LINGUA PAX

Language Policies and Cultural Identities

PROF E. Nolue Emenanjo (EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR)
National institute for Nigerian Languages
PMB 7078 - Ogbor Hill - Aba, NIGERIA

Abstract

The symbiotic relationship that exists between human language and culture, more so in a society in which there still is very strong and robust language loyalty, is one of the givens in sociolinguistic discourse. Essentially a mentifact and a sociofact created by particular people living in a particular geo-political society at particular periods in history, for intra-group communication purposes, human language is a mirror and the marker of self-image and group identity. An essential element of ethnicity - with religion and culture, language is a feature for both differentiation and identification. All these cut across all polities, whatever are their internal geo-political and sociolinguistic profiles, arrangements and configurations. The norm in most countries of the world is not monoculturalism and monolingualism but cultural and political pluralism and multilingualism. The complex multilingual political configurations of the nations in Africa, Asia, the Americas, Europe and Australia among others, are commonplace in sociolinguistic literature. Perhaps, because of the global influence and hegemony of English in Great Britain and the US, the plural linguistic and cultural diversities in the UK and the US are often downplayed even where there is abundant documentation on this. In the UK, for example, the 1978 Language Census of London Schools, the 1985 Linguistic Minorities Project and the two-volume work of Alladina and Edwards (1991) on Multilingualism in the British Isles, all these have revealed that Britain is far from being a monolingual state and that there are some 172 different languages spoken by children in London alone. In the US, S. Africa, Canada, Australia and New Zealand, the existence of (semi) autonomous 'homelands' granted to autochthonous groups is in recognition of their distinct cultural and linguistic identities. Also the many studies of linguistic and ethnic minorities in the US and of the US Bilingual Education Act (1968) point to the existence of restive, cultural and linguistic minorities calling for serious attention, integration and empowerment through balanced multiculturalism, and bilingual and multilingual education. Socio-political and linguistic independence were important issues leading to the break-up of the federating units in the USSR, Chechoslovakia and Yugoslavia. The well documented language conflicts or upheavals in the Soviet Union, Austria - Hungary, India, Canada, Australia, Great Britain, Belgium, Luxembourg and Switzerland, and in urban multilingual societies everywhere and the fairly recent riots in Bejaia, in Tunisia, where the Berbers who make up one third of the population demanded official recognition of their language, Tamazight. Language and ethnic identity featured in Macedonia where the Albanians, a minority group, demanded that their language be accorded official status. The situations that exist in Spain with Catalan and Basque or in France with Breton and Alsatian are still very much alive. Language is an inalienable possession of a group. It is a fundamental human right that is boldly enshrined in universal declarations like the underlisted, among others:

- The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948)
- The Declaration of the Rights of Persons Belonging to National, Ethnic, Religious and
Linguistic Minorities (1992)
- The Universal Declaration of Linguistic Rights (1996)

Given all the facts in the literature, Lee Hansen's Law, the imperatives of metaconsensus, industrialization, urbanisation, modernization and globalization living cheek-by-jowl with ethnicity; and ethnic pluralism, multiculturalism and multilingualism co-existing with monoculturalism and monolingualism, language policies must be sensitive to the demands of modern democratic procedures with their emphases on freedom, equality, accommodation, enthronement of fundamental human and linguistic rights, and human dignity. Language policies must also be equally sensitive to the fact that in a plural polity all languages are equal. There should, therefore, be … *no question of dispossessing any group however small of its language. A smaller language may have its role only at the local level and in initial literacy whereas a major language may have both a local, national, regional or international roles* (Bamgbose 1984).

All languages in a community or society must be accommodated in a language policy no matter their status, demographic strength and distribution, economic strength, state of development, sociolinguistic vitality, functions, legal status, estimation, geographical distribution, readiness for literacy and numeracy, etc. This has been called 'egalitarian multilingualism' All languages in any language policy must be assigned definite domains in education, the media, entertainment, the legislature and judiciary, political, economic and scientific discourse etc. In designing language policies efforts have been made or are being tried out in extant language policies in Switzerland, Australia, India, Canada, Wales Nigeria etc. with varying degrees of political realism, seriousness, and of success, with the minorities being allowed their say and dues, and the majorities having their ways and dues in keeping with the basic tenets of democracy.

