



edited by

Hywel Coleman,  
Jamilya Gulyamova  
and Andrew Thomas

# **National Development, Education and Language in Central Asia and Beyond**



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and Language in Central Asia and Beyond**

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and Andrew Thomas

Edited proceedings of the 6th  
International Language and Development Conference:  
'Linguistic Challenges to National Development  
and International Co-operation'

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# FOREWORD



It gives me great pleasure to introduce these proceedings of the sixth International Conference on Language and Development, organised by the British Council in Tashkent, Uzbekistan in 2003. This event was the first to be held outside South East Asia. The series of conferences began in Bangkok, Thailand in 1993, followed by Indonesia in 1995, Malaysia in 1997, Vietnam in 1999 and Cambodia in 2001.

The choice of Central Asia was especially appropriate since language policy is a critical issue for the newly independent states of the region, where a complex ethnic and linguistic mix exists.

The languages of the ethnic majorities have been established as the official state languages of the countries in the region – namely Uzbek, Kazakh, Kyrgyz, Tajik and Turkmen - however the role of Russian remains an important national asset. As well as being the native language of many ethnic Russians living in the region, it is also the lingua franca for inter-ethnic and international communication and is for many the language of business across and beyond the borders of Central Asia.

There are also many other minority languages spoken by different ethnic communities in all of the countries within the region, for example Tajik and Karakalpak in Uzbekistan and the Pamiri languages of the Badakhshan province of Tajikistan.

English is still a relative newcomer to the region but demand is immense and still growing, for the access it provides to information and knowledge (through publications, the media and internet), to international communication and to employment opportunities.

All the foregoing has implications and challenges for language education across the Central Asian region, where the British Council is pleased to be contributing to the teaching and learning of English with our local partners in Ministries of Education and teaching institutions.

Other parts of the world - East and Central Europe, the South Caucasus, South Asia, South East Asia and sub-Saharan Africa - are also strongly represented in this volume, retaining the international dimension of the series. In 2005, it will move to sub-Saharan Africa, where the seventh conference is being organised by the British Council in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

I hope you will enjoy exploring the issues raised in this volume and that it will support your own work on the pivotal role that language plays in national and individual development.

**Neville McBain**  
**Director**  
**British Council**  
**Uzbekistan**

# Chapter 1: National Identity, Education and Language: An Introduction<sup>1</sup>

Hywel Coleman



## Background and organisation

This volume constitutes the edited proceedings of the 6th Language & Development Conference which was held in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, in October 2003. The conference, which took as its theme 'Linguistic Challenges to National Development & International Cooperation', was co-hosted by the Ministry of Higher & Specialised Secondary Education, Republic of Uzbekistan, and by the British Council Uzbekistan.

The goal of the event, according to the conference handbook, was to provide a forum for discussion of 'important issues related to language policy, language learning and language teaching in the context of the developing world, from the perspective of policy makers, language and literacy educators, development professionals and donors.'

Supporting this overall goal were three major themes, each of which had a number of sub-themes, as shown in Table 1.

The Tashkent conference was distinctive, compared to its five predecessors. It was the only Language & Development conference so far to take place outside Southeast Asia. The selection of Uzbekistan as the

**Table 1: Themes and sub-themes of Language & Development Conference, Tashkent, 2003**

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Language policy and its relationship to national development</b><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Defining the role of language in nation building</li><li>- The role of indigenous and international languages in education in developing countries</li><li>- Language planning, language choice and multilingualism</li><li>- Language education in social and economic development</li><li>- Globalisation and language in development</li><li>- The role of languages in conflict resolution and regional development</li></ul></li><li>• <b>The effective design, implementation and evaluation of language and literacy curricula in development contexts</b><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Teaching language in a resource poor environment</li></ul></li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Teacher education</li><li>- Using Information &amp; Communication Technologies in language teaching and learning</li><li>- Distance education and its relevance in developing countries</li><li>- Communicative language teaching and cultural differences</li><li>- Curriculum reform and textbook development</li><li>• <b>Development projects and related linguistic issues</b><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Return on investment from the donors' perspective</li><li>- Ensuring sustainability</li><li>- Gender issues in language and development</li><li>- Institutional capacity building</li><li>- Facilitating change</li></ul></li></ul>
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<sup>1</sup>I am grateful to Martin Seviour for inviting me to edit this volume. I am also grateful to Geoffrey Crewes and William Savage for comments on earlier versions of this chapter.

host for the conference was particularly apposite, sitting as it does at the heart of the Central Asian region. Since the collapse of the Soviet Union all the new nations of this region have had to face up to a host of rapidly emerging questions concerning language choice, language and national identity, the language rights of minority groups, and language education. All of these issues are explored in this volume.

In total 97 papers were presented during the conference; 43 of these were later written up and offered to the editors for possible inclusion in this volume. From this number, just fourteen have been selected to provide a representative cross-section of the issues which were explored during the conference.

Inevitably, however, as a result of the selection process, the focus of the book has shifted to some extent away from the original conference theme. For example, the book is organised around three strands:

- Language planning and the language situation in Central Asia
- Literacy and bilingual education
- Language teaching development projects.

These strands reflect but do not exactly parallel the three principal themes underlying the conference (Table 1 above). Furthermore, the volume title, *National Development, Education and Language in Central Asia and Beyond*, reflects its focus more precisely than the original conference title would have done.

Each of the previous Language & Development conferences has also generated published proceedings. The full list of conferences, with their hosting organisations and subsequent publications, is shown in Table 2.

**Table 2: Language & Development Conferences, 1993-2003**

<p>1<sup>st</sup> Language &amp; Development Conference, Bangkok, Thailand, 1993 Host: Asian Institute of Technology Theme: 'Issues in Language &amp; Development'</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kenny, B. &amp; Savage, W. (eds). 1997. <i>Language and Development: Teachers in a Changing World</i>. London: Longman.</li> </ul>	<p>3<sup>rd</sup> Language &amp; Development Conference, Langkawi, Malaysia, 1997 Host: National Institute of Public Administration Theme: 'Access, Empowerment, Opportunity'</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Abdullah, A., Crocker, T. et al. (eds). 1998. <i>Language in Development: Access, Empowerment, Opportunity</i>. Kuala Lumpur: National Institute of Public Administration (INTAN).</li> </ul>
<p>2<sup>nd</sup> Language &amp; Development Conference, Bali, Indonesia, 1995 Host: Indonesia Australia Language Foundation Theme: 'Language &amp; Communication in Development: Stakeholders' Perspectives'</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Crooks, T. and Crewes, G. (eds). 1995. <i>Language and Development</i>. Denpasar: Indonesia Australia Language Foundation.</li> <li>• Crooks, T. (ed). 1996. <i>ESP in Southeast Asia</i>. Denpasar: Indonesia Australia Language Foundation.</li> </ul>	<p>4<sup>th</sup> Language &amp; Development Conference, Hanoi, Vietnam, 1999 Host: Asian Institute of Technology Theme: 'Partnership &amp; Interaction in Language &amp; Development'</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shaw, J., Lubelska, D. &amp; Noullet, M. (eds). 2000. <i>Partnership and Interaction</i>. Bangkok: Asian Institute of Technology.</li> </ul>

5<sup>th</sup> Language & Development Conference, Phnom Penh, Cambodia, 2001

Host: IDP Education Australia

Theme: 'Defining the Role of Language in Development'

- LoBianco, J. (ed.). 2002. *Voices from Phnom Penh: Development and Language: Global Influences and Local Effects*. Melbourne: Language Australia.

6<sup>th</sup> Language & Development Conference, Tashkent, Uzbekistan, 2003

Co-hosts: British Council Uzbekistan and Ministry of Higher & Specialised Secondary Education of the Republic of Uzbekistan

Theme: 'Linguistic Challenges to National Development & International Cooperation'

- Coleman, H., Gulyamova, J. & Thomas, A. (eds). 2005. *National Development, Education and Language in Central Asia and Beyond*. Tashkent: British Council Uzbekistan.

The remainder of this chapter provides a brief description of each chapter within the three strands. Where appropriate, cross-cutting themes and issues are identified. The collection takes us on a journey through Central Asia – particularly Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan and Tajikistan – with occasional excursions to Southeast Asia, South Asia, Eastern Europe, Central Europe and various parts of Africa.

## Language planning and the language situation in Central Asia

The four chapters in the first strand in this volume provide a vivid picture of the language situation in two neighbouring Central Asian states, Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan. In rather different ways, the two countries are facing similar issues in developing their indigenous national languages and in working out how to resolve the relationship between the respective national language and Russian.

Our journey starts in Uzbekistan. Mahanbet Dzhusupov discusses the position of Russian in Uzbekistan (Chapter 2). Dzhusupov believes that Russian still has an important role to play in contemporary Uzbekistan and he is concerned that it should be granted official status as one of a number of 'national' languages, whilst recognising that Uzbek is the sole 'state' language. As the role of Russian in Uzbekistan changes and becomes clearer, so – he argues – the teaching of Russian in the country needs to be rethought.

Many of the issues raised by Dzhusupov in the context of Uzbekistan appear again in William Rivers' discussion of the language situation in Kazakhstan (Chapter 3). Rivers characterises contemporary independent Kazakhstan as a 'vital, energetic, diverse and evolving' nation and he argues that the language situation reflects these characteristics. Although Kazakh now has the status of 'state language' and 'language of national integration', at independence fewer than half of all schools taught the language and textbooks in Kazakh were almost unknown. Rivers' survey of undergraduate students' attitudes to languages revealed that many ethnic Russians claimed to be studying Kazakh, although they admitted to very limited proficiency. On the other hand, most Kazakh respondents claimed to be functionally bilingual in both Kazakh and Russian. Rivers cautiously predicts that Kazakh will experience a 'resurgence' but that Russian will continue to have a major role to play in the country. He concludes that the country's language policies are inevitably located within a wider framework of ethnic and social policies.

The relations between Kazakh and Russian are also the focus of Juldyz Smagulova's study (Chapter 4). Smagulova recognises that there has been competition and conflict between the two languages in Kazakhstan since Tsarist times. However, her meticulous analysis of a range of factors (including the education system, popular perceptions of the need for a state language policy, population mobility, the social importance of Russian and language choice patterns in inter-ethnic interactions) leads her to the



conclusion that the potential for language conflict in Kazakhstan at the moment is relatively weak. Nevertheless, in a context in which so many variables are at play and where there are delicate balances between some of them, Smagulova argues that it would be unwise to make any predictions regarding future developments.

Gayrat Shoumarov and Abbas Iriskulov (Chapter 5) bring the first strand of the volume to a close with their proposal for an analytical framework which can be used to generate a sociolinguistic typology of languages. Their framework has six components which between them produce a precise picture of how widely used a language is, the extent to which it has been standardised, its legal status, its role in religious and educational affairs, and the other functions which it plays in society. The typology is illustrated throughout with reference to Uzbek in the context of contemporary Uzbekistan, thus linking back to many of the observations made by Dzhusupov in Chapter 2.

The uncertainty surrounding the relationship between Uzbek and Russian and between Kazakh and Russian, therefore, is the main focus of the first strand. However, it is also noticeable that three of these four chapters mention English as a language which – though still playing a relatively small role in Central Asia – is perceived as a growing force to be reckoned with. It is described as being associated with western culture which has ‘ubiquitous attraction’ for young people and as such could lead to Russian disappearing from schools altogether (Dzhusupov, Chapter 2), as offering a ‘formidable challenge’ to Kazakh (Rivers, Chapter 3) and as ‘competing’ with Uzbek (Shoumarov & Iriskulov, Chapter 5). This concern with the growing influence of English – although not a core issue for any of the contributors to this strand – provides a direct link forward to and a counterweight to the discussions of language teaching development projects in the third strand of the volume (Chapters 9 to 15).

From the first strand, then, we can conclude that in both the countries discussed here, and almost certainly in the other nations of Central Asia as well, the current language situation is fluid. Predictions about future developments can be made only cautiously, if at all.

## Literacy and bilingual education

The second strand of the collection focuses on issues of literacy and bilingual education. We stay in Central Asia for the first contribution to this discussion, with Stephen Bahry’s examination of bilingual education in the region of Badakhshan, Tajikistan (Chapter 6). Like most of Tajikistan, Badakhshan suffers from poor infrastructure and a severely under-resourced education system. Unlike the rest of the country, however, the Pamiri people of Badakhshan speak their own languages, not the national language Tajik. Children in this province have traditionally been educated in a second language, either Russian or Tajik. In other parts of the world it has been demonstrated that minority language children are less likely to be able to complete their secondary education. Bahry hypothesises that the principal cause of this phenomenon is that, compared to their peers, these children are less proficient in the language which is used as the medium of instruction. He argues that bilingual education, with or without the support of special second language instruction, can help minority language children overcome the disadvantage which they face. But, examining the situation in Badakhshan, Bahry finds evidence that children are receiving little of the support that they require, either in becoming literate in their first language or in learning Tajik as a Second Language.

In Chapter 7, for the first time, we leave Central Asia. Carol Benson takes us to Africa, where the use of the languages of former colonial powers as the languages of instruction in schools contributes to high repetition and dropout rates. Benson focuses on three experiments in the use of the mother tongue as the medium of instruction, in Guinea-Bissau, Mozambique and Niger. She is particularly concerned that successful small-scale experiments in use of the mother tongue rarely appear to influence national policy. In the three cases which she describes, the experiments achieved success (to different degrees) and were

popular with parents, but in each country there was no subsequent decision to introduce bilingual education nationally. Benson suggests that the failure of these experiments to have an impact on national policy can be attributed to a number of factors. One of these is the discourse gap between the language in which education project evaluations are written and the language which is needed in order to communicate with significant stakeholders. She concludes with a call to researchers to consider how they disseminate their findings and to be 'socially as well as academically responsible.'

In the third contribution to the strand on literacy and bilingual education, we stay in Africa. John Clegg's hard-hitting analysis of English-medium education in sub-Saharan Africa (Chapter 8) complements Benson's work (Chapter 7) in Francophone and Lusophone contexts elsewhere in the continent. Clegg begins by characterising education in the countries on which he is focusing as having high dropout rates, poor matriculation levels and poor results. Like Benson, he attributes these disappointing features, at least in part, to the difficulties which both teachers and learners have in using a European language as the medium for teaching and learning. He identifies twelve specific language-related problems which learners may encounter when English is the school language, and then discusses ten consequences of linguistic disadvantage. After making a number of recommendations (including a call for the introduction of bilingual schooling), Clegg demands an urgent debate on linguistic disadvantage in schools in Africa.

Chapters 6, 7 and 8, taken together, constitute a powerful critique of the failure to provide mother-tongue – or, at least, bilingual – education for children in contexts as far apart as Tajikistan, Guinea-Bissau, Mozambique, Niger and South Africa. The consistency of the arguments presented by Bahry, Benson and Clegg is extremely persuasive.

## Language teaching development projects

The third strand in this book consists of six chapters which examine aspects of language teaching development projects, plus one more chapter which focuses on a rural development project in which language plays a significant role. Three chapters (Woods, Chapter 9; Duff & Dickens, Chapter 14; Khan & Lubelska, Chapter 15) are concerned primarily or to a considerable extent with Central Asian contexts, whilst two chapters look at situations in countries elsewhere in the world which have also been directly affected by the collapse of communism (Czech Republic in Coleman & Šigutová, Chapter 11 and Azerbaijan in Padwad, Mammadova & Tin, Chapter 12). Vietnam provides the geographical context for the sixth language teaching development project (Kennett, Chapter 10). Meanwhile, Copley, Haylor and Savage describe a set of rural development projects in South and Southeast Asia in Chapter 13.

English is the language with which most of these projects are concerned, but other languages also make an appearance, including Bangla, Hindi, Indonesian, Oriya and Vietnamese (Copley, Haylor & Savage, Chapter 13) and Russian and Uzbek (Khan & Lubelska, Chapter 15).

The strand opens with Paul Woods' entertaining yet revealing analysis of the fundamental differences between British and American approaches to the design of military English projects (Chapter 9). Woods argues that American projects have as one of their objectives the 'success of US arms sales' whereas British projects focus on the facilitation of collaboration between the armed forces of Central Europe, Eastern Europe and Central Asia. American military language development projects are extremely expensive and pay no attention to long-term sustainability. British projects, on the other hand, cost only about one tenth of what the Americans spend, but detailed attention is paid to ensuring their sustainability after external funding comes to an end. Woods concludes that American projects are monolithic and technology driven, unlike British projects which are context-sensitive and needs driven.

Questions about project design are also raised by Psyche Kennett in her discussion of the benefits of prescriptivism in teacher development projects (Chapter 10). In her typically provocative way, Kennett

draws on her experience of an in-service teacher training project in Vietnam to lay out a dichotomy between what she calls 'reflective' and 'prescriptive' approaches to teacher development. She argues that the most effective way of bringing about change is to adopt a prescriptive approach in the initial stages of a project by providing teachers with well tried techniques which they can employ immediately. She believes that reflection is something which teachers will come to do spontaneously, given time. However, the limited timeframe of most language development projects means that the reflective stage is rarely captured in project impact studies. Incidentally, the limited duration of development projects is also criticised by Duff and Dickens (Chapter 14), whilst Benson (Chapter 7) bemoans the 'culture of pilot projects'.

The design of language development projects continues to be scrutinised in the contribution by Hywel Coleman and Marta Šigutová (Chapter 11). Using their experience of undertaking a qualitative retrospective evaluation of a teacher trainer development project in the Czech Republic, Coleman and Šigutová identify project sustainability as a particularly problematic issue. Part of the difficulty with this concept is its definition, since the term is widely used but with very different meanings. But partly, also, sustainability is difficult to build into projects at the design stage when understanding of the project environment is still limited. There are also difficulties associated with using sustainability as a component in measuring project success.

