

The Study of Globalization from a Language Planning Perspective

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Abstract

This study is dedicated to describe Globalization from a language planning perspective. It also discusses how language planning can be used to provide a theoretical framework for Globalization. The nature of globalization will be examined in terms of, consequences, problems and solutions, among many other factors. In order for these objectives to be achieved, the researcher goes through the following definitions: Language planning definitions, globalization definitions, presentation of an accounting scheme for the study of language planning. This latter is meant to improve our ability to describe, predict and draw generalizations concerning Globalization.

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1. Language Planning Definitions

According to Cooper (1989:29) there is a general disagreement upon to what term should be utilized to refer to the policy of language planning, in the sense that some scholars have proposed the term language engineering (Miller, 1950 cited in Al-Abed Al-Haq, 1994), others prefer to use Language management to describe the activity (Jernudd and Neustupny, 1986 cited in Al-Abed Al-Haq, 1994), Language standardization, language elaboration and language reform.

Language planning is a deliberate effort to influence the function, structure, or acquisition of a language or language variety within a speech community. From this follows a tendency to consider language planning as an activity which has as its main goal to cause changes in the society concerned. Despite its recency as an academic field, language planning has long existed as a sum of activities of states or empires. However, in the absence of formal policies, language planning decisions have long been outlined in the agendas of powerful individuals, such as modernizers, writers, teachers, lexicographers, and stylists. A more pertinent definition of the activity might be that of (Kaplan, R. and Baldauf, R., 1997: 3):

Language planning is a body of ideas, laws and regulations (language policy), change rules, beliefs, and practices intended to achieve a planned change (or to stop change from happening) in the language use in one or more communities. To put it differently, language planning involves deliberate, although not always overt, future oriented change in systems of language code and/or speaking in a societal context.

In short, language planning is an attempt by someone to modify the linguistic behaviour of some group of people for some reason. The reasons are complex, ranging from a desire to modernize a language in order to cope with the technological changes that are undergoing, to a desire to standardize a language, often with the political goals to maintain nationalization. Thus language planning is rarely unfussy; in the sense that to afford a one exact definition to this policy is not an easy task.

In this way, language planning has been referred to through different definitions by different

scholars. However, all the definitions may fall under two salient rubrics as suggested by Quedraogo (2000:13):

- 1). A political and/ or administrative activity, also named status planning.
- 2). A linguistic activity, also labelled corpus planning.

Status planning involves the allocation of languages to different societal domains, such as the official status, education, business, mass media...etc. However, corpus planning refers to such activities as the production of grammars and dictionaries, the innovation of orthographies, spelling reforms...etc.

2. An Accounting Scheme for Language Planning

Any language planning activity is an instance of social change, in the sense that any case of language planning ought to tell us at least , “*what actors attempted to influence what behaviours, of which people, for what ends, by what means, and with what results*” Cooper (1989:97). Each of these planning variables is now briefly described in turn.

1). *What actors*

These can be seen as working within four basic areas:

- a. Governmental agencies involved at the highest level, having the largest scope in planning, since government generally has the power to incite structures (or disincite structures) to enforce planning decisions (Kaplan, R. and Baldauf, R., 1997:5). Briefly speaking, they refer to those “*who get the most of what there is to get*”. Cooper (1989:88).
- b. Education agencies usually acting under the force of higher level structure which often extensively receive the entire burden of planning language change.
- c. Other non-governmental organizations: acting according to their own beliefs like national and international language academies of great prestige.
- d. All sorts of groups of influential individuals who create language policy as part of their normal activity. They are the people who promise, threaten advice, bug, or bribe but do not decide

2). *attempted to influence what behaviours*

- a. status: allocation of new norms and functions for a given language, identifying a language problem, competition between a national language and a foreign one.

- b. corpus: lexical elaboration, language modernization, or language revival.
- c. acquisition: teaching-learning processes, language choice as a medium of instruction.

3). *of which people*

type of target: individual vs organizations.

school vs university, private vs public sector.

4). *for what ends*

- a. overt: generally include making planning decisions and social changes such as language shift or linguistic assimilation. These can be classified under the impetus of language related behaviours.
- b. latent: they are non language-related behaviours such as the satisfaction of interests.

5). *by what means*

authority, force, power, persuasion, violence, or bribery.

6). *with what results*

- a. Achievement of national unity.
- b. Achievement linguistic assimilation, linguistic pluralism or language shift.
- c. Achievement of educational, economic and political advancement.
- d. Maintenance of power.

This above theoretical framework is offered by Cooper (1989:98) as a guide to future investigators in order to describe, predict, and explain language planning activity as a driving force of change. Perhaps some of the changes that occur in the functional allocation of languages are spontaneous. Most, however, are the outcomes of planning. An example of a planning activity would be the phenomenon of Globalization.

3. Globalization Definitions:

Globalization is a ubiquitous term but a vague one. It has been referred to through many definitions based on varying views of authors.

Generally speaking, Globalization may be defined as a rapid ongoing phenomenon described as inexorable integration of markets, states and technologies so that it enables individuals, corporations and states to connect more to one another within a new and evolving sense of '*borderlessness*'.

Examples of such connections could be: the flow of information and money, goods and services that were produced in only one part of the world are quickly spread over all parts of the world.

In this sense, Globalization is a policy that has shown massive changes (influences) on individuals and nation-states at: political, economic, and cultural levels.

