing fresh insights because it embraces the same hegemonic model of language planning. Such a model, it will be argued, ignores the real life challenges of ethnolinguistic behaviors in multilingual environments.

### 1.2 The glorification of the LWC model

The LWC model was alluded to in passing in the previous section. Now is the time to dwell on it a little longer and examine why it has been the favorite model for language planners. The LWC model can be described quite succinctly by the equation below:

One Nation = One Language

The rationale for this approach stems from the view that multilingualism is a liability, not an asset. This is the model that Kaplan (1998:424) proposed to the Philippines when he was an expatriate consultant at the request of the government:

Language policy is not, however, only concerned with lexical development. In the Philippines, for example, where the population speaks some 250 languages, *it was a political necessity to identify a national language.* [Emphasis added]

Kaplan is not the only scholar to espouse this view. Many of the leading experts believed until quite recently (and some still do) that the hegemonic



approach was (is) the only viable solution to the multilingual dilemma that many countries are confronted with. For this reason, the LWC model was readily adopted because it was the one with which Western language planners were most acquainted because it had been in existence in Europe since the 17th century:

Language planning has become part of modern nation-building because a noticeable trend in the modern world is to make language and nation synonymous. Deutsch (1968) has documented the tremendous increase within Europe during the last thousand years in what he calls ‘full-fledged national language.’ A millennium ago these numbered six: Latin, Greek, Hebrew, Arabic, Anglo-Saxon (i.e., Old English), Church Slavonic. By 1250 this number had increased to seventeen, a number that remained fairly stable until the beginning of the nineteenth century with, of course, changes in the actual languages, as Hebrew, Arabic, Low German, Catalan, and Norwegian either submerged or became inactive, and languages like English, Dutch, Polish, Magyar (i.e., Hungarian), and Turkish replaced the inventory. In the nineteenth century the total number of fully fledged national languages increased to thirty. According to Deutsch, it showed a further increase to fifty-three by 1937, and it has further increased since then. Each ‘new’ country wanted its own language, and language became a basic expression of nationalistic feeling, as we see in such examples as Finnish, Welsh, Norwegian, Romanian, Bulgarian, Ukrainian, Irish, Breton, Basque, Georgian, and Hebrew (Wardhaugh 2010:378).

In the 1940s, the Chinese vigorously defended the One Nation = One Language model in the name of national unity. Premier Chou En-lai<sup>1</sup> rationalized the official position of the Communist Party as follows:

The diversity in dialects<sup>2</sup> has an unfavorable effect on the political, economic and cultural life of our people ... Without a common speech, we shall to a greater or lesser extent, meet with difficulties in our national reconstruction ... It is, therefore, an important political task to popularize vigorously the common speech with the Peking pronunciation as the standard (DeFrancis 1972:458, 462–3).

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1 In a speech delivered on January 10, 1959.

2 DeFrancis (1972: 465) notes that the eight “dialects” are not orally mutually intelligible. However, they are mutually intelligible in writing because Chinese writing is logographic.

Some prominent Chinese linguists aligned themselves with the official position by putting forth the argument below:

There is no nation which at one and the same time speaks several languages.<sup>3</sup> Another communist commentator explained the rationale of the Chinese' insistence as follows: There are some Western linguists who think there are several Chinese languages, because the differences among the Chinese dialects are rather large, to the point where the people who use these dialects cannot understand each other. This mistaken suggestion is from a political point of view very dangerous. Whoever says that there are several languages says in principle that there are several nations. To contend that there are several Chinese languages is to argue for the division of China into several states. ... Chinese is the language of the Chinese people. As everyone knows, a common language is one of the characteristics of a nation. Hence the common language of the Chinese nation is one of the fundamental marks of the Chinese nation (DeFrancis 1972:462).