The question of sustainability is raised, explicitly or otherwise, in many of the chapters in this volume. Some contributors adopt a favourable and optimistic view of the concept, whilst others express doubts about its usefulness and feasibility. As we have noted already, Woods (Chapter 9) suggests that a concern with sustainability is a positive characteristic of the design of British language development projects. Similarly, Padwad, Mammadova and Tin (Chapter 12) claim that involving teachers at all stages in teacher development projects is an important element in achieving sustainability. On the other hand, no long term sustainability was achieved by any of the bilingual education projects discussed in the second strand of this volume (Bahry in Chapter 6, Benson in Chapter 7 and Clegg in Chapter 8). Duff and Dickens in Chapter 14, finally, are highly critical of the assumption underlying many education development projects that 'short-term investment' can lead to 'long-term results': 'short-term sustainable projects are almost always nonsense,' they argue.

Chapter 12, by Amol Padwad, Ragsama Mammadova and Tan Bee Tin, adopts the novel approach of taking three unrelated teaching materials development projects in different countries. It shows how the involvement of teachers in each case has been both possible and fruitful. The authors adopt Azerbaijan, India and Thailand as the contexts for their discussion. After their discovery that similar lessons can be learned from each of the case studies, they conclude that more extensive contact between language education development projects in different parts of the world may enable other important lessons to be learnt and disseminated.

Facilitating communication is also the focus of the contribution by Kath Copley, Graham Haylor and William Savage (Chapter 13). Their chapter describes the work of STREAM, an initiative which aims to provide support to communities in the management of aquatic resources. It is active in eleven countries in South and Southeast Asia. The activities carried out by STREAM are therefore distinctively different from those described in the other chapters in this strand. Nevertheless, they have a central concern with communication between stakeholders and with the role of language in successful communication. Copley, Haylor and Savage identify eight important lessons which they and their colleagues have learned. One of these is that the development of trusting and equitable relationships among stakeholders takes time. This confirms one of the conclusions reached by Duff and Dickens (Chapter 14), that – for worthwhile results to be achieved – some education development projects should be funded for as long as ten years.

With Chris Duff and Mark Dickens we return to Central Asia in Chapter 14. Drawing on many years of experience in small-scale education development projects in the Ferghana Valley in Uzbekistan, Duff and

Dickens argue that far more attention needs to be given to the reality of the contexts in which projects are located. In doing so, they question much of the orthodoxy of conventional project planning and so, in this respect, they have something in common with Kennett's questioning (Chapter 10) of one of the currently dominant tenets in teacher development.

We end our journey, as we began it, in Uzbekistan. The final contribution to this strand and to the volume as a whole is made by Svetlana Khan and Diana Lubelska (Chapter 15). Their discussion is based on an initially problematic experience of a textbook writing project in Uzbekistan. They found that project participants who had Uzbek, Russian and English as their first languages were failing to communicate successfully with each other because of inappropriate assumptions about the meaning of project terminology or because there is no equivalent for certain core concepts in one or more of the languages. The chapter provides seven recommendations for avoiding such misunderstandings, one of which is that stakeholders at 'all levels' should be involved in discussions. This of course is a recommendation shared with Padwad, Mammadova and Tin (Chapter 12) and Copley, Haylor and Savage (Chapter 13), but it also resonates with Benson's identification of the 'discourse gap' (Chapter 7) as a partial explanation for the long-term unsustainability of bilingual education projects.

## Conclusion

Our journey is now complete. As we travel through Central Asia and Eastern and Central Europe, we can see evidence everywhere we go of the linguistic shockwaves created by the collapse of the Soviet Union. Indigenous languages are endeavouring to adapt themselves to new roles in government and education. The new national languages and Russian are still seeking an equilibrium in their relationships. And, in some cases, minority languages within newly independent states are yet to be given any significant role at all.

English, as the global language, has already entered the equation in Central Europe and is starting to do so in Central Asia. This is being greeted with enthusiasm by some English language teaching specialists but with a certain degree of caution by other commentators.



## **Strand 1:**

Language  
planning and  
the language  
situation in  
Central Asia

# Chapter 2: The Social Functions and Status of Language in Multilingual Contexts

Mahanbet Dzhusupov



## Introduction

This chapter examines the current state of language policy in Uzbekistan with particular reference to the status of Russian. Uzbekistan has a state language as well as many minority and foreign languages. However, the social functions of these different languages vary and they each have a different official status. Thus Uzbek, the state language, is the language for all spheres of society. There are two approaches to determining the international or intra-national status of a language. One approach is sociolinguistic, the other is administrative-geographic. Conventionally, it is the administrative and geographic approach which has dominated; this has led to Russian, for example, being declared a foreign language in Uzbekistan. The social functions of Russian, though, are much wider and deeper than those of a foreign language. For instance, Russian is a compulsory subject on the official school curriculum and one of the languages of instruction in the higher education system (rather than an optional subject as is usually the case with foreign languages). Hence, Russian should be given the status of a national language in Uzbekistan.

## Social and linguistic change in Uzbekistan

Social change always has an impact on language to some extent. In some cases a new sociolinguistic situation turns out to be so extensive that it covers the territory of a number of different states. Thus, for example, the social statuses and the roles of Russian and other languages outside Russia, particularly in the countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), are highly varied. This meant that after the disintegration of the USSR (or, depending on one's point of view, after the smooth transformation of the USSR into the CIS), new patterns of expectations and perceptions arose. On the one hand, Russian speakers were increasingly exposed to language phenomena with which they had previously been unfamiliar, whilst on the other hand the Turkic-speaking population of Central Asia and Kazakhstan increasingly expressed the desire to hear their native languages rather than Russian everywhere (including in the media). These new sociolinguistic situations require detailed research since, as recently as fifteen to twenty years ago, such problems were not so acute as they are today. In these new sociolinguistic contexts, among the most urgent issues to be faced are questions about the legal and educational status of the various languages (Dzhusupov 2002a, 2002b, 2003; Dzhusupov & Avazbaev 1991). In bilingual and multilingual societies, finding solutions to these problems demands very specific sociolinguistic understanding and social sensitivity.

According to Bashatova (2002:8):

... for over eleven years, since Uzbek was legalised as the State language by the Law on the State Language of the Republic of Uzbekistan, Russian has become an official language.

We fully agree with the first part of this statement: Uzbek is undoubtedly the state language of the Republic of Uzbekistan. But why does the author assert that Russian is an official language of the Republic? In fact neither Uzbek nor Russian has the status of an 'official' language. The status of languages is determined by the Constitution (Republic of Uzbekistan 1992) and the Law on the State Language (Republic of Uzbekistan 1995); neither of these legislative documents grants official language status to Russian.

In the same article the author continues (Bashatova 2002:8):

... gifted students ... have good language skills ..., [they] speak Russian fluently, and for some of them Russian is the second native language.

The argument that Russian is the 'second native language' derives from the ideology of an earlier era. It was Sh.R.Rashidov, the former First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Uzbekistan, who first used the expression 'Russian is the second native language'. Party officials and scholars from Moscow liked both the concept and the way in which it was expressed very much and in consequence the concept was then developed and popularised. The concept found its way into state documents and academic programmes in Russian for schools and higher education institutions where languages other than Russian were used as the medium of instruction. The development of teaching techniques for 'Russian as a second native language' started. Then sociolinguistic surveys began to include the question, 'Do you consider Russian to be your second native language?'

Thus it was that the ideology created an approach to language training in general and Russian in particular. But in essence it was almost completely pseudo-scientific. We know that almost everyone has only one 'genetic' native language (except in mixed marriages where two languages are used). In cases where an individual does not have full command of his or her genetic native language (for social or other reasons), we still cannot say that the language which he or she has mastered is the 'second native language'. Rather, it is a second language that is carrying out the communicative functions of the genetically native language, i.e. the first language. It is not the fault of the individual if, at a very young age, he or she happened to find himself or herself in a foreign speech environment, with the sociolinguistic conditions of a foreign language.

## Need for principled approaches to language policy

The situation outlined above, combined with the need to solve other problems relating to the roles of languages in general (and Russian in particular) in the Republic of Uzbekistan, demand that we have an understanding of sociolinguistics. At the same time, it is also necessary that we should have an understanding of relevant legislation in Uzbekistan. We need to be able to see how sociolinguistic ideas are reflected in official documents such as the Constitution and the Law on the State Language.

In this chapter we are of course adopting a systematic and principled sociolinguistic approach. Scientific laws apply equally to all people and in every context. Thus two multiplied by two makes four not only for a Kazakh, but also for a Russian, a Jew, an Englishman and for everyone else. Similarly, gravity attracts everything with the same force; it cannot attract a Kazakh more strongly than a Jew, or a Russian more weakly than an American, or vice versa. We are all equal before the laws of science. Science is above the



individual and above nationality. But, despite all of this, official documents are at times drafted without consideration of the laws of science.

When the objective nature of science is not recognised, or when it is ignored, whether deliberately or otherwise, some serious social, humanitarian, ideological, and even legal consequences are felt. There may even be unexpected or undesirable implications. An example can be seen in the fact that the Constitution of the former USSR stated that the languages of all of its peoples had equal rights. But in 1975 the Council of Ministers of the USSR issued a resolution stating that the Higher Attestation Commission or HAC<sup>2</sup> should admit dissertations, abstracts and accompanying documents only in Russian. Automatically, this resolution gave rise to conditions which were counter to the provisions of the article in the Constitution about the equal rights of all languages. Therefore, for example, Kazakh, Uzbek and other languages were not given the opportunity of functioning equally in the field of science. This meant that the rights and functions of languages other than Russian were being denied, whilst the development of scientific genres in these languages was hindered. This accounts for the resentment against what was perceived to be 'Russification' and the infringement of the rights of the non-Russian population of the USSR. This resentment in itself was just one of the circumstances that led ultimately to the disintegration of the USSR. From this one case alone, we can see how important it is for official bodies to develop a well-informed and sensitive policy on language use, so that the rights of peoples and their languages are not infringed.

## Functions of languages

The primary function which a nation gives to its language is as the means of communication for the people concerned. Thus Uzbek is the means of communication of the Uzbek people, Russian is the means of communication of the Russian people and so on. In addition, a language can have secondary social functions depending on many factors (geographical, political, ideological, military, diplomatic and others).

One of these secondary or 'acquired' functions of language (one which in future may become a top priority) is that of interethnic communication. But this function may not be constant: it may be significant or not, it may disappear and then at a later time it may be revived. This function of being the means of communication between nationalities or ethnic groups is to some extent inherent in any language, but it fluctuates over time if it does not have clear legal status. For instance, in the 19th century French served as a means of international communication for the Russian intelligentsia and gentry. Meanwhile, in the 20th century Russian carried out this function throughout the Soviet Union. The language of international communication can change at any moment. Let us imagine a situation at a bus stop in Tashkent or in Shymkent: a Kazakh, an Uzbek, a Tatar and a Russian are waiting for a bus and are talking to each other in Russian, Kazakh and Uzbek. Moreover, they all understand each other. This means that the language of inter-ethnic or inter-nationality communication can switch frequently in the space of a few minutes. Another example can be found during a scientific conference in Tashkent or in Almaty, where participants are of different nationalities or ethnicities and where presentations are made in Russian, Uzbek or Kazakh. In this way, several different languages are fulfilling the function of the language of inter-nationality or inter-ethnic communication during a period of two or three hours. Hence, any language is able to perform the function of being the means of communication between ethnic groups and between different nationalities, depending on the sociolinguistic situation. In other words, this is a function which is situation-dependent and thus not constant.

At the present time the state language in Uzbekistan (and elsewhere) is rapidly taking on this inter-ethnic function. Yet as recently as ten years ago this role was being played in over 90% of cases by Russian. But it should be noted that expansion of the inter-nationality communication role of Uzbek and Kazakh (within the limits of their respective republics) does not mean that the area in which Russian is also playing this role is being reduced. At the moment we can say that these languages have parallel (though not always

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<sup>2</sup>The Higher Attestation Commission was the state body which conferred the higher degrees of Candidate of Science and Doctor of Science as well as scientific titles (Professor).



equivalent) roles in inter-nationality or inter-ethnic communication. Therefore, it can be concluded that being a language of inter-nationality communication is indeed open to change. Choosing which language to use for this purpose is a personal matter for the individual; it depends on the sociolinguistic situation.

Now from the foregoing we should be able to conclude that any statement in an official document (such as a national constitution or a law on state languages) which specifies which language is to be used for communication between nationalities or ethnic groups is by definition infringing an individual's constitutional rights. This is because the individual is being deprived of the right to choose for himself or herself which language to use in interacting with representatives of other nationalities. Why should a Kazakh have to use Russian or English when speaking to a Kyrgyz?

In fact, the first drafts of the Law on the State Language of the Republic of Uzbekistan and the Law on Languages in the Republic of Kazakhstan both made such statements. Fortunately, however, such declarations were absent from the final versions of these laws; from the point of view of the rights of the individual citizen and from the perspective of sociolinguistic reality, this is as it should be.

## Legal status of languages in Uzbekistan

The state should have a language or languages with which it can communicate with its people: this goes without saying. The language (or languages) which state bodies use to communicate with the public is often determined by legislation which deals specifically with this matter. Examples include cases where one specific state language is decreed, such as Uzbekistan's Law on the State Language (Republic of Uzbekistan 1995). Other examples – including the Law on Languages of Kazakhstan - include nations where the legislation discusses more than one language (see Republic of Kazakhstan 2001). It is also possible for a language to carry out the function of a state language *de facto* without explicit legislation to that effect. For instance, there was no Law on the State Language in the former USSR, although Russian was in effect playing this role.

According to Article 4 of the Constitution of Uzbekistan (Republic of Uzbekistan 1992:9):

... Uzbek shall be the state language of the Republic of Uzbekistan.  
The Republic of Uzbekistan shall ensure a respectful attitude towards the  
languages, customs and traditions of the nations and peoples living in its  
territory and create conditions for their development.

The Law on the State Language of the Republic of Uzbekistan adopted a new wording in 1995 (Republic of Uzbekistan 1995). In articles dealing with the state language and the languages of the other peoples of the Republic, the Law decrees that Uzbek shall be the state language of the Republic (article 1); that the languages of the other peoples and nations in the Republic shall be ensured a respectful attitude and conditions for their development (article 4); that a defendant in a court case shall have the rights to speak and to have access to materials concerning the case in his or her native language, whilst the trial procedure itself can be conducted either in the state language or in the language used by the majority of the population living in the given territory (article 11); that in the offices of notaries public, at the request of members of the public, texts of documents can be formulated in the state language, in Russian, or – where appropriate conditions apply - in other languages too (article 12). Article 9 states that all government organisations will use the state language in transacting their day to day business and that - depending on prevailing conditions and needs - translation into other languages shall be provided. The same article declares that both the state language and another language selected by participants shall be the working languages of international conferences held in the Republic.

Article 10 of the Law states that all businesses, organisations and public associations are to use the state language in carrying out their routine work, in undertaking statistical surveys and so on. However, if the majority of employees or members of an organisation do not master Uzbek, then the use of other languages is permitted alongside the state language.

Therefore it can be seen that Uzbek is the state language of the Republic of Uzbekistan, and no other language can be equated with it because of the prerogative which it is given in matters of law and official business. In other social activities such as science, the media, the arts and everyday life, there are no restrictions on which languages may be used. But in legal and official business the non-state languages can be used only as secondary ones, e.g. for translating official documents from Uzbek so that they can be understood and used by the non-Uzbek speaking groups in society.

Thus, this analysis of the law relating to language in Uzbekistan allows us to conclude that in fact Russian is one of the national languages of the Republic. This is confirmed by the provision of the Higher Attestation Commission of the Republic of Uzbekistan that Russian is given the reference code 10.02.02, i.e. 'national languages (Russian)'<sup>3</sup>. The specific definition given in brackets can vary, for example 'national languages (Kazakh)', 'national languages (Tajik)' and so on.

Nevertheless, some scholars and educationists still tend to give Russian the status of a foreign language. For this reason Russian language teaching methodology is frequently considered from the same point of view as English or German language teaching methodology.

## Status of Russian internationally

At the present time, the status of Russian varies from one country to another. It is:

1. the state language in the Russian Federation<sup>4</sup>
2. the second state language in the Republic of Kyrgyzstan
3. an official language in the Republic of Kazakhstan
4. one of the national languages in the Republic of Uzbekistan
5. a foreign language in the USA, Japan, etc.

Reflecting the range of functions which it plays in different countries and regions, Russian therefore has at least five different statuses (both official and de facto). Other languages in the Commonwealth of Independent States, as a rule, have at most only two or three official statuses, as the state language, as an official foreign language and as one of the national languages.

In the education systems of different states (except for Russia itself) Russian also has different roles depending on its official status, the frequency with which it is used, education traditions, and the level of linguistic and educational development in a particular country. For example, in the republics of Central Asia, Russian is studied as a non-native language, as a native language and as a foreign language (for the citizens of foreign countries). In other parts of the world, meanwhile, Russian is studied as the first foreign language, as the second or third foreign language, and so on.

Within the education systems of Central Asia, Russian is a compulsory subject in schools and higher education institutions. However, as noted earlier, Russian is sometimes referred to in documents hand in hand with foreign languages such as English and German. For example, provision regarding the advanced training of teachers of foreign languages of higher education and secondary specialised education institutions in the Republic of Uzbekistan suggests that specialists in foreign languages and specialists in Russian should be retrained on the basis of the same foreign language curriculum. Russian is not treated as a native or near-native language. Clearly, this does not reflect the reality of the situation; we need only compare the level of linguistic research carried out by Russian teachers with that undertaken by teachers of English, German, and other foreign languages, to see how distinctive the role of Russian is.

