



Report of working group 4
(Chair and rapporteur, Björn H. Jernudd)

Our World Congress on language policy implies that there are language problems and language issues that require management. Linguapax' involvement with language policy and our work group's concern with civil society and language policy obviously imply recognition of complex and organized expression of differential social, economic and political interests that have language policy consequences. Civil society actions interact with governance actions in language policy processes.

As someone who has been concerned with language planning and language management for some 35 years, I value the resurgence of interest in language planning and language policy processes. I thank work group 4 participants for putting up with me during this week of intense listening and discussion. I congratulate Linguapax on this Congress. Work group 4 wholeheartedly endorses Linguapax and its concern with language policy processes.

Work group 4 has discussed papers on a broad range of topics – from the opening paper on the role of NGOs in promoting minority languages, to detailed case studies of the work of particular voluntary associations in encouraging the use of particular previously suppressed languages in places as different as Estonia and Valencia and the Americas. We heard and discussed papers that contrasted ideologies of competition and solidarity, or sought ways to break speakers free from interpellation into freely using their own language in obtaining services from government agencies; we discussed how to make it possible for parents to make informed decisions about their children's languages of education. I invite you to revisit the program, to contact presenters by e-mail for copies of their papers. We look forward to reading all your contributions in a, we trust, soon-to-be-distributed proceedings.

Some highlights of what we transacted during the week will be reflected in our recommendations. Had we but had time to continue working together, a much larger proportion of questions that rose and experiences that were shared could have been so represented.

With this in mind I shall now represent as best I can what our group collectively expressed in the way of sharing, for purposes of this reporting off today. I have not had a chance to consult with my group after drafting this statement so it has to be considered preliminary. I shall have to take responsibility for shortcomings and misrepresentations.

We voiced some principles for NGOs as well as for all our work. They are:

- To work within an ideology of solidarity
- To work with moral and ethical awareness
- To promote diversity as a general value
- To respect and to enable self-respect for individual speakers of any language
- To advocate and enable access to multilingual education
- To take a systemic view
- To advocate access to mother-tongue education as a right
- To respect language equality and equity
- Do not dichotomize theory and practice
- To make spaces for ALL language expression, especially PERFORMANCES

Some recommendations are directed specifically to Linguapax, some less so. The Linguapax board is invited to consider our points.

A most important question had to be addressed first, namely, what do we mean by civil society, by civic organizations and by NGOs. The work group resolved – this is our first recommendation -- that the process of answering this important question would hold great value. We reflected that over the week we had met a most diverse group of people who work with shared purpose and with consequence for language use,

- Performing groups
- Soccer clubs – players practice the language!
- Parent teacher organizations
- Educator associations
- Place name study groups
- Labour unions

One way to preliminarily approach what are NGOs is the following:

There are groups within a society that

- 1) promote use of a language by people
- 2) lobby for better provisions for a language

And there are regional and international groups (across languages or across states) that

- 1) promote, seek and order knowledge about language groups and situations, and
- 2) bring people, ideas and examples together, to offer ideas to within-society groups in their particular contexts.

The two kinds of groups interact with each other, in both directions.

The regional and international NGOs also bring language concerns to the attention of actors at an international level (a role for Linguapax!)

Our second recommendation is that NGOs should help establish other NGOs.

We feel it is a matter of great importance that NGOs understand themselves and their places in language policy processes. Earlier work may help as a starting point:

- Jyotirindra Das Gupta: Language conflict and national development, Berkeley, Los Angeles, and London: University of California Press, 1970
- E. Annamalai, ed.: Language movements in India, Mysore: Central Institute of Indian Languages, 1979.

A contemporary work, soon to appear, is

- Birger Winsa, manuscript, on civil society and cultural production in the designated minority languages in northern Sweden.

The group discussed the search and ordering of knowledge by NGOs with the greatest concern. Work should serve to help groups make informed choices for action.

Therefore, our group strongly supports information gathering, information ordering and information flow to help groups make informed choices for action on language issues.

Our group recognizes the value of developing criteria for evaluating actions and outcomes to solve language problems and reacting to language issues. We recommend developing a database of actions and outcomes. The database would be constructed according to best available theories to explain who does what how to solve what particular kind of language or language-related problem, within particular constraints of time and place.

In particular, our group strongly supports south-south (in the ideological sense) cooperation, to mobilize experience and expertise wherever it can be found to work with the smaller and local language groups for the purpose of information sharing.

Our group recommends to NGOs to promote meetings between people-of-the-language with others, whether with language academics for exploring shared problems from each their perspective of analysis and practice, respectively, or with publics in performances and, simply, person-to-person.

NGOs should act as advocates for language groups of lesser power.

Our group strongly supports NGO networking.

We recommend to bring together people with shared problems and issues.

Our group recognizes that policies other than language policies have effects on language situations. Such policy interrelationships should be explored and, in particular, our group therefore draws attention to the value of networking with NGOs that represent other interests than language interests.

We recognize the value of exploring relationships between land, forests and the sea and continuity of language use, between property development, denial of habitat and displacement of peoples and language use; and recommend formation and dissemination of knowledge about these relationships.

As a particular kind of networking, we recommend coalition making between any and all interests that share a concern for consequences on languages from policies other than language policies, and from denial of habitats and displacements.

We recommend to inform the world of the value of traditional knowledge as expressed thru diverse languages in their particular settings of living.

We recommend to link biotechnology – broadly, ecologically produced – rights to intellectual property rights for the speakers of the languages through which such knowledge is expressed.

Our group recommends to NGOs to make spaces for popular and high art in the smaller and local languages in particular, and, in emulation of one of our principles, of performances.

Our group recommends finding ways – arguments, rallying cries, etc -- to influence the mindset of people everywhere to value linguistic diversity. Find a way to arouse people to save languages. Work with The Foundation for Endangered Languages (www.ogmios.org).

Our group recommends education by NGOs of other NGOs, on language issues and on the functioning and organization of NGOs in general.

Particular topics for knowledge generation (research) that were mentioned are:

To deepen understanding of the economics of language, in regard to language use as in regard to linguistic diversity

To explore how not all bilingual education programs are beneficial to vitality of language use

To explore by what other means than conventional education and literacy the use of languages can be (re) vitalized

To address dysfunctional effects of literacy if at the expense of oral practices

To explore the value added of cultural tourism in support of continued use of the smaller and threatened languages

To problematize the meaning of language planning, especially to make explicit how language planning models accommodate the interests of speakers of smaller and local languages and how language planning takes into account discourse practices of language users involved in language planning action.