With the Europeans and the Chinese firmly behind the LWC model, language planners sought to export it to Africa as the elixir that would cure its multilingual woes. To this day, advocates for the African Renaissance and some linguists are so enamored with it that they dream of imposing it at the continental level. They fathom Swahili as the pan-African language, Arabic as the regional LWC for North Africa, Hausa as the LWC for West Africa, and a Zulu-related language as the LWC for Southern Africa. It will be argued below that ethnolinguistic loyalty has been a formidable roadblock in the implementation of the LWC model in many parts of Africa. Recent survey data suggest that the hegemonic approach to language planning is no longer popular among Africans. Anyidoho and Dakubu (2008:146–147) report, for instance, that Ghanaians (including the majority of Akan speakers) oppose Akan being imposed as the national LWC on the rest of their countrymen and women.

### **1.3 Faulty assessment of ethnolinguistic loyalty**

Under the indigenous national LWC model, hardly was any consideration given to ethnolinguistic loyalty in language planning. It was assumed that as soon as an indigenous LWC was decreed and imposed on the citizenry, they would gladly adopt it. In fact, leading African linguists such as

---

3 This quote is attributed to Stalin.

Bamgbose (1991:7) trivialized the correlation between multilingualism and divisiveness as a “convenient scapegoat” for inaction. He points to the intense social upheavals in Burundi, Madagascar, Rwanda, and Somalia, all of which are monolingual countries, to suggest that the ethnolinguistic identity card has been overplayed. Indeed, these cases underscore the fact that it is a fallacy to equate monolingualism with social cohesion, but it is nonetheless true that multilingualism can lead to divisiveness. The post-election conflicts that often flare up in Côte d’Ivoire, Kenya, Nigeria, and many other places in Africa are strong reminders that ethnicity and ethnic allegiances are still a hurdle in language planning. There are plenty of examples all over the world to prove this point, but let’s content ourselves with the well-documented case of India where language planning in this multilingual state has led to various types of social conflicts. Dua (1996:2, 6) describes four types of language-related conflicts:

1. Language of wider communication versus national language
2. National language versus minority language
3. Majority language versus minority language
4. Majority language versus majority language

He contends that ethnolinguistic identity is prone to conflict in multilingual environments because it can be very easily “ideologized.” “Ideologization,” he argues, “serves as a rallying point for the speakers of a language.” Furthermore, he warns that “[language] loyalty and pride can be ideologically cultivated and manipulated to produce either integration or separation.” Examples of the latter are abundant in the literature. Secessionist discourse in Quebec on account of ethnolinguistic identity tells us that ethnolinguistic identity is not a joking matter in language planning. Biloa and Echu (2008:212) fear that promoting an indigenous Cameroonian language to the status of LWC on top of the uneasy relationship between English and French can aggravate the risk of a civil war. Most of the contributors to *Language and National Identity in Africa* express this fear for Africa in one way or another. Appleyard and Orwin (2008) correlate much of the turmoil in the Horn of Africa with multilingualism and ethnolinguistic identity. Su-leiman (2006:51) warns that no heterogeneous society is free from identity-driven conflicts. Naturally, when everything is going well, ethnolinguistic identity remains dormant. However, it rears its head under conditions that lend themselves to social turmoil:

We may also add here that identities come to the fore under conditions of stress, conflict and lack of security, which is often the case in national

identity at times of historical, social or political crisis. As Bauman states in a figurative turn of phrase, 'a battlefield is identity's natural home. Identity comes to life only in the tumult of battle; it falls asleep and silent the moment the noise of the battle dies down.'

Post-election violence in Côte d'Ivoire, Kenya, and Nigeria in recent years has shown clearly that ethnolinguistic loyalty is alive and well. No language planners in Africa can afford not to be vigilant about ethnolinguistic identity as a serious impediment to language planning. With increasing advocacy for minority rights and minority languages, any attempt to impose an indigenous national LWC on the rest of the citizenry is doomed to fail or lead to conflicts. Fortunately, some African countries have seen the handwriting on the wall and are in search of a new model. Mali is a case in point. Even though Bambara could legitimately be imposed as a national LWC because it is spoken by 40% of the population as their native language and another 40% as their second language, policymakers have distanced themselves from the LWC model and have selected 13 local languages as "national" languages<sup>4</sup> (Skattum 2008:99, 104).