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<sup>3</sup> The Higher Attestation Commissions of the Republic of Uzbekistan and the other former Soviet republics have a common coding system for academic fields. Thus 10.02.02 is the code for 'National languages', 10.02.04 is the code for 'Germanic languages', 10.02.19 is the code for 'General linguistics, sociolinguistics, psycholinguistics'. The coding system covers all academic fields.

<sup>4</sup> The Law on the State Language has not yet been adopted but a draft law is ready and is awaiting approval by the Duma.

## Approaches to determining language status

The status of a foreign language is usually determined using one of two approaches. The first of these approaches considers administrative and geographical aspects of the language whilst the second considers the sociolinguistic functions of the language.

From the point of view of administration and geography, English, German, Russian, Kazakh, Kyrgyz and Tajik can all be treated as foreign languages in Uzbekistan because geographically and administratively they serve as state languages in other states (UK, Germany, Russian Federation, etc). The logic of this administrative or 'statehood' approach does not allow any dissent: these languages are ultimately foreign languages. Yet in reality, considering the number of functions played by these languages, they are clearly not all of the same status. Thus, for example, Russian in the territory of Uzbekistan is fully functioning in four of the basic spheres of individual and communal activity, namely everyday life and informal relations between people; the mass media; the arts; and science.

As we noted earlier, in the fields of legislation and government bureaucracy the role of Russian – like that of other national languages such as Kazakh and Tajik - is strictly limited as these are the fields where priority is given to the state language. Nevertheless, the use of Russian in these fields is much wider and deeper than that of any of the other national languages in Uzbekistan. Furthermore, it is quite possible to learn Russian in bilingual situations in Uzbekistan without having to take any special language training. But English, German and other such languages in Uzbekistan - as well as in other member countries of the CIS - can be learned only through special language instruction. These languages are used only in joint venture companies, factories, higher education institutions and the like. Therefore, it is impossible to put them on a par with Russian.

Thus, in contemporary Uzbekistan, from the sociolinguistic point of view, considering the functions which these languages have, Russian - as well as Kazakh, Tajik, Kyrgyz and some other languages - cannot be considered as a foreign language. This makes Russian dissimilar to English, German and others.

In sociolinguistic research, the most reliable results will be gained from studies which begin by looking at the functions which a language actually plays, rather than by considering its geographical and administrative status. A functional approach will precisely differentiate foreign and national (not-state) languages within the Republic and throughout the region at large.

## Appropriate methodology for teaching Russian

In the field of education, since Russian in the context of Uzbekistan cannot be defined as a 'foreign' language, it is inappropriate to apply the methodology of Russian as a foreign language. However, it may be possible to make use of some techniques borrowed from Russian as a foreign language teaching methodology, but in combination with the traditional methods of teaching Russian as a non-native language. (In Kazakhstan, unlike Uzbekistan, few questions regarding an appropriate methodology for teaching Russian have been raised.)

The staff of the A.S.Pushkin State Institute of the Russian Language (GIRYa) in Moscow and those working in many other higher education and research institutions throughout the CIS and abroad are currently developing and popularising methodologies for teaching Russian as a foreign language. But to a large extent these methodological developments and concepts derive from work being carried out in the A.S.Pushkin GIRYa.

After the break up of the USSR and the closure of NIIPRYaNSh<sup>5</sup> there was less demand for new teaching techniques for Russian as a non-native language. This happened because a) the number of schools where

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<sup>5</sup> Scientific Research Institute for Teaching Russian in National Schools. The institute, which was based in Moscow, was closed after the break-up of the USSR.

the medium of instruction was a language other than Russian was much smaller than the number of schools where Russian was the medium; b) from a financial point of view, teaching Russian as a non-native language was less attractive than teaching it as a foreign language since foreigners coming from abroad to study Russian are generally very prosperous; and c) education and research centres dealing with the teaching of Russian as a non-native language remained and continued to be fully functional in the CIS countries, so there was rarely any need for them to ask for assistance from institutions and experts in Russia.

This 'lull' has inadvertently given some applied linguists and Russian language teaching specialists in Russia the impression that there have been no new developments in Russian language teaching in the other member states of the CIS. They have concluded, incorrectly, that it is now necessary to introduce the teaching of Russian as a foreign language in the other CIS states simply because these states are now independent and because Russian is not their state language.

But such an approach to the teaching of Russian in the CIS countries apart from Russia (particularly in the republics of Central Asia) does not reflect the reality of the situation. In our view, Russian language teaching in the CIS member states should have at least four functions:

1) The teaching of Russian as a non-native language, since for the overwhelming majority of non-Russian people in the other CIS countries, Russian is one means of communication available to them. For this reason the mental image of Russian as a 'foreign' language does not exist in the consciousness of most of the non-Russian population in Central Asia. However, people in these countries do perceive Russian to be a 'non-native' language. Teaching Russian in this way, as a non-native language, is acceptable in the majority of schools and higher education institutions which use Uzbek, Kazakh and other such languages as the media of instruction.<sup>6</sup>

2) The teaching of Russian as a native language, since this is completely acceptable for those schools and higher education institutions in the CIS countries in which the medium of instruction is Russian.<sup>7</sup>

3) The teaching of Russian based on a synthesis of the principles, concepts, categories and content derived from the teaching of Russian as a non-native language and Russian as a foreign language. We can think of this as a hybrid methodology. The need for such a methodology is urgent and beyond doubt. For instance, compared with the Khorezm area of Uzbekistan, Russian is used with much higher frequency in Tashkent, the capital. In Khorezm, the percentage of people who know Russian is not high (and especially so among secondary school pupils), but then the percentage of ethnic Russians and Russian speakers is not very high there either. In our opinion, the proposed hybrid methodology will be most effective in regions like this.

4) The teaching of Russian as a foreign language. This is needed for groups of foreigners, for example in language centres, university departments of Russian, international schools, and so on. At present there are many foreigners studying in the CIS countries; they study Russian first and then enter various higher education institutions. Language centres and departments of Russian as a foreign language have already been established in Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and elsewhere to help people like this.<sup>8</sup>

Some of the techniques of teaching Russian as a foreign language can be used with non-foreigners, but only at the very initial stage of training, if the trainees do not know Russian at all and if there is a necessity for them to acquire absolutely basic oral proficiency in Russian. But, beyond the initial stage, their language training should make use of the techniques of teaching Russian as a non-native language.

<sup>6</sup> An example of a technique appropriate for the teaching of Russian as a 'non-native language' is the use of comparison between Russian and the learners' native language. Translation into and out of Russian can be used, even at the beginning stages.

<sup>7</sup> When teaching Russian as a native language there is no need to start by teaching the rules of pronunciation.

<sup>8</sup> The process of teaching Russian as a foreign language starts with learning material by heart.

Hence, we can see that it is necessary for Russian language education to develop differentiated approaches which are sensitive to the frequency with which Russian is used in a particular region, how well people master Russian in that region, and their specific linguistic and applied linguistic traditions. We think that this problem – the need to develop differentiated techniques for teaching Russian outside Russia - is quite solvable. And the A.S.Pushkin GIRYa can serve as the central research establishment where this differentiated approach can be developed.

From the foregoing we can conclude that, if Russian is to be taught as a foreign language whether in Uzbekistan or in any other Central Asian state, it should be given the same status as English, French, German, Arabic and so on, to become an optional subject for learners. However, in the context of globalisation and the almost ubiquitous attraction of western culture and ways of thinking, the overwhelming majority of students will choose English. Relatively very few learners will choose Russian, and in the long term Russian will disappear from the timetables of schools where Uzbek and Kazakh are compulsory subjects.

However, to permit such a situation to arise would be unthinkable for the secondary and higher education systems in Central Asia and elsewhere. This is because in the post-Soviet world Russian serves as the main intermediary language, building bridges between cultures, bridges for science and education. And that is why Russian should continue to be a compulsory subject in secondary and higher education in Uzbekistan and the other CIS countries. Furthermore, Russian must be taught as a non-native rather than a foreign language.

## Conclusions

Twelve conclusions can be drawn from this discussion.

1. State, national and foreign languages are functioning in the Republic of Uzbekistan and in the other CIS countries. That is why Uzbekistan and indeed the entire CIS can be said to constitute a multilingual territory.
2. Sociolinguistic differentiation in the statuses of the various languages used in Uzbekistan can be observed from the fact that these languages do not all have the same functions in the community.
3. The status of a foreign language can be determined using two approaches: the administrative-geographical and the functional-sociolinguistic. An approach which takes into account the range of social functions which a language plays has proved to be more objective and useful as a descriptive tool.
4. Russian in the Republic of Uzbekistan is not a foreign language. It is one of the national languages of Uzbekistan as it is used actively in four areas of society: everyday life, science, the media and the arts. In the fifth area – in legislative and official matters – Russian is used as an intermediary language or as a second language.
5. In the modern world Russian carries out a wide range of social functions. For example, from one state to another its legal status may vary as follows:
  - a) state language
  - b) second state language
  - c) official language
  - d) one national language among others
  - e) foreign language.
6. Over the last fifteen years Russian language teaching has undergone marked changes. It must now adopt a diversity of approaches, depending on the sociolinguistic, administrative and geographical conditions of the contexts in which it is taking place. These approaches include:
  - a) Russian as a native language
  - b) Russian as a non-native language
  - c) Russian as a foreign language

d) Russian language teaching as a synthesis of the rules, concepts and principles derived from the teaching of Russian as a non-native language and from Russian as a foreign language, in other words a hybrid approach.

Consequently, Russian language teaching must develop approaches which are regionally and nationally appropriate, taking into consideration the roles which Russian plays locally, the local education law and other aspects of the context.

7. The role of Russian also varies from one country's education system to another. For example, it may be studied:

- a) as a native language
- b) as a non-native language
- c) as a foreign language
- d) as a second or third foreign language.

8. For the most part, Russian in the Republic of Uzbekistan and in the other CIS states should be taught as a non-native language.

9. At the moment, there is no single language of international communication. Potentially, any language could play this role, although the frequency with which each language is used in international communication varies considerably.

10. A language's role as a medium of international communication is a secondary one. In other words, this is an acquired function, since the primary function of language is as a means of communication among a particular people. So, for instance, the primary function of Russian is as the means of communication for the Russian people.

11. The function of international communication which a particular language may play at a particular point in time is not a constant feature of that language. It is a fluctuating phenomenon, and, hence, cannot be legislated for.

12. Determining through a country's constitution or through other legislation on language that a specific language is to be used for international communication is an infringement of the constitutional rights of a citizen. Every individual has the right to choose which language he or she will employ in interaction with the representatives of other nations and peoples.

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# Chapter 3: Factors Influencing Language Choice among Undergraduates in Kazakhstan

William P. Rivers



## Introduction<sup>9</sup>

This chapter details a few of the results of a project undertaken in 1999 by this author and the Department of General Linguistics at al-Farabi Kazakh National University to ascertain the language behaviours and attitudes of young college-educated citizens of the Republic of Kazakhstan. This generation, perhaps the last with any real memory of the Soviet era, and the first to reach maturity and start families and careers in the Republic, represents a critical tipping point in Kazakh language policy. Moreover, that policy exists in the context of a vital, energetic, diverse, and evolving country. That context influences language policy in a myriad of ways, and the research summarised here does nothing but highlight the intersections of language policy, ethnic policy, nation building, economic development, and patriotism.

The language policies and demolinguistics of the Republic of Kazakhstan, long a key focus of research and planning within Kazakhstan, have recently attracted the attention of analysts outside Kazakhstan, including Olcott, Laitin, Dave, Kolste, Schuyler, and others (see Rivers 2002 for an overview). The broad tendency of these analysts results in a picture of Kazakh language policy and the language situation in Kazakhstan which I believe is distorted by two key misapprehensions. First, there is a tendency to rely on state-driven frameworks for language change, particularly Fishman's Reversing Language Shift or RLS (Fishman 1991, 2001), which leads to an underestimation if not a dismissal of the key determinative agency of the individual in language change. Secondly, a variety of researchers, such as Olcott, Laitin, and Dave, assert a high degree of linguistic Russification in Kazakhstan, without any concrete evidence. For example, Dave and Sinott report that informal surveys in Almaty in the mid 1990s showed that perhaps 40% of urban Kazakhs had become Russified, and that the 1999 census deliberately avoided probing respondents' literacy in Kazakh for fear of negative findings (Dave & Sinott 2002:20ff). Haarman and Holman, in an analysis of 1989 Soviet census data, give a 60% acculturation rate for Kazakhs throughout the former Soviet Union (Haarman & Holman 1997:123).

In this context, the charge of *mankurtism* is often laid at the door of the Kazakh elite. The etymology of the term *mankurtism* is instructive. The Kyrgyz novelist Chingiz Aitmatov retells the Naiman<sup>10</sup> epic of the *mankurt* in his novel *Буранный полустанок: И дольше века длится день* [*The Day Lasts More than One*

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<sup>10</sup> The Naiman were a people who resisted but were eventually defeated by Genghis Khan in the early 13th century.



*Hundred Years*] (Aitmatov 1983:124ff). The *mankurt* of legend were 12th century Kazakh slaves, cruelly forced by a foreign conqueror to wear constricting headgear, which caused them to lose their memories, even to the point of not knowing their own names. The 20th century protagonist, Buryanii Yedigei, veteran of the Great Patriotic War and *dzhigit*<sup>11</sup>, labels the citified, educated, sovietised Kazakh youth of the seventies as *mankurty* for having forgotten their culture, for having adopted the bureaucratic culture of the Brezhnev-era Soviet Union (Aitmatov 1983:348), for obeying dictates to use Russian, even among themselves, while on duty. Dave (1996) traces the application of this term to Russified Kazakh elites by Kazakh language-nationalists:

*Mankurt* is a term of disapproval that nationalists and pure Kazakh-speakers frequently employ against their urban brethren, chastising them for allegedly abandoning their native language and ancestral culture to imbibe Russian language and culture. Thus, *mankurtizatsiya* is regarded as a distinct, if regrettable, trait of many urban Kazakhs. (Dave 1996:52)

The language policy researcher in Kazakhstan - Kazakh, American, Swedish or other - thus treads a knife-edge in posing and attempting to answer research questions such as those attempted in this project.

The language law of 1989 guaranteed education in Kazakh, gave Kazakh status equal to that of Russian in national and local government, and required certain government officials to speak Kazakh. However, in the intervening years, Kazakhstani language policy has focused pragmatically on preserving a delicate balance between the Russophone populations (consisting of ethnically Slavic and Kazakh elements) and Kazakhophone interests, while attempting to promote the status, prestige, and growth of Kazakh, in the face of formidable challenges.

Among these challenges are the spread of English as a foreign language, complex patterns of emigration, re-immigration, and internal migration, and continued shift towards Russian among the young urban elite. A second set of challenges results from the legacy of seventy years of Soviet language planning. Kreindler (1997) provides a Union-wide synopsis of the changing fortunes of regional and minority languages, the marked shifts towards Russification following Stalin, and the legacy of poor to non-existent infrastructure in the minority languages of the former Soviet Union. Haarman and Holman (1997) equate acculturation with linguistic assimilation, an assumption that we shall see merits some examination.

In Kazakhstan, the lack of infrastructure for the teaching of Kazakh and for Kazakh medium education meant that, upon independence, primary and secondary education in Kazakh was offered in 3364 of 8368 schools (40%) (Suleimenova 1997:117-118); that virtually no Kazakh language textbooks in any subject were available, and that there existed no cadre of teachers of Kazakh at the primary and secondary levels nor any teachers qualified to teach academic subjects in Kazakh. Finally, post-secondary education in Kazakh became available officially in 1989, and, in practice, is still spreading slowly through the system, with 67.8% of classes in 1996 offered in Russian (Suleimenova 1997:118).

In 1995, the government addressed the practical politics of the language situation by declaring Kazakh the 'state language' (*государственный язык*)<sup>12</sup> and according it the role of the 'language of national integration' (Suleimenova 1995). Russian was declared the official language, and accorded the role of the 'language of political integration', a function it fulfils alongside Kazakh, and with equal status relative to Kazakh (Kopylenko 1997:38). Kopylenko defines these two functions - national and political integration - as facilitating the operations and social functions of the polity (political integration) and the transmission of culture (national integration).

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<sup>11</sup> 'true horseman of the steppes'

<sup>12</sup>By which is meant the official language of the polity of Kazakhstan, rather than solely the working language of the government and its organs.

Both Fishman and Fierman approach language policy as a centrally directed activity of the polity. Within the RLS framework, the efficacy of a policy is determined by the degree to which the desired outcomes are achieved for the goals set for the polity as a whole. Individual choices which act against the interest of the policy are therefore deleterious to the policy, and should be counteracted by various means – the creation of educational opportunities in the language, mass media broadcasts, book publishing, and so forth (Fishman 1991). Fierman approaches the effects of language policy with more sympathy to the individual, but accords the individual little role in the implementation of language policies, or, more specifically, in the adoption of individual language behaviours in harmony with the policy (Fierman 1995). Rather than judging the language policies of the Republic of Kazakhstan or attempting a wholly premature assessment of their impact on the demolinguistics of Kazakhstan, in this chapter I describe some of the social, economic, and familial motivations for language shift in Kazakhstan, and, within the framework of the extant policies, provide some reflections on the way these factors (and the individual choices in language behaviour affected by these factors) might influence, accelerate, or impede those policies.