Introduction

Given the intimidating literature now available on the theory and practice of language planning in general (status planning, corpus planning, acquisition planning) and identity planning, and language policy in particular, and their relationship with ethno-political discourse it is, perhaps, worth the while to preface our presentation with some definitions. These will help to partly delimit the boundaries and focus of our paper and to partly reduce to a manageable level, unnecessary repetition and overlap with the other topics commissioned and advertised for this Congress, and its workshops.

Policy, policies and language policy

Ideally, a policy is a declaration of intent, for the implementation of a mission statement about a vision for something, about anything and for everything under the sun. It may also be a statement about a practice that is already on the ground, about anything under the sun. A policy may or may not be found in any corpus juris, text(s) or document(s). It may or may not be explicitly stated. It may be de jure and/or de facto. It may be a priori or post priori of a report, a research project, a finding or a political or government statement or Act of an assembly or of a parliament. Always polity-specific, policies may or may be people-driven or people- centred. But, in all, policies are meant to address and to solve a myriad of problems: personal, group, political, socio-economic and cultural, within the overall context of macro-economic development more so with today's realities propelled by the new proactive and ever-expanding technologies and the multidimensional realizations of globalization. Simply put, a language policy is a policy about human language, its status, its use and usage and its overall

management in any polity. It is a policy about who uses or adopts what language, when, where, why and how, in any polity no matter its ethnic or racial make-up; its linguistic composition or ideological position, or its political evolution. Ideally, a language policy should be the end product of language planning informed by, among other things, linguistic data from socio-linguistic surveys or profiles. In other words, language policies should be post priori and ought to post-date status planning. But because of a number of variables not the least of which is the history of the evolution of modern nations and nation-states, language policies are status quo phenomena which language planning has to contend with, understand and manage in the overall interest of the society or nation. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) states unequivocally that all rights are human rights. They are inalienable. They are non-negotiable. And they are fundamental for all peoples of the world, all polities in the world, all socio-political ideologies in the world. More than the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) but following hard in the footsteps and on the heels of The Universal Declaration of the Collective Rights of Peoples (1990)The Declaration on the Right of Persons Belonging to National, Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities (1992), The Universal Declaration of Linguistic Rights (UDLR) (1996) is the world's magna carta or the bill of language rights for all peoples the world over. It states in very clear terms that language or linguistic rights are fundamental, human rights. For, not only are all persons equal, in essence, so too all languages are equal in essence. Thus UDLR demands that:

"to correct linguistic imbalances… and ensure the respect and full development of all languages and establishing the principles for a just and equitable linguist peace throughout the world as a key factor in the maintenance of harmonious social relations all languages, like all peoples, would not only be seen to be equal in all respects but also be seen to be treated equally in all respects, in all polities".

Culture, society and cultural identities

Culture is '… *the whole complex of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features that characterize a society or social group. It includes not only arts and letters but also modes of life, the fundamental rights of the human beings. Value systems, traditions and belief … society's institutions. Its legal system, its processes of governance, legitimation and participation - all this vast web of intricate links and transactions define a society's character as well delimit its pattern of economic development…*'

The above holistic definition of culture was given at the UNESCO conference on cultural policies in Mexico in 1982. This launched the United Nations World Decade on Cultural Policies. By and large, the international community has formally adopted this rather broad UNESCO - sponsored view on culture, in what is now known as the Declaration of MONDIACULT. Culture is manifested in, among other things, music, art, painting, dance, folklore, literature and cultural heritage. These constitute the core of society's cultural identity. A society has its distinctive features, its cultural heritage, its cultural identity. From pristine times to now, such a society could be a social group, an ethnic group, a linguistic community, a state, a nation or a nation state.

Human language and cultural identity

Furthermore a culture can be characterized:

a. as a society i.e a set of individuals with mutual relations organized in specific social institutions;

b. as a civilization i.e. a set of artifacts which are produced and used by the members of the society; and

c. as a mentality i.e a system of values and ideas, moral and customs - a set of conventions that control the social institutions and determine the functions and meanings of the artefacts.