Since independence, managing the various ethnolinguistic identities within the boundaries of independent African nations has been a nightmare for politicians. Truth be told, some are not blameless in this process. Many of them fan the flames of ethnicity for short-sighted political gains. The consensus, however, is that all over the continent, politicians see ethnic loyalty more as a liability than an asset because of its propensity for divisiveness. However, recent studies by Block (2006:39) and Omoniyi (2006:11–33) can help us understand identity better and capitalize on it to formulate successful language policies. The former has shown that identity is compositional and consists of the following components: ethnic, racial, national, gender, social class, language, and religious features. He also makes a useful distinction between "primordial identities" and "acquired identities." Primordial identity is conceived of as consisting of traits such as race, ethnicity, and nationality, which are passed down from one generation to the next. Acquired identities, on the other hand, are those traits that are not transferable: level of education, socio-economic status, employment, marital status, etc. Religious identity is hard to classify because it straddles both primordial and acquired identities. From Omoniyi's work we learn that identity is hierarchical. By combining the compositional nature

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4 Ethnologue (2009:36) lists 56 indigenous languages for Mali. Estimates vary widely going from 20 all the way to 56 (Skattum 2008:104).

of identity and its hierarchical structure, it is possible to propose the following hierarchy for the purposes of language planning:

National identity > Ethnic Identity > Linguistic Identity > Religious Identity  
> Social Identity > Gender Identity > Racial Identity

National identity ranks highest in the hierarchy because language planning is first and foremost done for the benefits of citizens of specific nation-states. Ethnic identity comes in second place, higher than linguistic identity, because a group may lose its language and yet retain its ethnic identity. This is the case of many native Americans who, though they may no longer speak their ancestral languages, are still proud to be Dakotas, Ojibwes, Cherokees, etc. However, under normal circumstances, Wa Thiong'o (1986:15) argues, language, culture, and identity are inseparable because "culture is the collective memory bank of a people's experience in history. Culture is almost indistinguishable from language that makes possible its genesis, growth, banking, articulation, and indeed its transmission from one generation to the next." Fishman (1972:95) alluded to this in what he called "the value problem." Early on, he warned that the conflation between ethnic identity and linguistic identity would be a challenge to language planning:

One of the difficulties frequently mentioned in connection with language planning is the value content within which language and language behavior are formed. According to this view, language planning is more difficult because it centrally impinges upon human values, emotions and habits than does planning with respect to production of tangible economic goods.

One is left scratching one's head as to why a warning such as this was not integrated into a comprehensive approach to language planning. Why was the national LWC the model of choice even though it was well-known that it could not work because of "the value problem"?

Ethnolinguistic identity has also been found to be gradable. A lexical item is said to be gradable if it can be modified by degree words such as "very" or "less," or by the comparative and/or superlative suffixes "-er" or "-est" (Fromkin et al. 2010:197). The adjective "hot," for example, is gradable because it can be modified by "very" and "less" as in "very hot" or "less hot." The claim that ethnolinguistic identity is gradable is very useful in language planning. It helps hypothesize a correlation between the level ethnolinguistic gradation and the anticipated outcomes in language planning. It will be shown below that the stronger an ethnolinguistic group feels about its identity, the less likely it will accept an imposed indigenous

LWC. The converse is also true, that is, if a group has a weak ethnolinguistic identity, it is more prone to accept an imposed local LWC to the detriment of, or in addition to, its native language. It has also been suggested that ethnolinguistic gradation correlates highly with ethnolinguistic loyalty, namely, the stronger the group's ethnolinguistic identity, the stronger its loyalty to its ancestral language. Strong ethnolinguistic loyalty is a double-edged sword in language planning. It can act as a facilitating agency or a deadly impediment. McLaughlin (2008:157–60) exemplifies this correlation with Pulaar and Seereer, two indigenous languages spoken in Senegal:

Senegalese Pulaar speakers constitute about 23 per cent of the population, making them the largest minority language group in the country. However, their sense of belonging to a wider community of Fula speakers, and their strong sense of the role of language as a central marker of identity, have led them to be quite vigilant in maintaining their own language and keeping at bay the encroachment of Wolof in their communities. ... The Seereer, including speakers of Seerer-Siin and Cangin languages, have been the closest neighbors of the Wolof for centuries and have long spoken Wolof. ... Seerer speakers do not hold the same, often militant, prejudices against Wolof, although they are generally proud of their various languages. Possibly because they have been bilingual in various Seereer languages and Wolof for many centuries, compounded by the fact that they do not form a coherent linguistic group, the Seereer's concept of ethnic identity is not as centrality linked to language as it is for Haalpulaar.

In his Strategic Game theory, Laitin (1992:52) gives serious consideration to ethnolinguistic loyalty because of its consequential impact on language planning. He observes that "people can be mobilized to support terrorism, secession, or federalism in the name of language revival, in large part because of the psychological power of the sense of rootlessness that language loss imposes upon its speakers and their descendants." The recent literature on language and identity in Africa is helpful in understanding the role of ethnolinguistic loyalty and language planning. Marten and Kula (2008:298) suggest that a large number of Zambians who speak minority languages have a low ethnolinguistic loyalty. As a result, they are very willing to code-switch and "employ a number of different languages in different contexts." An indigenous LWC can be planned for groups such as these and for the Seereer because of their low ethnolinguistic loyalty. However, Appleyard and Orwin (2008:276–80) warn that such an indigenous LWC model would

not work in Ethiopia because groups such as the Oromos and the Tigrinyas have a very strong ethnolinguistic loyalty. This realization has compelled the Ethiopian government to stop trying to force Amharic on the rest of the country. Instead, in 1994, a federalist form of government was adopted to accommodate the various strong ethnolinguistic egos. A similar solution ought to be adopted for language planning in Côte d'Ivoire, where McWhorter (2003:78) reports that the strong ethnolinguistic loyalties of the Anyi and the Baule cause them to see their languages as separate even though they can understand each other orally. Similarly, the imposition of a national LWC is less likely to work for Benin because of the strong ethnolinguistic loyalty of the Fons. They would not be inclined to accept any language except their own. Though the Fons and the Guns speak fairly mutually intelligible languages, the former have refused for more than a century to use the Gun Bible, alleging that the two languages are different from each other. After decades of trying to convince them otherwise, the Bible Society of Benin has relented and is translating the Bible into Fon. These examples underscore the fact that ethnolinguistic identity and loyalty should no longer be overlooked in language planning, because, as Essegbey (2009:129) notes, in Ghana, "the merest hint that one language might be more prestigious than another turns people against that language."

#### **1.4 Elite hypocrisy**

The previous sections have highlighted the fact that a multitude of non-linguistic factors can contribute to the success or failure of language planning. One of these paralinguistic factors is elite hypocrisy. This pattern of behavior is defined as a deliberate attempt by the elite of the country to sabotage language planning efforts by subverting them in one way or another. Laitin (1992:69, 113, 152) notes that this behavior has been attested to in India, Tunisia, and Catalonia. He describes it as follows:

Often, although individuals vote for the promotion of a national language (showing diffuse support of it), in their personal lives they act in a way that subverts that vote. In many cases they enroll their children in schools where access to the former colonial language is ensured and, at the same time, demand equal favor for their vernacular. In the sardonic words of the Tunisian general secretary of secondary public education, "We do not cease to repeat 'Arabization, Arabization,' all the while sending our children to the schools of MUCF [French private system]."