## The study

In order to collect data on language use behaviours, attitudes towards first, second, and foreign languages, and self-assessed proficiency in Kazakh, Russian, and other languages in Kazakhstan, a survey instrument was developed and administered, under the aegis of the Department of General Linguistics at the al-Farabi Kazakh National University (hereafter KazNU), to investigate language-use behaviours and attitudes towards prestige, perceived returns, and identity, based on the work of Oud de Glas (1979), Weltens & de Bot (1995), Broeder & Extra (1996), Shohamy (1997), Shohamy & Donista-Schmidt (1998) and Spolsky & Shohamy (1999). The fieldwork was conducted during the Spring Semester of 1999. Kazakhstani colleagues of the author administered the survey to 1100 Russophone and Kazakhophone college students in eight institutions of higher education, in the cities of Almaty, Shymkent, Atryau, Taraz, and Karaganda. 857 completed surveys were returned. In each case, the survey was administered by Kazakhstani doctoral candidates in the Department of General Linguistics at KazNU, who typically were faculty members in language and/or linguistics departments at other institutions of higher education. The choice of Kazakhstani colleagues to administer the survey was based upon two factors: first, American researchers had reported difficulties in appearing before college audiences to administer surveys, in that such an appearance inevitably became the focus of the audience's attention, with requests from school personnel and respondents alike to teach English, to speak English with the respondents, and repeated requests for the 'right' answers to particular questions (Laitin 1997:225-230). The second factor, not unrelated to the first, was that the Kazakhstani university personnel, acting in an official capacity, had essentially unfettered access to respondents.

## Results

With regard to ethnicity, the sample of 857 Kazakhstani undergraduate students was 74% Kazakh, 15% Russian, 2.4% Uighur, 1.6% Korean, and 1.1% Tatar, with twenty-one other ethnicities reported, none at more than 1% of the sample. Ethnicity was elicited by a proxy question, 'Какой язык для Вас является родным?' ('What is your native language?') This approach was taken because direct questioning of ethnicity was felt to be culturally inappropriate, thus necessitating a proxy. Given the nearly isomorphic nature of ethnicity and 'родной язык' (literally 'native language') in Soviet census data (Anderson & Silver 1983, 1990; Silver 1975; Kolst 1999), the data on native language in this survey served as a reasonable proxy for ethnicity. With regard to Kazakhstan as a whole, the sample, taken in the spring of 1999, shows an over-representation of Kazakhs in higher education relative to the population at large; according to the 1999 Kazakhstani census, the population of Kazakhstan was 53.4% Kazakh, 29.95% Russian, 1.4% Uighur, 1.66% Tatar, and 0.66% Korean (Masanov 2001). This overrepresentation may be due, in part, to the failure of the author to include institutions of higher learning from the northernmost tier of cities in Kazakhstan. As well, the demographic skew in this sample may be due to a larger skew in Kazakhstan, in

that the Kazakh population tends to be younger than the Russian (Dave & Sinott 2002:1ff). Without more specific breakdowns of the data from the 1999 census, the degree of over-representation of Kazakhs in this sample cannot be determined. Note as well that the Korean, Tatar, and Uighur elements in this sample are greater than in the population at large. However, given the small size of these subsets in this sample (Korean being the largest at 10 individuals), the over-representation is not statistically significant.

With respect to mother languages, of the 819 respondents who chose to answer the question 'В доме, где Вы выросли, на каком языке Вы говорили с матерью?' ('Growing up, what language did you speak with your mother at home?'), 55.1% claimed Kazakh, 32.1% Russian, 9.6% both, and the remainder one or another of the minority languages of Kazakhstan, none greater than 1% of the sample.

In terms of intergenerational language shift, I have adopted Marshall's definition (Marshall 2000, 2002), where shift is considered to have occurred if the respondent has a language different from that of his or her grandparents, assuming that all of the grandparents spoke one and the same language. For those respondents whose grandparents all spoke the same language, very few minority ethnicity respondents spoke a different language (4 of 30 such respondents, or 13%), no more or less than expected by random chance in the sample. Even fewer Russians spoke a different language from their grandparents (2 of 77, or 2%), while more Kazakhs than expected did speak a language other than their grandparents' language (58 of 322, or 18%). The factors predicting this shift include: the language used with the respondent's paternal grandmother, with Russian as a grandparental language more likely than Kazakh to indicate a propensity to language shift, and minority languages more likely still; parental multilingual marriage, with a multilingual marriage more likely to predict shift; and the language used with respondent's mother, with Kazakh being likely to mitigate against shift.

For the entire sample, 339 respondents (46.7% of the 726 who answered the question) indicated that they would raise their children in Kazakh; 134 (18.5%) indicated Russian, and 253 (34.8%) indicated another language or languages, typically Kazakh and Russian, or one of the two in combination with English, or with a minority language of Kazakhstan. Of the 446 Kazakh respondents who answered the question, 265 (60%) indicated that they would raise their children in Kazakh; 45 (10.1%) indicated Russian, and 78 (18%) indicated Kazakh and Russian or Kazakh, Russian and English. In so far as the majority of these 'other' responses were either Kazakh and Russian or one of these two and English, the sample seems to generally support the stated language policy aims. However, the possibility of subtractive bilingualism resulting, in essence, in further shift towards Russian, cannot be discounted.

Among the ethnic Kazakhs in the sample, predictors for the language in which children would be raised indicate that the higher respondents rated their oral proficiency in a given language, the more likely they were to respond that they would raise their children in that language. Younger respondents were more likely to respond that they would raise their children in Kazakh; women were more likely to respond that they would raise their children in languages other than Kazakh. Finally, the use of Russian or languages other than Kazakh by the respondent's grandfather predicts that the respondent would express the desire to raise their children in a language other than Kazakh. For the Kazakh respondents, the higher a respondent rated her proficiency in Russian, the more likely she was to indicate the desire to raise her children in Russian, as did residence in an urban centre. The signal and strongest predictor of likelihood for Kazakh respondents to indicate the desire to raise their children in Russian is with women more likely than men to indicate that children would be raised in something other than Kazakh.

## Discussion

Among the goals of the language policy of Kazakhstan are two that bear relevance to this study: first, that the Kazakh language should find broader usage among all nationalities, especially Kazakhs; and second, that the population of Kazakhstan should achieve bilingualism in the two principal languages of Kazakhstan (Šajmedrenov et al. 1999; Masanov 2001). Achieving both goals will require reversing decades of

Russification among the Kazakh population, as well as the inculcation of Kazakh among a Russian population that has, by all available data, never demonstrated any inclination to master Kazakh to any serious degree (Kolst 2000). The data from the current study show a rather mixed prognosis for the language policies of Kazakhstan. With respect to the mastery of Kazakh by the Russian population, there was little evidence from this study that any increasing degree of substantial mastery among the population at large has thus far been achieved. However, a substantial portion of the ethnic Russian respondents indicated that they were undertaking the study of Kazakh; as well, there was a limited degree of mastery of Kazakh, as evidenced by the self-assessed proficiency levels given by the respondents.<sup>13</sup> The median self-assessment in Kazakh for Russians was at or below a level adequate to perform simple tasks, such as reading placards, answering the telephone, or completing written surveys.

With respect to mastery of Kazakh by the Russified Kazakhs in the sample, the median self-assessed proficiency level was much higher than that among the Russians in the sample, with the Russophone Kazakhs indicating that they could perform nearly as well as the Kazakhophone Kazakhs on all tasks. For the whole subsample of Kazakhs (Russophone and Kazakhophone) the level of mastery of Russian, according to the self-assessed proficiency data, was at the same level as the mastery of Kazakh, indicating that, for educated Kazakhs, fully functional bilingualism is the norm. The danger presented to Kazakhstan's language planners by this bilingualism is that the bilingualism thus far achieved among Kazakhs may well be subtractive, especially if the public and intellectual life of Kazakhstan should continue to show a greater use of Russian than of Kazakh. That is, if the registers, contexts, and situations in which Russian is favoured or more frequently used tend to be those which favour socioeconomic advancement, then mastery of Russian will be seen as a benefit, and pursued more assiduously than mastery of Kazakh. On that point, the tendency of Kazakh undergraduate students to indicate that their children would be raised in Russian, or in Kazakh and Russian, reflects this socioeconomic concern. Nearly 30% of the Kazakhs in the sample indicated that they would raise their children in Russian or in a multilingual environment including Russian. In the logistical regression models for the language in which prospective children would be raised, predictors for answers other than Kazakh were primarily sociolinguistic and economic. These included the respondent's proficiency in Russian and the respondent's residence in an urban centre, indicating that a more Russified parental milieu and background would be more likely to predict the respondent's answer to be not exclusively Kazakhophone. As well, Kazakh women were more likely than men to indicate that they would raise their children in a language other than Kazakh. The literature on this point -from the Scottish highlands (Constantinidou 1994), Brittany (McDonald 1984) and the Oberwart/Felsöör in Austria (Gal 1978) - is clear: socioeconomic mobility attaches to the majority language, and women's pursuit of such mobility includes mastery of the majority language.

In so far as Kazakhstan's language planning apparatus is concerned, the apparent desire among a significant portion of the Kazakh students in this survey to raise their children in something other than Kazakh poses complex challenges. The explicit goal of mastery of both Russian and Kazakh by the whole population of Kazakhstan may well be furthered by the desire to raise children to be bilingual. Again, the explicit goal of the language policy of Kazakhstan is full mastery of both languages. While it is clear that the Russian population of Kazakhstan has farther to go to reach this goal than the Russophone population, given the apparently solid mastery of Kazakh by Russophone Kazakhs,<sup>14</sup> the full mastery of Kazakh, as

<sup>13</sup> In their correlational studies of proficiency interviews and self-assessment scales, Clark (1981) and Oscarson (1989) point out the central tendency in self-assessments of proficiency, at least in the U.S. and Western Europe. Those with lower measured proficiencies tend to overestimate their actual proficiency, while those with higher proficiencies tend to underestimate. This counters Davé and Sinott's assertion that the self-assessment is unreliable methodologically because it is invariably inflated (Davé & Sinott 2002: 13). That claim requires some verification in the context of the former Soviet Union, given the results obtained by Clark and Oscarson.

<sup>14</sup> Laitin (1998) groups all Russophones together as 'russkojazychnije', attributing shared sociolinguistic behaviours and attitudes to the Russian/Slavic and Kazakh/Turkic components of this group. The data in this study argue that the distinction between Slavic Russophones and Kazakh Russophones is valid and linguistically more distinct than Laitin's findings.

opposed to mastery in conditions of subtractive bilingualism, will require attention to the sociolinguistic functions of Kazakh as well as the quality of Kazakh-language education.<sup>15</sup>

## Conclusion

Some twelve years from independence, and fourteen from the language law of 1989, the linguistic situation in Kazakhstan retains a degree of dynamism and unpredictability, at least with respect to the two major languages of the country. Demographic trends favour the resurgence of Kazakh, if only because the Russophone population has declined in relation to the Kazakhophone, although no ethnicity, save the Kazakhs, has posted any absolute gain in population since the 1989 Soviet Census (Kim 2001). In this atmosphere, and given the constraints on state investment on schools, universities, teaching materials, mass media, and so forth, the critical finding of this study with respect to the language policy of the Republic of Kazakhstan is that should the Republic desire to increase the mastery of Kazakh among the population at large, more attention must be paid to the individual desires of its citizens, whether Kazakhs learning the titular language, Kazakh parents making schooling choices for their children, or Russophones and minority language speakers choosing where to invest their time and energy. For the Kazakhs in Kazakhstan, the socioeconomic gravity of Russian will never disappear entirely, in that Russia is likely to remain the chief economic and strategic partner of the Republic. Countering that pull while retaining a place for Russophones in Kazakhstan will require a delicate balance, since the extant data on migration, (Kim 2001; Dave & Sinott 2002; Open Society Institute 1998) makes clear that a significant Russian and Russophone Slavic minority will continue to exist in Kazakhstan. That balance points out as well that the language policies of the Republic of Kazakhstan, as much as the language policies of any polity, exist within a broader framework of ethnic and social policy (Masanov 2001), and that the balancing act thus far has preserved Kazakhstan from the more dire predictions of some western analysts.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Masanov (2001) cites a litany of insufficiencies in Kazakh-language schools: a lack of teachers, materials, supplies, and so forth.

<sup>16</sup> Laitin's examination of Kazakhstan, Ukraine, Estonia, and Latvia predicted that Kazakhstan would be the most likely to undergo ethnic violence, and Ukraine the least (Laitin 1998). His prediction with respect to Kazakhstan was based, in some measure, on his reading of the ethnic Russian press (typically tabloids) as well as his interactions with ethnic Russians. I note here that Ukraine has seen extensive ethnic violence, particularly in western Ukraine, while Kazakhstan has seen none. One potential source for Laitin's apparent misreading is that the press in Kazakhstan enjoys a peculiar degree of freedom, in that fairly sharp dissent and dissatisfaction are expressed, which Laitin may have interpreted as indicating more serious dissent than existed at the time.

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# Chapter 4: On the Likelihood of Language Conflict in Kazakhstan

Juldyz Smagulova



## Introduction

The last century was marked by innumerable language conflicts based on the pursuit of native language rights and new identities. Hindi versus Urdu, Serbian versus Croatian, Spanish versus Catalan, French versus Arabic, English versus Spanish, French versus English, Russian versus the national languages of the former USSR: these are just a few examples of such conflicts. These situations display broad similarities, but they differ in the degree of conflict. Some of them are more latent in character whilst others are open, even violent, confrontations.

In Kazakhstan the existence of conflict between Kazakh and Russian cannot be denied, but today the language issue in the republic is not 'the burning problem' (Fierman 1997) that it used to be in the late 1980s and the beginning of the 1990s. Several stabilising factors have reduced the risk of this conflict becoming a major social distraction. A sociological study conducted by the Kazakhstan Parliament's Information and Analytical Centre indicates that interethnic relationships have improved. According to the results of the survey carried out among respondents of different nationalities who were asked to rank the main social problems, the ranking of interethnic problems moved down from 5th position in 1994 to 13th position in 1996 (Sadovskaya 2001).

## Potential sources of conflict<sup>17</sup>

Languages in contact easily become languages in conflict (Edwards 1994:89), yet it is not actual language contact or language diversity that generates conflict. Language conflict is a result of ideologies that determine the goals of society through its conception of itself (Even-Zohar 1986). When languages are incorporated in identity definition, state or ethnic, when languages become tools of political manipulation in securing and maintaining power, when - in other words - symbolic values of languages are employed, the languages involved enter into a state of conflict. Fundamentally, the conflict over language policy in the Republic of Kazakhstan is not just about languages, it is an ethnic and social conflict in which the languages have become implicated in a number of different ways.

First of all, the Kazakh and Russian languages have become highly politicised as both languages were involved in *defining the new state*. When Kazakhstan declared its independence, the new government was faced with a political dilemma of identification. On the one hand, it was a newly independent state trying to assert itself as a nation with Kazakh as its sole national language. The strong monolingual ideology was needed to build a new nation/state, to reverse decades of language shift and to unite ethnic Kazakhs who were divided into two groups, Russophones and Kazakhophones. On the other hand, the fact that

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<sup>17</sup>The conflict between Kazakh and Russian is longstanding and goes back to Tsarist Russia. This chapter analyses only the current situation in Kazakhstan.



Kazakhstan was historically and actually a bilingual and multiethnic country, together with the necessity to maintain good relations with Russia and retain the loyalty of the ethnic Russians and other minorities living in Kazakhstan, encouraged the acceptance of a bilingual ideology. Moreover, a bilingual ideology was to some extent motivated by the need to comply with European linguistic rights requirements in order to be perceived as a democratic state by international organisations and by western countries.

This ideological contradiction was resolved by defining the new state as a homeland of Kazakhs and a bi-ethnic society. Societal bilingualism, with Kazakh, though, given a higher status than Russian, was declared the desired outcome of the language policy. While the current 1995 Constitution (Republic of Kazakhstan 1995) defines Kazakh as the sole state language, there are two official languages – Russian and Kazakh. All languages, Kazakh, Russian and minority languages, are declared to be ‘under protection of the government’ (Republic of Kazakhstan 1995, Article 7). Each person has the right to use his or her own native language and culture, and to choose a language for communication, child rearing, education and creative activities (Republic of Kazakhstan 1995, Article 19).

Secondly, nationalism requires action to ensure Kazakh its symbolic role in *defining the new Kazakh identity and rights*. Despite Russian having been elevated from a language of interethnic communication in the 1989 Law on Languages (Republic of Kazakhstan 1989) and the 1993 Constitution (Republic of Kazakhstan 1993) to an official language in the 1995 Constitution (Republic of Kazakhstan 1995), the Kazakh elite and the government firmly insist on Kazakh being the sole state language. The aim of this legislation is to improve the status of Kazakh in relation to Russian on the basis that Kazakh has for too long been treated as a minority language in its own titular republic. The Kazakh approach to the question of language rights in the light of this ideology has been to press for rights for their native community (including language rights), rather than individual rights. The territorial principle has been supreme: Kazakhstan is a land of Kazakhs who speak the Kazakh language. This ideology has strong social support from ethnic Kazakhs, both Russophones and Kazakhophones. The survey results show that significantly more Kazakhs than Slavs believe that their ethnicity should have privileges during the employment recruitment process (27.2% versus 8.8%), university admissions (19.2% versus 8.6%), promotion at work (19.7% versus 8.6%), elections for positions of authority (33.5% versus 9.9%), distribution of land (26.9% versus 5.4%) and the privatisation process (19.2% versus 5.3%) (Malinin et al. 2001).