Every culture is in a class by itself differing from others by their specific state, specific civilization, specific mentality, and a specific language. Participation and transactions in many facets of a culture, especially, the verbal arts and letters, music, folklore and literature, processes of governance, articulation of fundamental human rights and intra-group human communication are achieved through language. In all autochthonous societies or cultures there is a natural one-to-one correspondence between languages and cultures. In fact, in such societies language is one of the essential if not the bench mark marker of culture. Some social scientists see language as the most obvious and most important attribute of a (linguistic) nation. saying there is no such thing as a nation without a common linguistic basis. Yet, in spite of this truism of anthropological linguistic studies, the mutual relationship between language and culture remains circular as culture feeds on language while language stimulates culture. However, in modern nation states defined, delimited, created and carved up by the agencies of various forms and types of imperialism, wars, treaties and conferences (like Berlin of Africa) migration, emigration and mass population movements - language is not an essential marker even though it may be in and for political engineering. It is in nations such as these, more so the bi-ethnic, bi-cultural or bilingual, or the multi-ethnic, multicultural and multilingual ones that language policies are desirable for mapping out uses, usages, and functions in keeping with the demands of fundamental human rights.

Language policies and cultural identities

Deriving from our definitions of culture, society and language a la fundamentals:

- human language is an inalienable human right

- human language is an essential marker of cultural identity

- human society, more so modern nations, may be mono-ethnic, monocultural and monolingual, or pluri-ethnic, pluri-cultural, and plurilingual.

- language policies, for them to be pragmatic, problem-solving, people-oriented and proactive, must be sensitive to the linguistic realities and political complexions of the polity

- language policies must be fact-based, aim at problem-solving and be future - oriented

- language policies are always prescriptive

- language policies should comprehensively address, all aspects of

- language use and usage in all domains and modes of a polity

- language distribution

- language learning

- language policies must be democratic enough to accommodate all the cultural diversities, all the linguistic varieties and all the repertoires identified in any nation

- In plural, multi-cultural and multilingual societies, language policies must provide for multiculturalism in education and 'egalitarian multilingualism' for languages. According to Carmardons (1997), the principle of 'egalitarian multilingualism' provides for 'balanced relationships among languages (and) must be based upon equality and reciprocity of the linguistic communities and of the speakers', so as to give due recognition to the linguistic rights of the speakers of all languages. This fact must never question the plenitude of functions of each language in its own historical (area) (space)/territory. The recognition of these rights must logically have a symmetric or reciprocal nature among the different linguistic communities which belong to the same (multilingual) polity'. It matters little if the polity is the Spanish state, the Swiss Federation, the European Union, the former USSR or present-day Nigeria. All the languages therein are to be given reciprocal and equal recognition. Thus in Spain, Castilian should enjoy equal and reciprocal status with Catalan and all the official languages of Spain. All the eleven languages of the EU should enjoy same also. This is the only way of providing for all citizens' collective/personal linguistic rights with its corollary of equality of opportunities without linguistic barriers when accessing to public goods and services.

Language policies

Only small autochthonous societies can be said to truly monocultural, monodialectal, and monolingual. Some large autochthnous societies could be multicultural, but monolingual, and multidialectal, with diglossia etc. In some such societies the dialects could be on their way to becoming languages either on their own or by (subtle) coersion through identity planning, status, corpus and acquisition planning and implementation or through the forces of glossogamy. Consider Ukranian, Biorussian and Russian. Consider Norwegian and Dutch; Mandarin Chinese and Mainland Chinese; Urhobo and Okpe, Efik and Ibibio and Ikwere and Igbo, all in Nigeria. But with colonialism and imperialism and their aftermath, large population movements, immigration, globalization, the imperatives of equality, liberty and egalite, the innocence of monoculturalism and monolingualism has predictably given way to the experience of multiculturalism and multilingualism.

Language policy and cultural identities: Nigeria as a case study

Nigeria, like most countries, does not have a well-articulated and explicit national language policy that can be found in one document. But like most countries, Nigeria does have a national policy for language in education and, by default, and implication in the polity. This policy is sometimes explicitly and sometimes obliquely, stated in:

i. National Policy on Education, (NPE) (1977; Revised 1981; 2000)
ii. Government Views and Comments on the Findings of Recommendations of
the Political Bureau (1987)
(iii) The Cultural Policy for Nigeria (1976)
(iv) The Constitutions of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (1979, 1989, 1999)

Language in the policy: a paradigm

The de facto National Policy on Languages (in education) recognises the multi-cultural, multilingual three tier political-polity which tries to capture the multi-ethnic, and, ipso facto, multilingual polity which Berlin and the British have hammered into a rough-hewn existence. The policy provides for:

i. Mother-Tongue (L1) and/or Language of the Immediate Community (LIC) as the language of initial literacy at the pre-primary and junior primary levels, and of adult and non-formal education.
ii. The three major (national) languages - Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba as L2 - as the languages of national culture and integration.

iii. English - the official language - as the language of formal literacy, the bureaucracy, secondary and higher education, the law courts, etc.

iv. Selected foreign languages especially, French, and Arabic, as the languages of international communication and discourse. These are the languages for which Language Villages have been set up.