Skattum (2008:120, 121) reports a similar duplicitous behavior in Mali:

Haïda's 2005 survey however shows that here as elsewhere, *speech and behavior do not necessarily go hand in hand*. When observing the parents' registration of their children in these seven schools, Haïdara found that *the monolingual French ('classic') schools all filled up first. Deprecatory remarks were overheard: 'I'm not enrolling my child in a Bambara school!' or 'We have avoided the use of national languages once more this year' (a school director reassuring a parent)*. In real life, *the more education a parent had, the more it turned out he preferred French for his children and this included the teachers themselves*. What this shows is that though people may be in favour of national languages, they may not wish to gamble with the future of their own children in national education. [Italics added for emphasis]

A number of observations can be made from these two quotes. First, the elite give lip service to language planning. They champion it for the whole country, yet they prefer for their own children to be educated in the ex-colonial language. Secondly, the elite are prepared to use every possible means to avoid subjecting their own children to mother-tongue education even though they may have fashioned the policy themselves, or may have helped fashion it. As the example from Mali shows, the elite do not hesitate to bribe their way out of sending their children to schools where the medium of instruction is the local language, if necessary. A school principal has used unconventional means to make sure that an educated parent's child is not put in a class where the mother tongue is the medium of instruction! Thirdly, there are several other hypocritical strategies that the educated elite use. Bamgbose (1991:117) reveals that policymakers try to exempt their children from mother-tongue education by writing language policies that are riddled with loopholes and escape clauses such as "when adequate arrangements have been made" or "whenever possible." Fourthly, in some instances language policies are formulated in such a way as to exempt metropolises on the grounds that such agglomerations are too linguistically diverse for the policies to be implementable. Another common loophole in language policy statements that the elite exploit to their advantage is the exemption given to private schools (religious or not). Such schools are not required to offer classes in the mother tongue on the grounds that some expatriate children may enroll there. Since more will be said about elite hypocrisy and lip-service in subsequent chapters, suffice it now to quote Simpson and Oyetade (2008:188) in order to underscore the private school exemption trick used by the elite in Nigeria:



Although the ambitious intention was that children *everywhere* should receive their first three years of primary schooling in their mother tongue or the language of the local community, in practice this actually *happened only sporadically*, and more so in Yoruba, Hausa, and Igbo areas and *public schools* than in minority areas and *private education*, which was set on providing all-English education from a very early age (primarily to satisfy the wishes of fee-paying parents that their children learn English well so as to be able to find better employment at a later age). [Italics added for emphasis]

Needless to say, this pattern of behavior has deeply hurt the cause of mother-tongue education in post-colonial Africa. The behavior of the elite speaks more loudly than their tiresome demonstrations of the alleged cognitive and intellectual benefits of early mother-tongue education. The duplicity of language planners has caused the elite who are not involved in the language industry to be skeptical, ambivalent, apathetic, or even hostile to the use of African languages in education. This, in turn, has hardened the resolve of parents against mother-tongue education in many French-speaking countries in Africa. Many pre-literate and semi-literate parents have grown cynical about the real motives behind the recent push for mother-tongue education in the early grades. Farmers and unskilled workers who live in rural or semi-rural areas see it as a cleverly designed conspiracy to keep their children at the bottom of the socio-economic ladder while the children of the elite are educated in languages that afford them socio-economic mobility. Who can blame them for their cynicism when one remembers that the language policies of the Bantu Education Act in South Africa were intentionally designed to achieve a similar result? If language planning is to succeed in contemporary Africa, the policies must be formulated in such a way that they apply fairly to all the citizenry, irrespective of whether they live in a megacity or in the most remote rural village, or whether their parents are educated or illiterate, rich or poor. The blueprint for such a policy will be discussed throughout this book to show how this new approach can be implemented.

In almost all these cases, there is a functional “linguistic separation of powers” which has resulted in a diglossia à la Fishman. The international lingua franca is also the colonial language, the official language, the language of elementary, secondary, and college level schooling; the administrative language, the language of the courts, the language of international business, the language of the formal sector of the economy: banking, services, telecommunication; of the armed forces, etc. In a nutshell, it is the language of upward social mobility. One cannot secure the job of one’s dreams without mastering it.