In this context, the term ‘development’ used in legislative documents means both language revival and language spread. Kazakhstan legislation on languages is aimed at supporting the growth of Kazakh and increasing its vitality. It provides Kazakh with the right to be used in communicative domains and functions where predominantly Russian has been used before. This measure - ensuring the development of integrative and instrumental motivations for learning Kazakh - is a necessary step to reverse the decades of language shift among urban Kazakhs, and of course, to spread Kazakh among non-Kazakhs. More Kazakh-medium schools and Kazakh-medium university departments should be available, Kazakh as a subject must be taught in Russian-medium schools, and Kazakh must be used in government, in official publications and in the media. This policy implies a constant battle for more, which in turn, makes Russophones very uncomfortable, for they believe that the spread of Kazakh will decrease the functioning domains of Russian, will lower the status of Russian and will threaten their language usage. This insecurity is another source of conflict.

Thirdly, all the changes identified above in the state and language policy are especially sensitive because they imply lowering the status of Russians and ‘weakening the bonds of the Soviet people’ (Fierman 1997). In other words, they require *reconsideration of Russian identity*. Masanov (2002) observes:

Quite naturally, for the great majority of Kazakhs, Kazakhstan is their homeland, while Russians are five times less likely to describe the country in this manner, despite the fact that three-quarters of them were born here. Among Russian respondents, the situation is fundamentally different. For the absolute majority of Russians, their homeland is the entire Soviet Union or the place of birth – and in a far lesser degree Kazakhstan.

Russians find it difficult to accept that they are now national minorities as their presence in Central Asia was part of a classic ‘civilisation mission’ (Kuzio 2002). Fear of cultural assimilation and insecurity about the future of their language create a source of potential conflict. Russian political groups - for example Lad - are demanding equal status for both languages, and 29.5% of Russians (compared to just 2.1% of Kazakhs) believe that it is necessary to enact a law giving Russian the status of a state language so as to stabilise relations between the nationalities (Sadovskaya 2001). Like any emotional constructs, insecurity is hard to deal with; the psychological and socio-cultural adaptation of Russians in the new states is going to be a difficult and time-consuming process (Streltsova 2001).

Finally, the languages are interconnected in the *power struggle in society*. Language policy in Kazakhstan like almost everywhere is motivated by efforts to secure their own interests by the Kazakh elite. Cooper argues that ‘In the struggle to promote interests one uses whatever ammunition is at hand’ (1996:183) and languages often are the most readily and easily available instrument in this struggle to create a new elite and to attain political control.

Despite such deep-rooted politicised conflict between Kazakh and Russian, Kazakhstan is not likely to become an arena of violent ethnic confrontation in the foreseeable future. A poll conducted in 1998 revealed that 50% of those surveyed regarded interethnic relations as peaceful, 30% as friendly, 15% as not always friendly, and fewer than 2% as tense (Malinin 2001). Several factors contributed to stabilisation of the language conflict in Kazakhstan.

## Stabilising factors

### **Achieving compromise between language ideology and ethnic policy**

The current language legislation<sup>18</sup> is the outcome of a compromise between two contradicting ideologies, monolingualism and bilingualism. It is aimed not only at strengthening Kazakh, but also at maintaining Russian as well as the minority languages.

When in 1993 the first Constitution of Kazakhstan declared Kazakh to be the state language and Russian to be the language of interethnic communication (adopting this division from the 1989 Law on Languages of the Kazakh Soviet Socialist Republic), the language issue became a topic of heated debate between Russian and Kazakh nationalists. It triggered confrontation in Parliament and in society at large. Under pressure from Russians and other Russophones, including ethnic Kazakhs, the 1995 Constitution elevated the status of Russian to that of an official language, although the text of the document is obscure: ‘In state organisations and in local government bodies, Russian is officially used on an equal footing with Kazakh’ (Republic of Kazakhstan 1995, Article 7).

Satisfying the linguistic claims of Russians and other Russophone residents of the republic was a necessary political step in order to prevent interethnic conflict in society. Granting Russian status equal to that of Kazakh, as an official language, became an indicator of political equality – a crucial condition for integration of Russians in the state. Here I agree with Safran that ‘the extent to which speakers of minority languages identify themselves with the larger community (or the state) in which they reside is heavily dependent on the degree of legitimation their language is accorded’ (2001:88).

<sup>18</sup>For detailed information about language legislation in Kazakhstan see Fierman (1998) and Masanov (2002).

The results of the 1998 poll referred to above indicate that most citizens see the government's balanced ethnic policy as one of the main factors contributing to the stability of interethnic relations. Shortcomings in the interethnic policy are attributed to misinterpretation and distortion of political decisions by local governments. Thus 43% of Kazakhs and 12% of Slavs believe that national policy is 'balanced and actively contributes to interethnic accord', whilst 38% of Kazakhs and 59% of Slavs believe that 'everything said is correct [i.e. everything proclaimed by central government is right], but in the regions things are done differently.' Meanwhile, only 2% of Kazakhs and 13% of Slavs state that 'there are conscious efforts to support one ethnic group and exclude the other' (Malinin 2001:68).

### **Improved attitudes towards acquisition of Kazakh**

Implementation of the national language policy requires the acquisition of Kazakh by certain groups of people and one of the major language policy objectives is the creation of conditions conducive for acquisition of Kazakh language to certain minimum standards. Achieving this goal has been quite problematic and potentially dangerous due to the number of people that have had to be taught and their attitude towards Kazakh. Slavic people coming to Kazakhstan found it undesirable or even unimaginable that they should learn Kazakh, and among the Russians there were powerful stereotypes regarding their civilisation and racial superiority (Masanov 2002; Nauruzbayeva 2003). Not surprisingly, therefore, according to the 1989 census only 0.8% of Russians were fluent in Kazakh. This negative attitude towards learning and speaking Kazakh had spread among urban ethnic Kazakhs as well; up to 40% of Kazakhs did not speak Kazakh and made no attempts to learn the language. This was the heritage that the Kazakhstan government had to overcome in its language acquisition planning.

The 1995-1996 survey conducted by Masanov (2002) showed that attitudes toward studying Kazakh had changed. According to his results, the majority of the population had by this time become tolerant of the idea of studying both Kazakh and Russian:

Nearly the same number of Kazakhs as Russians favour compulsory instruction by Kazakhs of Russian<sup>19</sup>. Two-thirds as many Russians as Kazakhs are in favour of the study of Kazakh by Russians. Again, two-thirds as many Russians as Kazakhs favour the study of Kazakh by state servants.

Improved attitudes are a key factor in determining the likelihood of conflict, since 'trends and conflicts are concerned not with facts, but attitudes' (Spolsky & Shohamy 1999:96).

### **Limited objectives of language planning**

In the beginning, when it was idealistically believed and stated that language reversal could be achieved in a short period of time, the main concern was to teach Kazakh to adults. However, very soon it became clear that forcing the process of transfer to Kazakh created more problems than it was solving. One of the major negative consequences of this hurried language policy was the mass emigration of the non-Kazakh population, mainly the young and well-educated. Later, the focus of language acquisition planning shifted from adults to children. The new model of state language developments requires different levels of competence in Kazakh from different age groups. The first group, born before 1995, is expected to learn Kazakh to a minimum level just to ensure the creation of an environment of state language use that would be conducive for acquisition of Kazakh by the younger generation, everyone born after 1995. This latter group is expected to be functionally bilingual (Kuzhabekova 2003).

Nevertheless, a gradual but sure switch to Kazakh is taking place in the state and local government bodies which are the prime objects of the planning effort manifested by Article 2 of the 1997 Law on Languages

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<sup>19</sup>By this, Masanov appears to mean that Kazakhs and Russians are equally in favour of Kazakhs teaching Russian as a compulsory subject in Kazakh-medium schools.

(Republic of Kazakhstan 1997)<sup>20</sup>. According to the latest government requirements, government structures should be switching to all Kazakh by 2008 which implies that all civil servants will have to master Kazakh by that time. Even so, learning of Kazakh is not obligatory; it is encouraged. Government organisations make Kazakh language classes available free of charge to help adults to learn it. There are also various material and moral incentives to stimulate interest in acquiring the language such as benefits for specialists who already know or who successfully learn Kazakh.

Currently, there is no list of government positions that require knowledge of Kazakh. However, for many positions, applicants are expected to speak the language since the Law on Languages and the Constitution obliges officials to respond to citizens' enquiries in the language of the original request. Interestingly, there are significantly different expectations for ethnic Kazakhs and non-Kazakhs regarding learning of the state language. Kazakhs are expected to know their native language sufficiently well to be able to perform duties in it, and there is also growing social pressure to use Kazakh for everyday communication. A survey conducted by Arenov and Kalmykov (1998) shows that both Russians and Kazakhs have difficulties because of their lack of knowledge of Kazakh. Moreover, 1.5 times more Kazakhs report that they experience difficulties because of their lack of knowledge of the Kazakh language than do Russians. This finding allows us to state that language planning at the grassroots level is aimed at ethnic Kazakhs; other nationalities experience much less pressure or even none to change their language behaviour. The focus of language acquisition planning efforts on ethnic Kazakhs and the relatively mild policy regarding language requirements for other groups in society lessen the chances of conflict on the part of the non-Kazakh population whilst ethnic Kazakhs are not likely to protest about having to use Kazakh because of their strong ethnic solidarity.

### Education

As might be expected, in their endeavours to encourage the acquisition of Kazakh, the government utilises the most accessible and effective tool: education. Overwhelmingly, this is delivered through state schools. The education system consists of Kazakh-medium and Russian-medium schools. (In addition, about 3.3% of schoolchildren attend minority language schools which use Uzbek, Uygur, Tajik, German and Tatar.) Parents have freedom to determine the language of their children's education. The curriculum subjects in these schools are identical and it is only the medium which is different. Second languages - Kazakh in Russian-medium schools and Russian in Kazakh-medium schools - are taught as compulsory school subjects from grade one. The language curriculum is reciprocal which is another stabilising factor. In grade 6 of Russian-medium schools, for example, the Russian language as a subject and the Kazakh language as a subject are taught 3 hours a week each, and the same is true in Kazakh-medium schools. Moreover, school graduates have the choice of continuing their education in universities in Kazakhstan or of going to Russia to study there. Similarities in school curricula and agreements between the two countries make this possible.

These efforts to encourage acquisition of the Kazakh language are accompanied by 'kazakhisation' and promotion of the concept of an independent Kazakhstan in every possible way. New school textbooks are written in line with the new ideology and teachers are required to use Kazakhstani books (although of course many schools still use Russian and old Soviet texts alongside the new ones). For example, in mathematics textbooks, exercises contain Kazakh names alongside Russian names. The Russian language textbooks (e.g., for the 6th grade) extensively use excerpts from Kazakh authors writing in Russian or translated into Russian, and they also contain texts of ideological character about the motherland, interethnic unity, patriotism, and so on. A survey among senior pupils in high schools indicates the effectiveness of this approach in fostering positive attitudes towards Kazakh among Russian children and towards Russian among Kazakh children. Both groups showed positive feelings towards each other's native languages, and both groups almost unanimously agreed that knowledge of both Kazakh and Russian is

<sup>20</sup> The law does not regulate language use in personal communication or in religious organisations.

necessary for their future (Isimbayeva 2003). These results are especially significant because they show that the younger generation perceive the Kazakh language to be a legitimate and functioning state language, knowledge of which can serve a useful function. Such beliefs are a necessary prerequisite for effective acquisition planning and also for preventing language-based conflicts.

### **Traditions of Soviet language policy and public awareness**

A centralised language policy is nothing new for the people of Kazakhstan (or indeed for the people of the whole of the former Soviet Union). They had more than 85 years of experience of repeatedly replacing one centralised language policy for another: *korenizatsia* or vernacularisation (from 1917 to the 1930s), Russification (from the 1930s to the 1980s), and, finally, revitalisation (since 1989). Schlyter (2001), analysing language policies in Central Asia, notes, 'the men and women in charge of current language laws and their implementation were brought up with this kind of language policy.' I would add that it is not only those in charge of language policies but also the general masses at whom such policies are aimed who have become accustomed to the ideas that language policies exist, and that such policies are designed and controlled by central authorities. People may disagree with some points of a policy, but they are not going to challenge the existence of the policy itself.

One of the most notable facts about Kazakhstan is that the public, or at least the well educated, are well aware of the role of language and ethnic identity in social, cultural, and political life. This understanding of the need for an equilibrium between linguistic, role, and identity repertoires has helped to develop policies on ethnicity and language which are more or less even-handed. Despite resentment concerning some policy decisions (for instance, the disappointment felt by Kazakh nationalists about the speed of reforms, or the dissatisfaction of Russian nationalists about the status of the Russian language), people nevertheless understand that these decisions were conciliatory.

### **Increased proportion of Kazakhs in general and urban population**

One of the key factors affecting the linguistic situation in Kazakhstan has always been demography. At the time when Kazakhstan achieved independence, the population of the country according to the 1989 Census was 16,986,000 people. Forty-four percent of the population were Kazakhs, 36% were Russians and 20% were of other nationalities.

In 1926 Kazakhs accounted for more than two thirds of the population of the republic. However during Collectivisation in the 1930s, over 1,000,000 people died from famine as a result of the destruction of the traditional nomad economy. A large part of the population left the country, fleeing from the Soviets and famine. In the 1990s one-fifth of the total Kazakh population lived outside Kazakhstan, in Uzbekistan, China, Mongolia, Afghanistan, Turkey, India and other countries. From the 1940s to the 1970s, when the Kazakh population had still not yet reached the level of 1926, huge immigrations of Russians and Ukrainians, up to 325,000 a year, made Kazakhs a minority in their own country. By 1959 Kazakhs represented only 30% of the total population.

Establishment of a dominant Russian-speaking class in urban areas, which were the only centres of higher education, industry, wealth, political power, and culture, significantly sped up the re-linguification process of urban Kazakhs. In 1989 Kazakhs represented 27% of the urban population while Slavic groups - Russians, Ukrainians and Belorussians - represented the urban majority even in primarily Kazakh regions in the south and the west of the country.

Today, however, the demographic situation is different. Since 1989 due to mass emigration of Russians, Germans, and other nationalities, the population has decreased by more than 2 million people, about 10%. In 1999 the total population of Kazakhstan was 14,953,126; Kazakhs represented 53%, Russians 30% and

other nationalities 17% of the total population. The Kazakh share of the country's population increased partly because of a higher birth rate among Kazakhs and also because of immigration of ethnic Kazakhs from other countries. Since 1991, 42,300 families or more than 183,000 ethnic Kazakh individuals have been repatriated to Kazakhstan. The urbanisation of Kazakhs and the relocation of the capital to the north of the country also played an important role in the redistribution of the Kazakh population. In particular, there has been an increase in the proportion of ethnic Kazakhs in cities and in the northern parts of the republic where Kazakhs traditionally have been in the minority. Currently the proportion of Kazakhs is significantly greater among the younger generation. This allows us predict that the demographic situation is going to be very different twenty years from now.

Demographic changes act as stabilising factors in two ways. Firstly, the increased proportion of Kazakhs in general and in the urban population in particular has removed the sense of insecurity on the part of ethnic Kazakhs who for a long time were a minority in their own land and who feared language assimilation and loss of autonomy. Secondly, the fact that many Russians have left the country – rather than consolidating their efforts against the government and its new policies – has become one of the major components of political stability in Kazakhstan (Masanov 2002; Sadovskaya 2001). Only 10% of those Russians who have decided to stay in the country indicate that they have participated in actions aimed at defending their national interests. Even among this sub-group the majority have limited their activities to participation in debates and arguments, and only 0.9% have admitted using some sort of force (Malinin 2001).

### **Vitality of Russian and its social importance**

Russian is important as an official language, as the language of education, science and the mass media, as a lingua franca and, of course, as the native and dominant language of ethnic Russians and Russophones. The 1999 census revealed that 74.8% of ethnic Kazakhs know Russian and only 25.2% of them claimed to be monolingual Kazakh speakers (Smailov 2001). At the same time only 7.7% of Russians claimed to know Kazakh (Arenov and Kalmykov 1998). Russian is viewed as reliable linguistic capital, possession of which provides access to wider information, cultural and economic spheres. It also ensures empowerment and upward social mobility. Today Russian remains a prevalent language in all domains. In fact, oralman (repatriated Kazakhs, especially those from Mongolia and China) have a lot of difficulty adjusting because of their lack of knowledge of Russian.

Russian is clearly dominant as the language of day-to-day government activity. Among government employees, 75% use Russian and 25% use Kazakh (Nysanbayeva 2000). As a rule, official documents are written and edited in Russian and then translated into Kazakh. Parliamentary debates are usually in Russian. On rare occasions a Kazakh speaking member of parliament will choose to speak in Kazakh; when that happens all those members who do not speak it have to use headphones and listen to an interpreter.

Russian is important in education. 75% of preschools are Russian-medium and 44% of the total population of school children go to Russian schools. In 2000, Russian was the language of instruction for 68% of students in universities (Republic of Kazakhstan 2001).

Russian is the main language of the media. Broadcasting in Russian is more profitable since it attracts more viewers and listeners and consequently more advertisers. Consequently, the private broadcasting companies comply with the requirement stipulated in Article 18 of the 1997 Law on Languages (Republic of Kazakhstan 1997) - that the number of hours of programmes in other languages should not exceed the time devoted to programmes in the state language - by broadcasting in Kazakh during off-peak hours when there are relatively few viewers and listeners (Kuzhabekova 2003).

The number of books, brochures and other materials published in Russian significantly outnumbers those in Kazakh. Out of 1301 titles published in the country in 1999, 867 (66.6%) were in Russian. Russian is also



dominant in the printed media. 433 newspapers (81.9% of the national total in terms of circulation) and 168 journals (75.8% in circulation terms) are published in the Russian language (Smailov 2002a, 2002b).

Languages do not exist independently of the people, families and communities that use them. For languages to survive and thrive, they must be integrated into the lives of their speakers. They must also be reflected in the community institutions that the languages are related to, their schools, libraries and so on. In Kazakhstan, Russian speakers – unlike Kazakh speakers - have access to all of these facilities. This gives us reason to believe that Russian speakers should have little reason to feel resentment and thus there should be no reason for conflict.