The unstated policy on languages

i. Advocates multiculturalism and multilingualism as the national goal.

ii. Recognises English as the de facto official language in the bureaucracy and all tiers of formal education

iii. Treats Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba as potential national languages which are to be developed and used as L1 and L2 all through the formal educational system.

iv. Recognises ALL Nigerian languages as meaningful media of instruction in initial literacy, and in life-long and non-formal education.

Tables I and II schematically present what should be the factors of languages in Nigerian education with respect to literacy and formal education.
See Table III and note its interpretation:
i. L1 = (L2) = (L3) = L1
ii. L4 = L2
iii. L5/L6 = L3
Thus, L1 is a Nigerian language; L2 is English and L3 is either another Nigerian Language, French or Arabic. Whereas most Southerners who are non-Moslem will have French as L3, most Northerners who are Moslem will have Arabic as L3. The resultant picture is the triglottic-mother tongue, other tongue and further tongue model that has been consistently analysed for Nigeria. See the Socio-linguistic pyramid for Nigeria as devised by Brann (1989).

Flaws in the policy

The policy is flawed in many areas which we will present as questions:
i. Don't the statements on language constitute just a statement of intent rather than a serious programme for implementation?

ii. If the Mother Tongue (MT) or the Language of the Immediate Community is considered so important at the pre-primary level as an integral part of the child's culture and the link between the home and the school, why should it be "principally" and not "solely" used at this level?

iii. If the Mother Tongue or the Language of the Immediate Community is considered a very important medium for achieving initial and permanent literacy and numeracy, why should it be only used "initially" and not throughout the whole of primary education? The Ife Six Year Primary Project (SYPP) and the experimental MT project in Niger Republic have confirmed that those who have their total primary education in MT "who had turned to technical pursuit have proved more resourceful than their counterparts from other schools when they met on the technical plane. The SYYP children have demonstrated greater manipulative ability, manual dexterity and mechanical comprehension.

With their colleagues, the project children have demonstrated a great sense of maturity, tolerance and other affective qualities that make them integrate easily and readily with those they come in contact with" (Fafunwa et al. (1989:141).

iv. How do people identity the Language(s) of the Immediate Community in pluralistic settings like urban areas, cities, university campuses?

v. Aren't the pronouncements on the three major languages vague and effeminate? Do phrases such as "government considers it to be of interest to national unity that each child should be encouraged to learn" not suggest that the choice of language is optional and left to the child to choose or not to choose? Common sense dictates that if learning a major national language is a responsibility, then its learning cannot be optional. It has to be compulsory!

vi. Further on the choice of languages, by whom and at what level is this choice of one of the three languages to be made? By the parents, the school or the pupils?

vii. If the governments are serious about implementing the policy, shouldn't there be a definite chronogram for all states to follow in the implementation of the programme? Why is the implementation of the language provisions couched in cautious 'escape' phraseology: subject to the availability of teachers'?

viii. If the governments consider the learning of the three languages crucial for national integration, where are the legal and other sanctions for defaulting federal, state and local governments or their agencies?

ix. Practically ALL Nigerian languages can be used as mother tongues or language(s) of immediate communities. Is it pedagogically feasible to organise initial literacy in 400 odd languages?

x. How do just three of the major languages serve the needs of the educational process and become the media for preserving the peoples' cultures - 400 autonomous peoples' cultures?

xi. Are three years of JSS L2 in the major Nigerian languages enough for the cultural immersion and the political unity envisaged?

xii. What is the relationship between Mother Tongue and English? Why should there be a change-over only after three years? Isn't this contrary to UNESCO and other findings? Won't the transition create a psychological gap detrimental to cognitive maturation and intellectual development of the child?

xiii. Why is the policy silent on Nigerian Pidgin - one of the country's major languages?

xiv. What are the language skills expected from pupils studying each of the major languages involved in the multiglossic Nigerian situation?

xv. How do we accommodate all the languages and cultures in a scheme?

xvi. The total number of teachers required in 1988 for the three major Nigerian languages was 55,237. Only 6,383 or 11.6% of these were then available. How and where were the remaining 48,854 teachers to be produced? Is the recruitment or training of these teachers to the left to chance or to a co-ordinated programme involving all agencies concerned?