However, contrary to the refrain in the sociolinguistic literature, knowledge of the international LWC is no longer confined to the elite. The term “elite closure” that Myers-Scotton introduced in the 1990s is now anachronistic. It may have been true a decade or so after the independence of most countries, but it is no longer applicable to contemporary Africa unless the definition of elite is stretched to include jobless college graduates. Not surprisingly, Bokamba (2008:103) has generously bestowed the label of elite to secondary school graduates! Even if this were so, Mazrui (2008:206) disproves that the label “elite” is stretched in describing the following situation in Kenya:

Yet it would be wrong, at least in the case of Kenya, to regard English exclusively as a language of the elite. It may be an additional language of a minority of the country’s population, but members of that minority are not necessarily members of the elite. Indeed, the slums of Nairobi – the capital city of Kenya – where I have had the opportunity to conduct research, are full of unemployed youth with an appreciable command of English.

In my previous employment as a linguistic consultant for a large international organization, I had the privilege of travelling to many countries and employing many people with an excellent command of French or English who did not belong to an elite class. Mazrui’s assessment of the Kenyan situation is valid for scores of countries all over the continent. In general, there has been a steady increase in literacy levels all over Sub-Saharan Africa. As a result, there is an ever growing number of people who know the former colonial languages very well who cannot and should not be classified as elite without a severe distortion of contemporary sociolinguistic realities.

### **1.5 Unaddressed parental concerns**

In the indigenous LWC model that has been in vogue since the 1960s, parental involvement in language planning is minimal. Of course, Kaplan (1998), Kaplan and Baldauf (1997) and others make opinion surveys a central piece of their methodology. However, because an overwhelming majority of Africans are illiterate and/or live in rural areas, it goes without saying that their input in the language planning process and outcomes is negligible. It is therefore fair to assume that the national LWC model mostly seeks the opinion of educated city dwellers. This approach leaves out a large percentage of parents who are stakeholders in the language planning debate. However, Laitin (1992:119) is of the opinion that success or failure in language

planning depends to a large extent on how parents' fears and aspirations for their children's future are addressed:

The most important general finding of the game-theoretic analysis is that the "players" involved in state construction are different over the centuries, leading to differently constituted language games and different equilibrium outcomes. The nature of the postcolonial bureaucracy has made it a key independent player in African state building able to subvert the language goals of political leadership. Also, the involvement of the state in mass education has brought school administrators and parents into the arena of language policy, interests that state builders of earlier centuries never encountered. New players and newly unleashed interests have led to newly constituted games. The dynamic of these games has pushed many African states not toward rationalization but toward a 3±1 multilingual outcome.<sup>5</sup>

Recent language attitude surveys underscore clearly that parents in Nigeria are uneasy, opposed, or even hostile to mother-tongue education in primary schools. Simpson and Oeyetade (2008:192) quote a study by Iruafemi in which only 6% of Nigerian parents approved of an indigenous language as the medium of instruction, while 24% of parents favored English as the sole medium of education. They also report a study by Adegbiya in which 77% of the respondents in Nigeria opposed replacing English with indigenous languages in elementary grades. Bado (2009:17) reports a study in which Ndebele and Shona parents in Zimbabwe prefer English as the only medium of education for their children. Parental involvement and support is critical for the success or failure of language planning, as has been well documented in other places in the world. Daniel (2003:5) reports that UNESCO was dismayed by the approval of Proposition 227 in California. The passage of 227 spelled doom for bilingual education:

Many were outraged in 1998 when Californian voters, by a 61% majority, imposed English as the state's sole language in publicly-funded schools despite opposition from a coalition of civil liberties organizations. Approval by referendum of Proposition 227, as it was called, meant resident foreign born children, mostly Spanish-speaking, could no longer be taught in their own language. Instead, they would have an intensive one-year course in English and then enter the general school system. The move was watched closely nationwide because 3.4 million children in the United States either speak English badly or not at all.

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5 The 3±1 formula will be explained thoroughly in Chapter 2.