### **Weak language-identity ties**

Language shift and a perceived threat to the vitality of Kazakh could easily have fuelled a sense of trauma, triggering a rise in anti-Russian sentiment among Kazakhs and propelling the tide of linguistic nationalism, as happened in Ukraine. However, this has not occurred in Kazakhstan, as Nauruzbayeva (2003) observes. She concludes that the Kazakhs' ambivalence about the government's proposed language revival efforts and their tolerance of Russian occur because the Russian language has been positively associated with higher social status, rather than with cultural assimilation. There has been no perceived threat to the cultural identity of ethnic Kazakhs through the use of Russian. The results of the Census clearly show that the sense of national identity is very strong among the Kazakhs; despite the fact that from 25% to 40% of all Kazakhs do not speak Kazakh (Fierman 1997; Masanov 2002), 99.4% of ethnic Kazakhs consider Kazakh to be their native language (Smailov 2001).

Several attempts to strengthen the weak connection between ethnicity and language among Kazakhs have failed. The Kazakh nationalist movement, for example, proposed that there should be punishment for those who fail to acquire the native language; however, this has not been included in any official documents (Fierman 1998).

Thus, weak language-identity ties as well as a mild policy on the ethnicity-language relationship have contributed to stabilisation of language conflict in Kazakhstan.

### **Ethno-cultural factors**

According to the findings of research in ethnolinguistic identity (Giles & Johnson 1981, cited by Ellis 1994), members of an in-group may or may not adopt positive linguistic distinctiveness strategies when communicating with members of an out-group. Speakers evaluate the situation and decide whether to adopt status or solidarity behaviours, and person-centred or group-centred strategies. In situations where people choose solidarity with their own in-group, linguistic divergence from the out-group is likely, while in situations where they are more concerned with status and are person-centred, convergence is likely. Adopting one or another strategy by members of an in-group can either reduce or escalate language conflict.

Unfortunately, there are no studies of interethnic communication strategies by Kazakhs and Russians, but my own observations lead me to conclude that Kazakhs in their communication with other nationalities consistently opt for convergence strategies. Usually, a whole group of ethnic Kazakhs will switch to Russian if just one non-Kazakh joins the group. This kind of language behaviour reduces the chances of language conflict. Poll results demonstrate that interethnic confrontations in everyday communication are isolated events; this indirectly supports my observations (Malinin 2001).

Other factors that reduce the likelihood of language and interethnic conflict in Kazakhstan have been identified by specialists in Central Asia studies. Kushabekova (2003), for example, believes that a culture of

interethnic tolerance, the relative secularism of society and the geopolitical location - which places Kazakhstan in an important buffer position between Europe and Asia – have created a situation which has little potential for interethnic conflict. Modernization – ‘a process of transformation of a heterogeneous society with various forms of languages and cultures into a homogeneous one with more standard forms of institutions’ (Lee 2003:247) - helps to eliminate parochial ethnic discrimination and reduce tension. Yet another factor is the weak ethnic stratification of society. Ethnic conflicts intensify if different ethnicities hold different socio-economic positions in society. However, in Kazakhstan society is stratified not on the basis of nationality but on grounds of residence, i.e. rural versus urban (Lee 2003). To all of the above mentioned factors we should add economic growth and political stability in Kazakhstan which more than any other non-sociolinguistic factors contribute to stability in the country.

## Conclusion

This chapter has tried to show that at the moment the likelihood of language conflict in Kazakhstan is weak, but it is impossible to predict whether language problems will trigger confrontation in the future. The possibility of conflict cannot be ruled out altogether for there are too many political and social factors that can easily destroy the delicate balance which has been described here.

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# Chapter 5: Globalisation and the Sociolinguistic Typology of Languages

Gayrat Shoumarov and Abbas Iriskulov



## Introduction

In the world today there are thousands of different languages, each with its own phonetic system, grammatical structure and word-stock, and each with its own status in the society where it is spoken. Regardless of these different aspects these languages have some inter- and extra-linguistic similarities. This chapter describes the sociolinguistic stratification of languages in the era of globalisation. This typology differs from others in that it recognises that cultural, social, political, religious, historical and other factors frequently interact in determining the role which a language plays in society.

## Typologies for the classification of languages

Contemporary linguistics classifies languages mostly from the point of view of their common source or root, grammatical structure and social characteristics, though they may also be grouped according to certain other features.

When languages are classified according to their source the analyst does this by identifying related languages. This approach has a long history, dating back to the 16th and 17th centuries. It was William Jones, a British lawyer in India, who first noticed the identity of roots of Sanskrit and European languages. In 1786 he wrote:

The Sanskrit language, whatever be its antiquity, is of a wonderful structure; more perfect than the Greek, more copious than the Latin and more exquisitely refined than either; yet bearing to both of them a stronger affinity, both in the roots of verbs and in the forms of grammar, than could possibly be produced by accident; so strong, indeed, that no philologer could examine them all three without believing them to have sprung from some common source, which, perhaps, no longer exists. There is similar reason, though not quite so forcible, for supposing that both the Gothic and the Celtic, though blended with a very different idiom, had the same origin with the Sanskrit.

This observation gave rise to the development of philology as a field of study in the 19th century, using comparative methodology as a core technique in researching related languages. Thus genetic typology has its own object of research and its own method, which is called the comparative-historical. Its main goal is to identify related languages or languages that have sprung from a common source.

The second – and the most widely spread – method of classifying languages is based on the grammatical structure of languages irrespective of their roots, of their families. This approach studies the structural similarity of languages. There are many conceptions which are generally accepted in linguistics today which were generated by this approach. For instance, Schlegel (1809) identified three types of language: isolating, agglutinative and flexional. To these categories, Humboldt (1836, 1988) added a fourth: incorporating (or

polysynthetic) languages. Sapir (1963) then proposed a new principle of classification which is based on the expression of relations within the sentence and on the presence or absence of derivation. Thus, he distinguishes concrete radical, derived, concrete rational and pure relational languages. He also groups sentences according to the 'technique' by which secondary elements are attached (thus classifying them as isolating, agglutinative, fusional and symbolic). There is a third aspect of classification in Sapir's system which is connected with the degree of synthesis of language units (analytic, synthetic and polysynthetic). Anyway the morphological or structural classification of languages came into being in the process of classifying languages on the basis of relatedness. The approach has developed its own method known as 'analytical comparison', although in American linguistics it is also referred to as the 'confrontational' method.

We can see, therefore, that both the genetic and the morphological typologies actually deal with the language structure and its system. Both of these typologies are said to be concerned with 'internal' linguistics or 'microlinguistics'.

## Sociolinguistics

But neither the genetic nor the morphological classifications differentiate languages in terms of whether they are strong or weak, big or small, rich or poor, their degree of popularity, or how influential and prestigious they are in the era of globalisation<sup>21</sup> and so on. These characteristics are ignored by the genetic and morphological classification systems. But it is precisely these issues which are the subject matter of sociolinguistics because, when defining a language socially, one makes use of other criteria which have nothing to do with its relatedness to other languages or with its structural identity.

Compared to the genetic classification system, sociolinguistics is a comparatively new branch in linguistics. This approach, unlike internal linguistics or microlinguistics, takes as its subject matter external linguistics or metalinguistics. It studies the social contexts of languages since languages are spoken in society, not in a vacuum. Thus, the different aspects of variable speech are the corner-stone of sociolinguistics. As Kottak (1996) maintains:

Sociolinguists don't deny that people who share the same language share deep structures and rules, which permit mutually intelligible communication. However, sociolinguists focus on features that vary systematically with social position and situation.

Meanwhile Duranti (1997:13) writes that 'Sociolinguistics came out of urban dialectology in the late 1950s and early 1960s.' All languages serve as means of communication but the forms and conditions of their use depend on social and historical conditions in the area. The term 'ecology', which originated in the field of biology, has been borrowed by linguistics to mean 'interdependence of language and its surroundings' (Haugen 1972).

Sociolinguistics as a relatively new discipline does not yet have its own highly perfected methodology, although it tends to favour quantitative techniques. Among the most widely used procedures for studying the social differentiation of languages are 'social network analysis' (SNA) and 'principal components analysis' (PCA) (Duranti 1997:13). SNA operates with two concepts: *closeknit* and *looseknit*. Closeknit networks characterise speakers of the highest and lowest socioeconomic status (SES) groups in a community. Usually closeknit networks among the high SES groups reinforce standard speech whilst low SES groups speak varieties which are considered to be *non-standard*. PCA uses statistical techniques that allow the investigator to examine a large number of linguistic variants to compare speakers with similar linguistic characteristics and, as a last step, to determine what social similarities are shared by these linguistically categorised groups of speakers and what the differences are.

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<sup>21</sup> Globalisation is the emergence of a complex web of interconnectedness that means that our lives are increasingly shaped by events that occur and decisions that are made at a great distance from us. The central feature of globalisation is therefore that geographical distance is of declining relevance, and that territorial boundaries such as those between nation-states are becoming less significant

## Criteria

Any classification system presupposes the availability of certain criteria. The British sociolinguist Roger Bell makes use of four criteria in his research: standardisation, autonomousness, historic character and vitality (1976:198). Meanwhile the Russian scholar Vinogradov (1976:41-42) argues that there can be only one criterion for grouping languages in terms of social characteristics, i.e. the communicative environment which includes within it social, ethnic, demographic, historic and other features of language.

In her recent work Mechkovskaya (2001:132, 217) proposes five criteria for the social typology of languages: 1) communicative rank of language; 2) existence of written language (script); 3) degree of standardisation; 4) legal status of languages ('state', 'official', 'constitutional' and so on); and 5) its confessional and educational statuses.

Southerland (2001:509) characterises sociolinguistic research in this way:

... [it] ranges from the very limited and localised context of a single conversation to studies of language use by whole populations.

The same writer discusses speech varieties thus (Southerland 2001:510):

The term *speech variety* is the label given to that language (or form of language) used by any group of speakers. ... Speech varieties are of four types: 1) the standard language; 2) social speech varieties (also called social dialects or sociolects); 3) regional speech varieties (or regional dialects) [and 4) functional speech varieties (or registers)].

All of these measures are subdivided into several smaller categories. So, for instance, sociolects are associated with the socioeconomic status of the speaker, i.e. their ethnicity, gender, occupation, age group, and so on. These characteristics are arranged along a vertical dimension. Meanwhile, regional dialects are distributed across a horizontal dimension whilst functional speech varieties (also known as registers) are interested in language use in specific speech situations.

As we can see there is no overall agreement concerning the criteria which should be employed for classifying languages socially. Nevertheless, although scholars do not share the same fundamental concepts, there are certain terms that are common to many classification systems.

For the purposes of this chapter we make use of six criteria to describe the status of contemporary Uzbek in the post-Soviet period. These criteria are:

1. Communicative rank
2. Standardisation
3. Legal status
4. Confessional or prophetic status
5. Educational status
6. Communication spheres.

### 1 Communicative rank

In order to define the communicative rank of a language one should know the number of people, the ethnic groups and the number of countries that speak this language as well as the social functions which the language has and the social spheres in which it is used in the countries where it occurs.

It has been calculated that there are currently 6,912 living languages in the world<sup>22</sup>. However, approximately 3,050 million people - almost half of the population of the world - speak just 12 principal languages. These are Mandarin Chinese (873 million), English (508 million), Spanish (322 million), Bengali (211 million), Arabic (206 million + 246 second language speakers), Hindi (181 million), Portuguese (177 million), Russian (145 million + 110 million second language speakers), Indonesian (140 million), Japanese (122 million), German (95 million + 28 million second language speakers) and Korean (67 million). In this list Uzbek comes in 54th place with 19 million speakers.

When defining the communicative rank of languages it is very important to take into account the amount of communication in the world. Although Mandarin Chinese is spoken by more people than any other language it is spoken in a relatively small number of countries which are concentrated in East and Southeast Asia whilst English is spoken in a much larger number of countries spread across every continent. Moreover, English is very frequently used as the medium of communication between native speakers of other languages; Mandarin Chinese is much less frequently employed in this way. Thus, although English is spoken by only about 58% of the total number of people who speak Mandarin Chinese, its communicative rank is actually higher than that of Chinese.

From the communicative rank of languages we can identify world languages. By this term we refer to the inter-ethnic and inter-governmental languages which have the status of official and working languages of the United Nations Organisation. Under the Charter of this organisation the official languages are Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish. Arabic has also been added as an official language of the General Assembly, the Security Council, and the Economic and Social Council.

Sociolinguistic typology also identifies state or national languages. The national language is usually the language of the majority of the population in a country. Whereas international languages are spoken in more than one country, state or national languages tend to be spoken in one country, like Uzbek in Uzbekistan. Uzbek is both the mother tongue and the official state language for Uzbeks living in Uzbekistan and the official state language for linguistic minorities who live in this country even though their mother tongue may be different. In some neighbouring countries Russian and local languages are of absolute legal equality.

In one relatively small country there may be as many as 11 national or official languages. A case in point is South Africa.

## 2 Standardisation

The next aspect of sociolinguistic typology to be considered is the degree of language standardisation. Languages differ greatly from each other in this regard. A language can be said to be uniform if there is unity between its dialects, slang, popular speech and literary language. The closer these constituents are to each other the more perfect is the language.

Standardisation is a very important approach to the classification of languages from the point of view of their social differentiation. This criterion is closely connected with the previous one, i.e. with language function. Actually the degree of standardisation of a language depends on the level of education in the country where it is spoken, the existence of radio and TV broadcasts, and the publication of periodicals (newspapers and magazines). All these are present in the case of Uzbek.

During the Soviet period, although Uzbek was considered to be an official state language of the Republic of Uzbekistan, in fact official meetings at all levels, especially in the cities, were conducted in Russian. The same was true of official correspondence. This means that in reality the official spoken language was

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<sup>22</sup> This figure and the others in this paragraph come from the online version of Ethnologue: Languages of the World at <http://www.ethnologue.com/web.asp>, accessed on 24th June 2005. Unless otherwise stated, the numbers of speakers include both first and second language speakers.

Russian. From all the sociolinguistic dimensions it is the relationship between the literary language and the dialects which is the most important. The closer this relationship is the more standardised the language can be said to be. Even if schools were teaching Uzbek, and even though periodicals were being published in Uzbek, standardisation cannot be said to have been achieved if the language was not spoken in all spheres of everyday life. This was the actual situation as it affected the languages of all the republics of the Soviet Union.

Mechkovskaya (2001) maintains that 'the Constitution of 1977 granted equal protection of the law to all citizens regardless of their language,' as well as the opportunity to be instructed in their native language at school, and 'the right to speak the native language in courts of law.' Nevertheless the Constitution failed to provide guidance which would guarantee adherence to the declared principles. This led to a lack of legal security for the national languages and 'silent' or unspoken advantages for the language of the bureaucracy. It also made it possible for restrictions on the social functions of local languages to appear to be 'natural', undermining even the rights declared by the Constitution. The 1977 Constitution of the USSR did not define the legal status of particular languages. There was nothing in it to indicate the specific status of the Russian language (for example, there was no expression such as 'language of international communication'). Nevertheless, a de facto hierarchy of languages and the specific status of the Russian language, though unstated, became apparent in several subtle ways.<sup>23</sup>

In the situation which has just been described it was actually impossible for the languages of ethnic minorities to develop towards absolute standardisation<sup>24</sup>. Though today Uzbek can be classified as a language which has been relatively well codified (that is to say, it is a language with well worked out literary norms in standard grammar and vocabulary), we would like it to have become the truly official language of the country. This issue is raised here because in recent years a number of scholars have written with great concern that even as the country celebrates the 16th anniversary of the declaration of Uzbek as a state language it is common to find syntactical constructions in Uzbek which are copied from Russian, as in the following example from Mamatov (2001): 'OAK ... ni professor ilmiy unvonida tasdiqladi' ('The degree of Doctor was conferred on him/her by the Supreme Attestation Commission'), where the correct Uzbek should be 'OAK ... ga professor ilmii unvonini berdi'. Illustrating his argument with many other examples, Mamatov argues that Uzbek is currently competing with two other languages, English and Russian. If the situation continues like this then Uzbek will lose the competition and be replaced by English and Russian as the country's official languages. Though this may be thought of as a rather exaggerated scenario, it is not difficult to find people who hold such opinions in Uzbekistan at the present time.

We should also mention that in some developed countries one cannot help noticing that there is a strong counter-tendency to homogeneity. In other words, native speakers are proud of their local dialects and try to use these dialects whenever possible. Of course, this tendency may strengthen the status of dialects and lead to their further development. We wonder if this phenomenon can also be explained by globalisation?

### 3 Legal status

The legal status of languages is also an important feature in their social typology. Many different terms have been used to define the legal status of languages, including state language, national language, official language, language of interethnic or international communication, local language, language of ethnic

<sup>23</sup>The de facto privileged status of the Russian language can be seen from the heraldry of the USSR and of the constituent republics. Firstly, the State Emblem of the USSR bore the inscription 'Workers All over the World, Unite!' The version written in Russian appeared with larger font than other versions in the languages of the other Union Republics; moreover, the Russian version was placed in a highly prominent position, in the middle and at the bottom of the emblem, whilst the inscriptions in other languages were situated in subservient positions, symmetrically on the right and on the left of the emblem. Next, the State Emblems of the individual Union Republics bore the same inscription 'Workers All Over the World, Unite!' in two languages, i.e. the language of the respective constituent Republic and Russian. (Mechkovskaya 2001:217)

<sup>24</sup>Languages constantly change and they change according to the needs of society. These changes try to meet the needs of the society that uses these languages. However, languages never achieve perfect or absolute standardisation.



minority and so on. In some sociolinguistic literature the terms state, official and national are not differentiated; when there is only one state, national or official language in a country, these terms usually mean the same and so become synonymous. But there are countries that do differentiate them on legal grounds as is the case, for instance, in the Islamic Republic of Mauritania. In this country Arabic is the national language and French is the official language. In the case of Uzbekistan, Uzbek was declared to be the national, state and official language of the country in 1989.