If we look critically at the goals for teaching/learning languages as spelt out in the policy we will find that there are three primary functions for language in:

i. Making Nigerians capable of acquiring knowledge, skills and attitudes that will make Nigeria a highly developed nation ("the importance of language in the educational process").

ii. Making Nigerians capable of preserving and positively utilizing their cultures ("a means of preserving peoples culture").

iii. Making Nigeria become a virile and united nation ("in the interest of national unity").

Yet in terms of actual schooling four specific roles are mapped out for language in Nigerian education, thus:

a. Educational process: school subject

b. Educational process: a medium of instruction

c. Preservation of culture: a means of additive communication as a first target

d. Promotion of unity: a means of integrative communication as a second target.

Of the four goals above the second, i.e. (b) is irrelevant to the teaching of Nigerian languages at the Junior Secondary School (JSS) level.

A closer look at all the provisions of the NPE reveals that the use of any Nigerian language as a medium of instruction is limited to the primary and pre-primary levels. Again of the three relevant goals, only the last two are relevant for the teaching of Nigerian languages at the JSS level. The designers of the NPE had at the back of their minds the preservation of culture and promotion of Nigerian unity as crucial to the JSS. Hence the emphasis. Otherwise all the languages: English, French, Arabic, taught as school subjects at the JSS have intellectual relevance.

General observations

1. Since language serves important social functions and has a geo-political definition to it LP, whether status, corpus or acquisition is a preservative social activity operating in a geo-political terrain and with socio-cultural interaction patterns and needs.

2. Cultural identities have territoriality. They may be in terms of race, ethnicity, nations, states or semi-continents. I am aware however that Yiddish and Gypsy have neither territoriality nor terrian among the 21 members of the Council of Europe.

3. Status planning and acquisition planning are connected with fundamental human rights. That's why they are endemically politically and/or ethnically or racially contentious. Thus whenever the policy infringes or appears to infringe on these inalienable universal linguistic rights there are tensions, blows-ups, battles and wars. Attempts by dominant groups to impose their language no matter how subtly, and to block social mobility, inevitably result in language conflict. The language riots in Soweto were decisive on stopping the language policy which the defunct apartheid regime wanted to impose in the blacks in South Africa. The different wars with the Tuaregs and the different proposals to stop them largely account for the status won by Tamasheq in Mali and Niger.

4. Universally, LP is more crucial and critical in education. The reason for this is simple - education is a very powerful instrument of change and development. This explains why, in a number of countries, the language policies are embedded or subsumed in or extrapolated from their education policies - (Nigeria, Switzerland, the East African communities with Kuswahili.)

5. Cultures are systems of symbols for the identification of a people and language is one of the most potent symbols in the network. Even when language shift has taken place, cultural identities remain despite the use of new linguistic codes of an LWC. Allocthtonous communities are aware of their 'beingness' more so after the second generation, as postulated in Hansen's Law which holds that what the second generation wishes to forget, the third generation wishes to remember - in terms of their original cultural identity. Where language loyalty persists as in Burkino Faso, Mali, Cote d'Ivoire, Ghana, Togo, Benin and Senegal - speakers of small-group or minority languages are not prepared to give up their MTs in favour of a majority language, LWC, lingua franca or national language. For example, it has been recorded that in Mali, Songhai or Dogon speakers turn off their radios and TVs that are dominated by Bambara. The point here is that languages are accepted or rejected on the basis of attitudes and values. Language loyalty means a 'fanatical' attachment to cultural values and is synonymous with ethnic identity. Language loyalty does block the spread of LWCs for horizontal integration and communication as well as vertical integration through education

6. The existence of de jure language policies with enabling laws and statues, and implementation agencies has only reduced linguistic and cultural tensions in countries that have these: Wales, Canada, New Zealand, Australia. Occasionally these tensions come to the surface when there is a lack of political will on the part of bureaucracy to make the structures work effectively in the interest of the beneficiaries, who are more often than not, minorities. Ineptitude, indifference and confusion confound the situations and make implementation difficult if not impossible for the heritage, indigenous, non-official, vernacular or ethnic languages. The National Policy on Languages in Australia in 1987 emphasized Australian nationhood for the indigenous languages. One-half of Australia's 200 languages were used regularly and language death stemmed. That policy promoted ethnic identity and culture and established a broad non-partisan policy of multiculturalism and multicultural education to further promote and popularize the retention of the cultural heritage of different ethnic groups and promote intercultural understanding. If the Australian NLP with its breadth and scope and success were generally acceptable did the Australian government need to promulgate the National Language and Literacy Policy (NLLP) and to drastically re-name, re-focus and re-locate

the National Languages Institute of Australia mid-stream? The Australian NLP has never been the same, since the NLLP.