4. Globalization as an Instance of Language Planning Activity

Globalization is viewed as geared towards a change in the scale of human organization that links distant communities and extends the reach of power relations across the world's areas. This definition implies that in a Globalization process, there is an issue of the subject (doer of the action) or *globalizer* versus the object (receiver of an action) or *globalized*. Agreement (2010:2). Within this context, Globalization activity describes *what actors (globalizers) attempted to influence (globalize) what behaviours, of which people (globalized), for what ends, by what means, and with what results* .

Certainly the most powerful states (countries of the North) are the doers of action, i.e. *globalizers*, whereas the less powerful (countries of the South) become the receivers of action i. e., *the globalized*.

Instances of globalizers in the world may be listed as follow: the UNESCO (the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization), the IMF (International Monetary Fund), the World Bank, the OECD (Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development), GATT (Global Agreement on Trade and Tariffs), and WTO (World Trade Organization), ICE (International community of education) ...and many others.

The process of globalization now relates not only to physical trade as a target of such activity but also other various aspects of life, among which education (the teaching-learning behaviours) is a case in point.

All over the world, education plays a significant role in promoting individual freedom; only through education can a state make progress, disseminate knowledge and get proud of itself in struggle for development. Education is often seen as a '*quick buck*' or as a key condition for economic growth; it makes a significant contribution to higher individual productivity and income. However, educational institutions are viewed as a site for the production and reproduction of knowledge,

ideology, skills, values and behaviours in the global culture, only when education is carried out in a context of a good language planning, and good governance.

Any successful globalizers' progress is based on education. The International Community composed of United Nations: Hong Kong, South Korea, Ireland and many other European countries agreed on a framework for action to implement the world Declaration on education for all. They all called for elimination of "*gender discrepancy in primary, secondary education, and higher education by 2015*". (Bloom, 2005 cited in Sorondo et. al, 2007: 59)

One of the aims '*for what ends*' was to afford educational expansion, and educational development. For the near future, there will be some economic activities that can be carried out only by people with various educational achievements.

It is worth mentioning that countries whose population has had a primary education only are likely to have economies based on low skilled worker with low productivity; however, countries whose population has got higher education are likely to have economies built on high skilled worker with relatively high productivity. In this respect, countries that have not afforded girls education are in fact harming their economies by limiting the economic contribution that could be made by women. Probably, a more interesting point to be deduced from here is that girls who do not attend schools have children earlier. Furthermore, uneducated mothers are not able to bring up their children accurately and are less able to manage the family finances.

Besides, educated women have fewer children than uneducated ones. In this vein, (Bloom, 2005 cited in Sorondo et.al, 2007:69-70) reminds us that:

the former group delay childbearing in order to use their skills in the workplace; they are more aware of the contraception and of the economic benefits of smaller families ; and their increased knowledge of health care means their children may be more likely to survive to adulthood, so they need fewer children to attain their desired family size.

Not only does education in a globalized world seek for large gains in enrollment, but also of the type of education asked for. A teacher always plays an important role in education; he is not only supposed to pass on information to students, but also to show up the inner capabilities of his learners. Thus, it is precedent to develop well-trained teachers than '*plush facilities*'. This can be fulfilled

through giving teachers autonomy to teach in their own way, which in turn can increase the return on the investment in teachers' trainings and salaries. (Bloom, 2005 cited in Sorondo et.al, 2007: 71).

5. Conclusion

Finally, there are always good and bad news about a given story. The good news about Globalization is that there is a birth of the idea of building a homogenized global village inhabited by global citizens who are going to live together *symbiotically* through productivity, competitiveness, maximization of profit from economic and knowledge growth. It is saddening, however to mention that the relation ship that stands between the *globalizer* and the *globalized* can in many ways be *parasitic*, in the sense that many world leaders make of Globalization a strategic tool to consume the resources of the South particularly Africa. Within this context, Agreement (2010: 5) bluntly states that: “[Globalization] is seen as a capitalist fuelled engine that is driven by the western imperialists”. This is clearly an approach that suits the interests of the global neo-capitalist leaders.

Similar points, no doubt, might be made with language. First of all, it would be untrue to deny the fact that the run of western cultural goods does not mean any deep cultural diffusion resulting in western dominated cultural homogenization. The more serious problem, however, is rather that with linguistic globalization, in the sense that any language represents a way of thinking. Therefore, Arabic or Swahili will represent ways of viewing the world, in a manner which is different from any individual living in western language communities. If destroyed or lost, one will lose his/her identity. In this vein, local languages are also important in the rising of a given state's informal economy. Bruthiaux (2002, cited in Ferguson, 2006: 142) argues that for the poorest sectors of society literacy in local languages will contribute to development and poverty reduction. English language education, for these people, he adds, is ultimately worthlessness; it should be geared instead towards those who “*have a realistic chance of participating in international exchanges soon*”.

The above discussion is leading to the conclusion that any state that desires a national development should implement language nationalization, in the educational system and, therefore, ensure the people's national identity. (Dhaouadi 2002, cited in Paolletis, 2006: 408). In countries that suffered colonization, it is necessary to adopt policies that allow the use of a native language. The implementation of Arabization in North Africa is a case in point. However, this does not appear to say

that any policy solution should assume a necessary opposition between English or French and local (national) languages and plan to promote one rather than another. For, such policy solutions are faulty in the sense that both (English or French and local language) should be used complementarily: English (or French) because it offers job opportunities increasingly governed by global leaders; local languages because they contribute to effective learning and national development. In education, this implies “additive bilingual education”. Ferguson (2006:143).

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