## 4 Confessional or prophetic status

Another very important feature in the social classification of languages is the relationship between the local language and the language of religious worship and rituals, because in many cases the confessional or prophetic language differs from the local language. In the context of Central Asia, including Uzbekistan, the confessional or prophetic language has long been and is still Classical Arabic, which became the language of the Koran in the 7th century. Languages in this category, everywhere in the world, are considered to be sacred. Being so, they play an important role in society and in the development of local languages. It is due to the influence of Classical Arabic, and particularly the Koran, that the Turkic languages - including Uzbek – were first written in Arabic script. Classical Arabic also had a considerable lexical influence on the Turkic languages, whereas its grammatical, structural and phonetic impact has been relatively slight. Many words have been borrowed from this prophetic language, including the names of people, cultural and religious events.

Originally, the contents of the Koran were known only to educated people and, due to its sacredness, it was not translated into any of the local languages before 1917. After the revolution, religion was actually prohibited and because of this translating the Koran was not allowed. Consequently, translating the Koran into Uzbek became possible only after Uzbekistan gained independence; now, with a translation of the sacred book freely available, everybody can become acquainted with it.

Previously, before an Uzbek translation of the Koran became available, one had to go to religious meetings where those religious personnel who had graduated from madrasahs interpreted the content. Verbal manifestations of religious beliefs such as prayers, chants, invocations, myths, fables and tales, statements about ethics, behavioural standards and morality were taught from the standpoint of the Koran. But now that people can read the Koran in their mother tongue, the social function of Uzbek has widened considerably.

## 5 Educational status

Three categories of educational status of languages can be identified:

- a) official state language learnt by ethnic minorities that live in the country
- b) the medium of instruction, when education is conducted in this language,
- c) a special subject taught in schools.

From the point of view of the first type of languages Uzbek is taught in schools and higher education institutions as an official state language to all ethnic minorities who live in Uzbekistan and whose mother tongue is not Uzbek. It is taught not as a language of major communicative importance but as the official state language of the country.

Since Uzbek is a state, official and national language in the country education is conducted in Uzbek though there are schools and university departments where classes are conducted in Russian and in some other languages too.

In Uzbekistan, Uzbek is taught in education institutions first as a mother tongue, so that students can perfect their knowledge of the language, and secondly in philological departments that train future teachers of Uzbek, translators, linguists and so on.



Thus, educationally Uzbek plays all three roles identified by a social typology of languages: a) as an auxiliary language, b) as a means of education, since it is the language of the ethnic majority and an official, state language, and c) as a special subject taught in schools.

## 6 Spheres of communication

During the Soviet period Uzbekistan – like other republics - was bilingual. In many societies usually the law defines the functions of each language. But, as we noted above, in the case of Uzbekistan during the Soviet period there was never a clear-cut definition of the functions of the languages of the ethnic majority (Russian) and the ethnic minority (Uzbek). We can identify six important spheres or arenas in which communication takes place: (1) education; 2) government bodies, legislation, clerical work, legal proceedings; 3) mass media; 4) personal documents including passports, diplomas, driving licences, etc; 5) services, including trade, healthcare, communications and so on; 6) visual information (geographic names, names of streets, traffic signs, advertisements and the like). Of these, Uzbek is now widely used in the first five spheres. The sixth is something of an exception, since the strong influence of Russian and English is observed in advertisements. This is explained by globalisation and by the entry of Uzbekistan into the world community. Borrowing words and expressions from the languages that have become means of interethnic communication is natural and one can hardly resist such changes.

## Conclusions

In this chapter we have made an attempt to describe languages from the point of view of a social typology of languages. We have also attempted to place Uzbek in this context. The social typology of languages is a comparatively new branch in linguistics; this means that much still has to be done in the future. The findings of this chapter are not final; more research lies ahead.

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## **Strand 2:**

Literacy

and bilingual

education

# **Chapter 6: The Potential of Bilingual Education in the Educational Development of Minority Language Children in Mountainous Badakhshan, Tajikistan**

Stephen Bahry



## **Introduction**

The problems of the development of the education system of Tajikistan - Mountainous Badakhshan Autonomous Province (MBAP) in particular - are surveyed in this chapter, with a focus on issues that relate to the linguistic complexity of MBAP and the language of schooling. Evolution in the language policy of Tajikistan relevant to MBAP is outlined followed by a review of research findings on the role of the medium of instruction in literacy and ultimate success at school for minority language students. There has been debate as to whether minority language children should be introduced to literacy in the majority language or in their first language. Further, if literacy is introduced in the first language, how long mother tongue instruction should continue, and when and how instruction in the majority language should be introduced are important questions.

The language-related problems of students in Mountainous Badakhshan province of Tajikistan - where the majority of children do not speak Tajik, the medium of instruction in Tajikistan, as their first language - were identified in a recent study. Implications from the literature on minority-language students' education are drawn for school children in MBAP. Differences between Tajikistan's language policy, which supports bilingual education in MBAP, and actual practice are discussed. Questions for further research on the relative effectiveness of various language policies for the education of minority language children in Tajikistan are also proposed.

## **Education system of Tajikistan and Mountainous Badakhshan Autonomous Province<sup>25</sup>**

Tajikistan's education system has serious problems in the aftermath of the fall of the Soviet Union and the two-year Civil War which followed independence. It has insufficient infrastructure, teachers, and teaching materials, together with inadequate finances for the education system. It depends on assistance from donors for its reconstruction (Niyozov 2001; Republic of Tajikistan 2002; UNESCO 2000a; UNICEF 2003; World Bank 2003a, 2003b).

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<sup>25</sup> Also known as Gorno Badakhshan Autonomous Oblast (GBAO)

Figure 1: Political map of Tajikistan<sup>26</sup>

Central government spending on education from 1992-2001 is 3% of the total budget. Teachers' salaries cover about 20% of their needs, forcing them to leave teaching or supplement their incomes. Inability to afford these payments as well as clothes, shoes and textbooks causes many pupils to be absent from class (Republic of Tajikistan 2002:22; UNICEF 2003). MBAP is more mountainous and has a higher altitude than the other regions of Tajikistan, with only two roads to the outside, one to lowland Tajikistan and one over the Pamir mountains to Kyrgyzstan. After independence, there was an influx of refugees from lowland Tajikistan to MBAP, followed by a shortage of food supplies when the road from lowland Tajikistan was closed; only the provision of food aid by road from Kyrgyzstan prevented mass starvation. MBAP faces the same educational problems as Tajikistan as a whole, exacerbated by the isolation of MBAP and its extreme environment (Akbarzadeh 1996; Niyozov 2001; AKDN 2002).

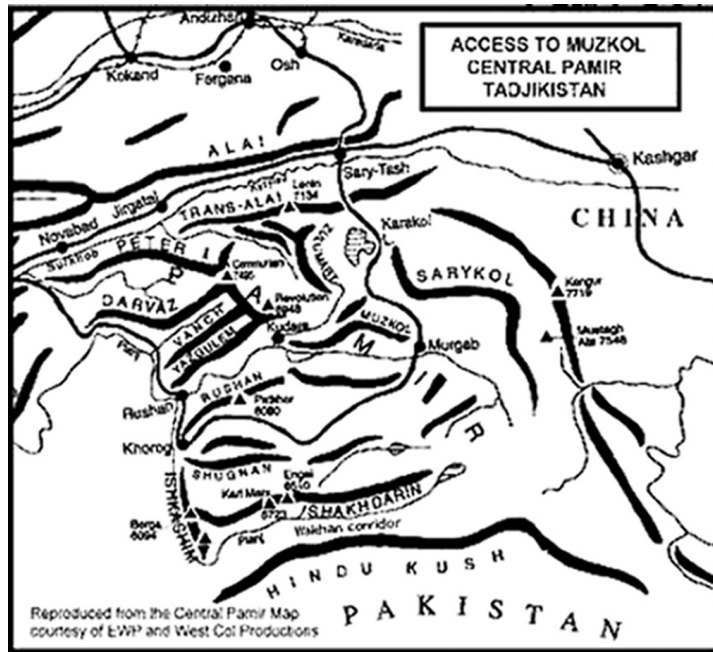
## Mountainous Badakhshan Autonomous Province of Tajikistan and its linguistic situation

MBAP is extremely diverse linguistically, with six East Iranian languages spoken there, as well as Tajik and Kyrgyz. East Iranian languages include Pashto of Afghanistan, Ossetian, spoken in the Caucasus, and Yaghnobi (descended from the ancient Soghdian language) spoken in the upper Zeravshan valley of Tajikistan. The East Iranian languages and Tajik/Persian separated long ago and are mutually unintelligible (Bashiri 1997; Niyozov 2001; Sims-Williams n.d.).

Figure 2 shows how the mountain ranges of MBAP divide the region linguistically, with most languages taking their name from the region or valley where they are found.

<sup>26</sup> Retrieved 13 October 2003 from [http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/commonwealth/tajikistan\\_pol01.jpg](http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/commonwealth/tajikistan_pol01.jpg)

**Figure 2: Mountainous Badakhshan Autonomous Province<sup>27</sup>**



**East Iranian or Pamiri languages** The right bank of the upper Panj river that separates Tajikistan from Afghanistan has a series of tributaries, whose narrow valleys are divided by high mountains. In these valleys are spoken the Pamiri languages (Comrie et al. 1996; Bashiri 1997). Table 1 lists the Pamiri languages from north to south with estimated numbers of speakers of each. In Darvaz and Vanch, Pamiri languages have been completely replaced by Tajik, and Pamiri speakers in other districts are said to have stopped using Pamiri languages in public (Bashiri 1997; Margus et al. 2001; Dodykhudoeva 2002b). How many speakers of these languages remain is uncertain since they have not been counted since 1939 (Landau & Kellner-Heinkele 2001:193). Thus, Pamiri languages are included in UNESCO's atlas of threatened languages (Wurm 1996). Shugni, with 50,000-65,000 speakers by one estimate, is the language of the MBAP's administrative centre, Khorugh, and is the Inter-Pamiri lingua franca (Jamshedov 2001:36; Chapter 5 of Niyozov 2001).

**Table 1: Pamiri languages<sup>28</sup>**

Language	Estimated number of speakers 1939/1940	Estimated number of speakers 2001
1. Yazgulami	2,000	3,000-4,000
2. Rushani	5,300	-
3. Bartangi	3,700	-
4. Shugni	18,600	-
Total 2+3+4	27,600	40,000
5. Ishkashimi	-	3,000-4,000
6. Wakhi	4,500	20,000

<sup>27</sup> Retrieved 13 October 2003 from <http://www.ewpnet.com/muzkol.jpg>

<sup>28</sup> Margus et al. 2001; Fillipov 2001; Dodykhudoeva 2002b

**West Iranian languages: Tajik/Persian** Literary Tajik, based on the Tajik spoken in northern Tajikistan and in Uzbekistan, is the official language in MBAP. Used in the official institutions of the province, it is a second language everywhere in MBAP, except Darvaz and Vanch districts, where a dialect of Tajik closer to the Tajik of southern Tajikistan with elements of Pamiri language is spoken. Speakers of Pamiri languages are also said to have developed another form of Tajik, 'Inter-Pamir Farsi', used as a lingua franca between speakers of different Pamiri languages. Thus, at least three differing forms of Tajik are found in MBAP (Bashiri 1997; Niyozov 2001; Dodykhudoeva 2002a, 2002b).

**Turkic languages: Kyrgyz** Kyrgyz speakers form the majority in Murgab district on the Pamir plateau. They are provided with Kyrgyz-medium schools, which use curriculum and textbooks prepared in Kyrgyzstan. There is reportedly a high degree of Kyrgyz/Shugni bilingualism in Murgab, with many Kyrgyz families sending their children to Tajik-medium school (Bashiri 1997; Niyozov 2001).

Although speakers of Pamiri languages form a local majority in their home regions of MBAP, on a national scale they are considered speakers of minority languages. MBAP children have traditionally been educated in a second language, either Tajik or Russian.

## Research on education problems of minority language children

Since the United Nations set as its goal the achievement of minimum standards of education, much research has been done on reducing barriers to educational achievement for all children worldwide (UNESCO 2000b). For minority-language children, one barrier to educational achievement is the language of schooling. In industrialized countries, where education finances are relatively strong, minority-language children still often have a higher dropout rate, lower attendance rate, poorer achievement scores, lower rates of secondary school graduation and of continuation to post-secondary study, and more frequent placement in non-academic or vocational streams compared to majority-language children.

Table 2 illustrates national differences in high school participation and achievement in the United States between majority language students in secondary school and minority language students with strong and weak proficiency in the majority language. There is a gap between enrolment of students with strong and weak skills in the language of schooling (English), which increases as they get older.

Age	English L1: Speak English only	English L2: Speak English very well	Speak English with difficulty
5-14	92.7	93.7	89.2
15-17	92.9	92.3	83.7
18-19	65.8	70.2	53.6

Figure 3 illustrates secondary school completion rates for minority language students in a large urban school district in Canada (Derwing et al. 1999). The majority of ESL students leave high school with no diploma.

<sup>29</sup> US Commission on Civil Rights 1997

**Figure 3: High school completion rates for English as a Second Language (ESL) students in one urban Canadian school district, 1991-1996<sup>30</sup>**

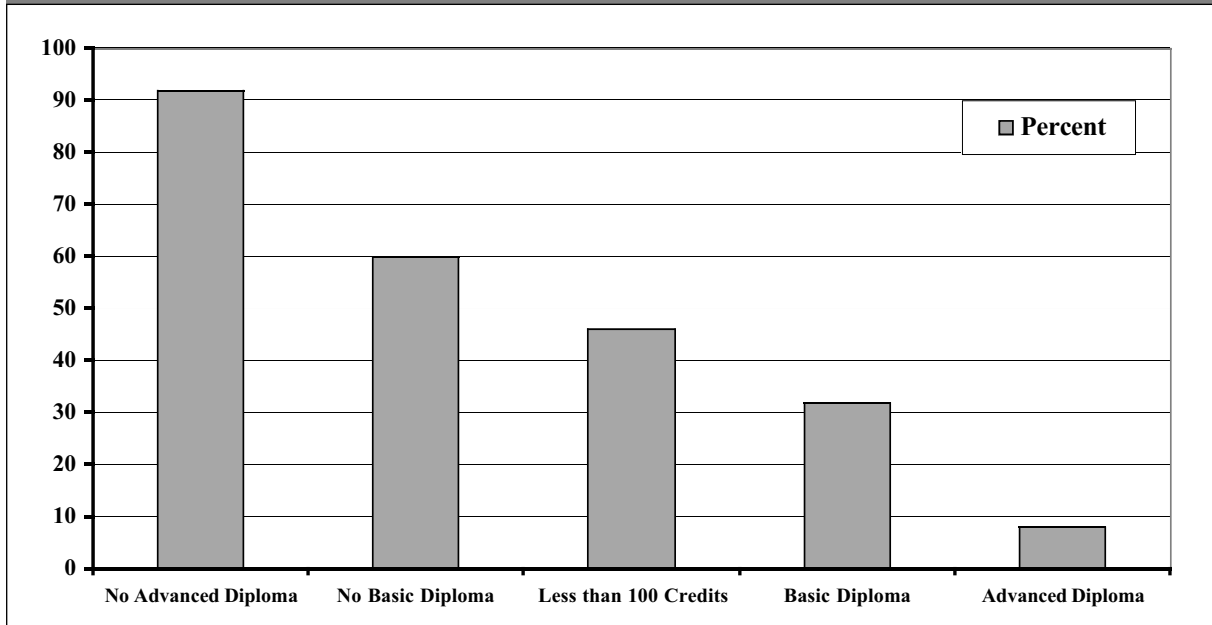
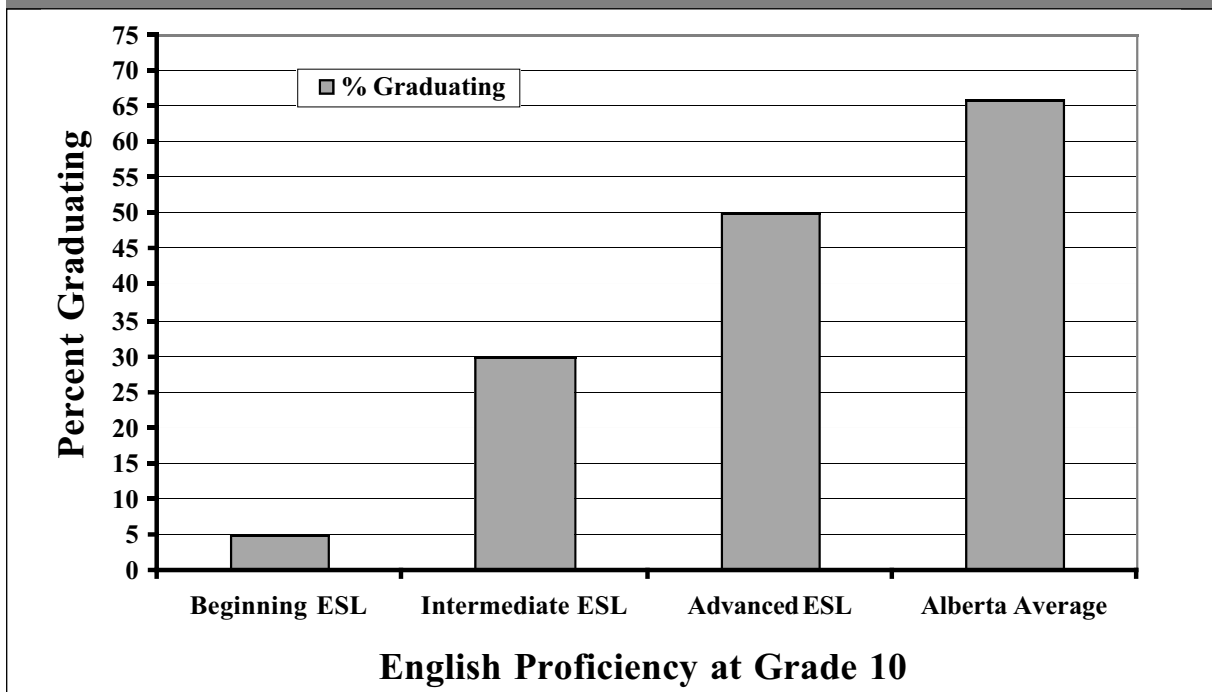


Figure 4 illustrates the findings of a longitudinal study conducted in one large Canadian urban high school which investigated differences in completion rates between students with different English proficiency levels (Watt & Roessingh 2001). Completion rates are quite different depending on students' proficiency in the majority language: highest for majority language students and lowest for minority-language students with low English proficiency when beginning high school.