7. Identity planning has not and cannot abrogate cultural identity. The attempt in modern polities to superimpose national or official languages or to favour supranational identity over national or inherited identity moreso since the foundation of the UN, in 1948 which gave recognition to the national language as a prominent marker of national identity - has not worked. For it is an utopia. As examples, French, English and Italian are the official languages of their respective countries. Yet the regional languages of Catalan, Basque, Corsican, Breton, Flemish, Alsatian continue to serve as vibrant symbols of the national identities of their speakers.

Conclusion and recommendation

Practically all countries of the world are multilingual even if not all are administratively multilingual or have language policies that are sensitive to their multilingual and multi-cultural complexions. It is generally held that none of the extant models of multilingualism can be applied to all cultures, countries or circumstances. But Switzerland is a success story of handling multilingualism and multiculturalism in a small country; Wales and New Zealand of bilingualism in complex-macro bilingual countries; Australia and India of handling multiculturalism and multilingualism in big sub-continents; Luxembourg of trilingualism with triglossia in a small multilingual country. The great success of Switzerland with multilingualism is because politically and culturally, Switzerland is built on a 'long tradition of compromise in which direct democracy allows minority opinions to be voiced and often acted upon'. It is this culture of democracy that the theory of 'egalitarian multilingualism' tries to build on and promote.

Egalitarian multilingualism will adequately cater for the co-existence of (official) languages in a polity, the (bigger) languages of wider communication (LWCs) and the smaller Languages of Less Circulation (LLCs); endogenous (foreign or imported) and indigenous languages (native, heritage, vernacular) languages; the great cultivated languages and the small, uncultural languages. - all complications and expenses notwithstanding. This is the price which multicultural and multilingual countries have to pay for democratic macro-development. After all, languages are great resources like minerals and personnel found in any nation. All that is called for is proper management for 'handling' multilingualism. Egalitarian multilingualism should be able to cater for the incorporation of the languages of both the autochthonuous and the allochthonous minorities in the mainstream national language policy.

· In the EU, there's 'equality of all languages' as there's equality of all member countries; "any limitation of the number of languages used by the European Parliament would interfere with the democratic nature of Parliament.'

· 'There is to be absolute equality between the community languages whether used actively or passively, in writing or orally, at all meetings of parliament and its bodies'.

· The EU respects cultural diversity and is committed to linguistic pluralism and no levelling of linguistic and cultural differences, because the multilingualism of Europe (even if it is both a treasure and an Achilles heel, an asset and a liability) - is one of the essential features of Europe's culture and civilization, and of world culture, civilization and its diverse identities.

· Egalitarian multilingualism is for integration rather than assimilation, for horizontal as against vertical communication, and for holistic and inclusive development. EU concern for minority languages led to the creation of the European Bureau for Less Used Languages (1983) with some token budgetary provisions for publications and research, conferences and policy

studies.

· Egalitarian multilingualism would handle the issues of allochthonous minorities: migrants, guest workers, returning servicemen from former colonies, refugees, emigrants, transmigrants. Egalitarian multilingualism should thus guarantee identities for the 32m linguistic minorities and 20m historical minorities of Europe's 320m population as at 1997. The new national identities must bear in mind the dividends of egalitarian multilingualism and multiculturalism and stress the functional differentiation and diversity of languages. They must not yield to the chauvinistic tendencies resulting from traditional nationalism. With egalitarian multilingualism, the French should remain French in the EU without suppressing the regional languages in France - Occitan, Catalan, Basque, Corsican, Breton, Flemish, the Alsatian variety of German.

· Egalitarian multilingualism would prevent assimilationist tendencies such as: the absorption of Welsh, Scottish and Gaelic in Great Britain, Breton in France, Frisian in the Netherlands, and Sorbic in East-Elbian Germany, the very many small minority languages in the northern parts of Nigeria. etc, etc.

· Egalitarian multilingualism would stem language death, reverse language shift and respect language loyalty. It is estimated that in Canada before the Europeans came and the country adopted a rigid bilingual policy in two exogenous European languages, there were 450 Aboriginal languages and dialects, in eleven language families. By the late 1970s only some 60 Aboriginal languages were still identified in the same eleven language families. In 1982, of the 60 languages only three had more than 5000 speakers, which is the cut-off population for languages in danger of dying.

Finally egalitarian multilingualism captures fully the spirit behind the universal declarations of human rights, of the rights of persons belonging to national, ethnic religious and linguistic minorities, and of LINGUISTIC RIGHTS.

E Nolue Emenanjo
Aba
15 March 2002

Some references

Ajulo, S. B. (ed.) 2000 Language in education and society: Festschrift in honour of C.M.B. Brann Lagos: University of Lagos Press

Alladina, S and V. Multilingualism in The British Isle: The older

Edwards (eds.) 1991 mother tongues of Europe London and N. York: Longman

Ammon, U. 1994 'The present dominance of English in Europe with outlook on possible solutions to the European language problems' Sociolinguistica 8 (1994): 1-14

Bamgbose, A. 1984 'Minority languages and literacy' In: F. Coulmas (ed.) Linguistic minorities and literacy Berlin: Mouton

Bamgbose, A. 1992 Speaking in tongues: Implications of multilingualism and language policies in Nigeria Ibadan: Wemilore Press

Bamgbose, A et. al. (eds.) 1992 Implementation Strategies for the Language Provisions of the National Policy on Education

Abuja: Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council

Belo, M. A. 1995 Nigeria and multinationalism Lagos: Malthouse Press Ltd.

Brann, C.M.B. 1981 European Languages in Sub-Saharan African:

Perspective and prospective Brussels: European Co-operation Fund

Broeder, P and Guss Extra 1995 'Ethnic Identity and Community Languages in the Netherlands' Sociolinguistica 9 (1995): 96-112

Burgarski, R. (1987) 'Unity in Diversity: Aspects of language policy in the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia' Sociolinguistica 1(1987): 1-12

Byram, M. S. 1986 Minority education and ethnic survival: A case study of a German school in Denmark Clevedon: Multilingual Matters Ltd

Cenoz, J and U. Jessner 2000 English in Europe Clevedon: Multilingual Matters Ltd.

Churchill, Stacy 1986 The education of linguistic and cultural minorities in the OECD countries Clevedon: Multilingual Matters Ltd.

Clark, E and D, Jegede Culture and Nation Building Ibadan:Verity (eds.) 1992 Press Ltd.

Clyne, M. G. (1984) Language and society in the German-speaking countries Cambridge: Cambridge University

Press

Comrie, B. (ed.) 1987 The Major Languages of Western Europe London: Routledge
(ed.) 1987 The Major Languages of Eastern Europe London: Routledge

Coulmas, P. (ed.) 1983 Linguistic minorities and national languages: Languages policy issues in developing countries Berlin and N. York: Mouton de Gruyter

Coulmas, F. (ed.) 1991 A Language policy for the European Community: Prospects and Quandries Berlin; Mouton

Crystal, D. 2000 Language Death Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

Cyffer, N. et al (eds.) 1991 Language Standardization in Africa Hamburg: Buske

Durmuler, Urs, 1991 'Swiss Multilingualism and international communication' Sociolinguistica 5 (1991): 111-159

Durmuler, Urs 1994 'Multilingual Talk or English Only? The Swiss Experience' Sociolinguistica 9 (1995): 44 – 87

Eastman, C. M. 1984 Language, ethnic identity and change In J.

Edwards (ed.) (1984): 259-279

Edwards, J (ed.) 1984 Linguistic Minorities; Policies and Practices London: Academic Press
1985 Language, Society and Identity Oxford: Blackwell

Emenanjo, E. N. 1985 'Nigerian Language Policy: Perspective and Prospective' Journal of the Linguistic Association of Nigeria 3:123-134

Emenanjo, E. N. 1992 'Language and the National Policy on Eduction' In; I. Ipaye (ed.) Nigerian Education: Past, Present and Future Lagos: Macmillan Vol. 1:215-237

Emenanjo, E. N. (ed.) 1990 Multilingualism, minority languages and language policy in Nigeria Agbor: Central Books with the Linguistic Association of Nigeria

Emenanjo, E. N. and Language endangerment and language

P. K Blembo 1999 empowerment in Nigeria: Theory and Reality Vol. 1. Aba: National Institute for Nigerian Languages

Eruvbetine, A. E. (eds.) 2001 The humanistic management of pluralism: A formula for development in Nigeria Lagos: Faculty of Arts, University of Lagos

Extra, G and Immigrant Languages in Europe Clevedon: L. Verhoeven 1993 Multilingual Matters Ltd.

Fafunwa, A.B et.al (eds.) 1989 Education in Mother Tongue: The Ife Primary Education Project Ibadan: University Press Ltd.

Fishman, J. A. 1991 Reversing Language Shift Clevedon:
Multilingual Matters Ltd.

Gallner, Ernest 1987 Culture, Identity and Politics Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

Hanson, Marcus L 1952 'The third Generation in America' Commentary
IV: 492-500

Haarmann, H. 1986 Language in ethnicity: A review of basic ecological relations Berlin and N. York

Haarmann, H. 1992 'Historical trends of cultural evolution among the non-Russian languages in the European part of the former Soviet Union' Sociolinguistica 6 (1992):
11-41

Haarmann, H. 1995 'Europeanness, European Identity and the role of language: Giving profile to an anthropological

Infrastructure' Sociolinguistica 9(1995): 1 - 55 Hamers, J. F. and M. H. A. Bilinguality and Bilingualism Cambridge:

Blanc (eds.) 1983 Cambridge University Press

Herriman, M and Language policies in English-Dominant

B. Burnaby 1996 Countries Clevedon: Multilingual Matters Ltd.

Holman, E. 1995 'Multilingualism and National Identity in Post-

Soviet Estonia' Sociolinguistica 9(1995): 136-140

Hutchinson H and Ethnicity Oxford: Oxford University Press
A. D. Smith 1996

i Camardons, J. S. 1997 'Planning Multilingualism: The Catalan case' Sociolinguistica 11 (1997): 43-52

Ikara, B. 1987 Minority languages and lingua franca in Nigeria Maiduguri: University of Maiduguri Press

Kennedy, C. (ed.) 1984 Language planning and language education London: George Allen and Unwin

Khubchandani, L. M. 1986 'Multilingual societies: issues of identity and communication' Sociolinguistics 16.1:20-34

La Bianco, 1987 Australian National policy on languages Canberra: Australian Government Publishing Service

Latomaa, S. 1995 'Finland as a multilingual society: Yesterday, today and tomorrow' Sociolinguistica 9(1995): 113-135

Lewis, E. G. 1972 Multilingualism in the Soviet Union: Aspects of Language Policy and its implementation The Hague: Paris

Lyman, S. M. 1988 Ethnicity, pluralism and other implications for Africa and the world Maiduguri: University of Maiduguri Press

Mateene, K and Reconsideration of African Linguistic Policies

J. Kalemba (eds.) 1980 Kampala: OAU Interafrican Bureau of Languages (OAU/BIL) Publication 3

McKay, S. L and N. Sociolinguistics and Language Teaching

H. Hornberger (eds.) 1996 Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

Onyeneke, A. N. (ed.) 1986 Popular traditions of Nigeria: Proceedings of the workshop on "Methods of Transmission and Preservation of the Non-physical Cultural Heritage in Contemporary Nigerian Society" Lagos: Unesco and Macmillan Publishers

Ouedraogo, R. 2000 Language planning and language policies in some selected West Africa countries Burkina Faso: International Institute for Capacity Building in Africa

Prah, K. K. (ed) 1998 Between Distinction and Extinction: The Harmonization and Standardization of African Languages. Witwatersrand: Witwatersrand University Press

Price, G. (1984) The Languages of Britain London: Edward Arnold

Pugh, R. 1996 Effective Language in Health and Social Work. London: Chapman and Hall

Riagain, P. O. 1997 'Post modernity and Language policy: A need to refocus' Sociolinguistica 11 (1997): 16 - 62

Serageldin, I and I. Taboroff Culture and Development in Africa: Proceedings (eds.) 1992 of an International Conference held at World

Bank D. C. Environmentally Sustainable Development Proceedings Series I

Suberu, R. T. 1999 Ethnic minority conflicts and Governance in Nigeria Ibadan: Verity Press Ltd.

Tabouret-Keller, Vernacular Literacy Oxford: Clarendon Press Andree et al. (eds.) 1997

The Economist Dec. 22, 'The triumph of English: A world empire by other 2001 - Jan 4, 2002: 33-35

means'

Tosi, A. 2001 Language and Society in a Changing Italy Clevedon: Multilingual Matters Ltd.

Tschumi, R, 1978 Theory of Culture N. York: NOK Publishers

Young, C. 1976 The Politics of Cultural Pluralism Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press