**Figure 4: Completion rates at one Canadian high school by English proficiency at Grade 10<sup>31</sup>**

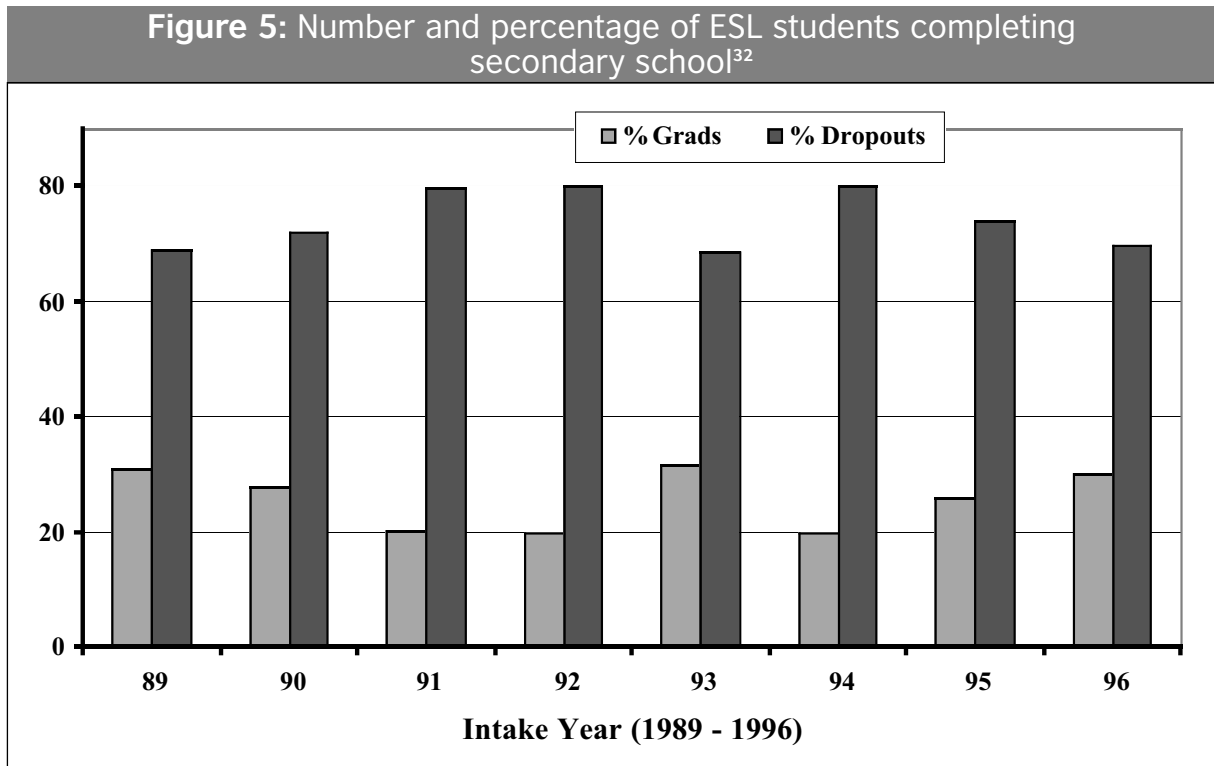


<sup>30</sup>Derwing et al. 1999

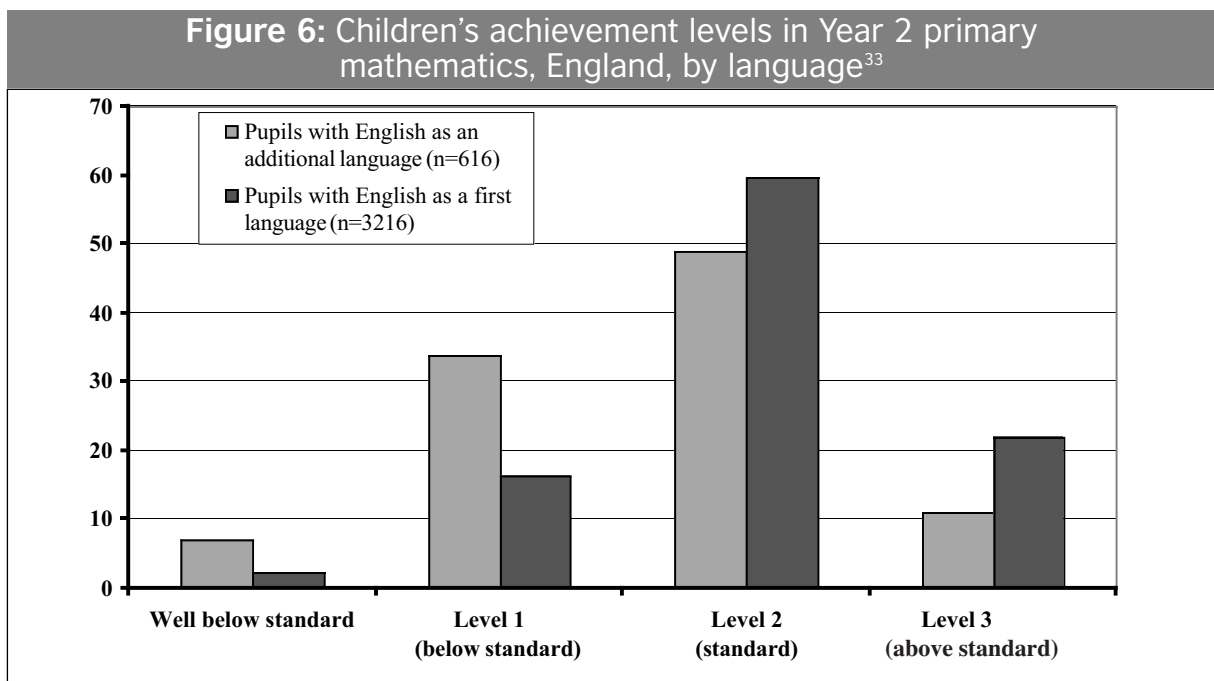
<sup>31</sup>Watt & Roessingh 2001



Figure 5 summarises the results of a study in one high school in Calgary, Canada, of long-term trends in completion and drop-out rates of ESL (Watt & Roessingh 2001). Overall dropout rates are never below 60% over an eight-year period.



Next, Figure 6 shows the results of an analysis of differences in mathematics scores of a sample of Year 2 primary (elementary) school pupils in England between majority and minority language students (Hargreaves 1997).



<sup>32</sup> Watt & Roessingh 2001

<sup>33</sup> Hargreaves 1997

These data suggest that:

- 1) It is harder for minority than majority language students to complete secondary school.
- 2) How much harder depends not only on the fact of the home–school language difference, since different types of L2 students have very different completion rates.
- 3) Proficiency level in L2 seems to strongly affect the completion rates of minority-language students and probably affects their transition rates to post-secondary education.

These and other similar studies suggest that minority-language children's education frequently suffers in comparison with that of other children (Skutnabb-Kangas 1995a; Baker 1996; Cummins 2000). A reasonable hypothesis is that minority-language children's lesser proficiency in the language of schooling is one important factor influencing their lower participation rates, transition rates and achievement scores in comparison to majority-language children. What theoretical explanations have been proposed for these observed differences?

## Possible theoretical explanations for educational problems of minority language children

### **Additive versus subtractive bilingualism**

Different types of bilingualism can be distinguished according to the relationship between L1 and L2. Additive bilingualism provides additional abilities or skills to the learner, and does not involve the new language and associated culture replacing learners' first language and culture. Subtractive bilingualism involves the second language performing certain functions instead of the first language. Under subtractive conditions, speakers of minority languages may feel pressured to give up their language and culture to conform with the majority, or may resist learning the second language and participating in education, as a means of preserving minority group language and values (Baker 1996:66; Cummins 2000).

### **Basic interpersonal communication skill, cognitive academic language proficiency and the interdependence hypothesis**

Similarly, language proficiency can be divided into two types: Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills or BICS, and Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency or CALP (Cummins 1984, 2000; Baker 1996). Cummins calls proficiency in informal spoken language used for face-to-face social interaction Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills or BICS. Typically, this type of interaction makes use of rather simple syntax and a limited range of lexis, with many clues to meaning in context and extralinguistic signals. BICS is relatively easily acquired by minority-language children through interaction with majority-language peers. Cummins calls proficiency in formal language used for academic purposes Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency or CALP. Typically, this variety involves more complex syntax, a large abstract vocabulary, with fewer redundancies, extralinguistic signals or clues to meaning lying in context. It often involves higher-order abstract thought. CALP is usually acquired through exposure to written language, whether at home or school (Cummins 2000:58-65).

Minority-language children can require several years - 5-8 years in a typical North American English-speaking environment - to attain grade norms in aspects of majority language CALP. Their oral proficiency in L2 social interaction does not guarantee sufficient L2 CALP for successful learning of challenging subject matter in L2. If unprepared for this difficult situation, they may be inappropriately labelled as having attitude or learning problems whereas in fact their difficulties should be attributed to language problems (Cummins 1981; 2000:58-7).

Studies have found that spending time on mother tongue education in bilingual education programmes need not lead to reduced academic performance in L2; in fact there may be closer correlations between

L1 and L2 Reading scores than there are between L1 and L2 Oral Skills (Cummins 2000:183). To explain such findings, Cummins (1986, cited in Baker 1996:345) proposes the Interdependence Hypothesis: 'To the extent that instruction through a minority language is effective in developing academic proficiency in the minority language, transfer of this proficiency to the majority language will occur given adequate exposure and motivation to learn the language'. Some aspects of CALP may be common to more than one language, permitting bilingual learners to draw on a Common Underlying Proficiency, which can be used in either language. Development of CALP in one language may facilitate further development in an additional language (Cummins, 2000:38-39).

The BICS/CALP distinction implies that minority language children require support in achieving the type of language proficiency (CALP) that is necessary for educational success. Thus, introduction of instruction and testing in L2 before there has been sufficient development of L2 proficiency (both BICS and CALP) may lead to difficulties either in studying subject matter or in demonstrating learning. The interdependence hypothesis may also imply that development of L2 proficiency may be restricted if the second language is used to replace the first language in the classroom, or if the second language is introduced before first language proficiency is sufficiently well-developed to permit decontextualised learning (Baker 1996:97).

## Policy options for education of minority language children

Table 3 displays the range of policy options available to education systems for dealing with minority-language children in school systems (Baker 1996).

<b>Characteristics</b>	<b>Minority submersion education</b>	<b>Second language instruction</b>	<b>Transitional bilingual education</b>	<b>Maintenance bilingual education</b>
Literacy introduced in	L2	L2	L1	L1
Medium of instruction in early primary years	L2	L2	L1 & L2	L1 & L2
Medium of instruction throughout compulsory education	L2	L2	L1 > L2	L1 & L2
Second language instruction provided?	NO	YES	YES	YES

A review of 39 methodologically sound and comparable studies on the effectiveness of education of language-minority children concluded that pupils can be taught subject matter effectively in L2, with two conditions. Firstly, the teaching must be performed well. Secondly, progress in the subject matter must not get ahead of progress in the language skills needed for study of the content. These conditions thus rule out submersion as an option (Baker & de Kanter 1983, cited in Baker 1996:211). A meta-analysis of 23 of these studies concluded that bilingual education that supports the minority language consistently produces superior outcomes with advantages in achievement in reading, mathematics, language skills and overall achievement compared to education in second language or submersion environments (Willig 1985, cited in Baker 1996: 213).

<sup>34</sup>Baker 1996

These studies conclude that bilingual and/or second language instruction support minority-language students' education. Tables 4 and 5 display conditions identified by other researchers as facilitating achievement among minority language children, who conclude bilingual education is more supportive of minority language students' needs than second language instruction or submersion.

**Table 4: Conditions facilitating minority language children's educational success, according to Lucas et al. 1990<sup>35</sup>**

1. School leaders clearly committed to educational success of minority language students
2. L2 is important but L1 is promoted throughout curriculum and perceived as advantage not liability
3. Teachers know current effective approaches for teaching minority language children
4. Teachers committed to empowerment of students and participate in activities developing that commitment
5. Students provided with variety of courses in both languages with small class sizes
6. Students provided with career and study counselling and have achievement monitored
7. Parents encouraged to contact teachers and counsellors and participate in meetings
8. Students provided with high expectations for success and strong support

**Table 5: Conditions facilitating minority language children's educational success, according to Skutnabb-Kangas 1995b<sup>36</sup>**

1. L1 is main medium of education, especially during first 8 years
2. All children know or alternate equally between knowing and not knowing language of instruction
3. All teachers are bilingual
4. Foreign languages are taught through children's L1 and/or by teachers who know it
5. All children study both L1 and L2 as compulsory subjects from Year 1 to Year 12

Cummins (1986, cited in Baker 1996:394-396) suggests that minority language students are 'empowered' by incorporating the home language and culture into the school curriculum, involving parents in their children's education, and regarding the learning process as not mere transmission of knowledge with the learners as passive recipients. Table 6 shows extracts from a curriculum which attempts to provide many of the conditions which have been identified above as facilitating or empowering minority language children's educational success.

<sup>35</sup> Lucas, Henze & Donato 1990, cited in Baker 1996: 220

<sup>36</sup> Skutnabb-Kangas 1995b:12-14

**Table 6: Multilingual curriculum of European schools<sup>37, 38</sup>**

Subject area	Subject	Grades 1 & 2	Grades 3, 4 & 5	Grades 6 & 7	Grade 8	Grades 9 & 10	Grades 11 & 12
<i>Languages</i>	L1 as a subject	L1	L1	L1	L1	L1	L1 (advanced)
	L2 as a subject	L2	L2	L2	L2	L2	L2 (advanced)
	L3 as a subject			L3	L3	L3	L3 (optional)
	Classical languages (optional)			L1	L1	L1	L1
	L4 as a subject (optional)					L4	L4
<i>Mathematics/ Science</i>	Mathematics	L1	L1	L1	L1	L1	L1 (advanced)
	Integrated science			L1	L1		
	Biology					L1	L1
	Chemistry					L1	L1 (advanced)
	Physics					L1	L1 (advanced)
<i>Social Science</i>	Environmental studies	L1	L1				
	Human sciences			L1	L2		
	Geography					L2	L2 (advanced)
	History					L2	L2 (advanced)
	Economics & social science (optional)					L2 (optional)	L2 (optional)
<i>Other</i>	Music	L1	L1	L2	L2	L2 (optional)	
	Art	L1	L1	L2	L2	L2 (optional)	
	Physical education	L1	L2	L2	L2	L2	L2
	Religion or Ethics	L1	L1	L1	L1	L1	L2
	Philosophy						L1

## Language policy in Tajikistan

During perestroika, Tajikistan and the other republics of Central Asia declared the 'titular' language of their respective states to be the official language. After independence, the titular languages of each country may

<sup>37</sup> Source is Baetens Beardsmore 1995, from Table 1, p. 40; Table 2, p. 43; Table 3, p. 45; Table 4, p. 46.

<sup>38</sup> L1, L2, L3 and L4 mean First, Second, Third and Fourth language and indicate the medium of instruction of the course.

have been seen as necessary unifying symbols for the state (Schlyter 2001). Nevertheless, the Language Law of 1989 guaranteed free use of minority languages everywhere, including the languages of MBAP.<sup>39</sup>

In 1993, the Law on Education was decreed, Articles 5 and 6 of which made Tajik the language of instruction, while instruction given in other languages in 'compact settlements of minority groups' (Landau & Kellner-Heinkele 2001:122) was also permitted. In 1994, Article 2 of the revised Constitution allowed every national group to use its own native language freely (Republic of Tajikistan 1994), but it did not specifically include speakers of Pamiri languages, who are not considered to be 'national groups' (Landau & Kellner-Heinkele 2001:193).

In 1995, the president of Tajikistan appointed a commission headed by Bozgul Dodkhudoeva, the Deputy Prime Minister, to investigate the implementation of the 1989 Law on Language. Among the findings of the commission were that in 1996-1997, the prescriptions of the Law on Language regarding the use of Tajiki in the conduct of official business were followed by no more than 10% of the government offices and public organizations surveyed (Landau & Kellner-Heinkele, 2001, p. 105). The commission's final recommendations on implementing the Law on Language were presented to the government in October 1997 and were approved. The programme was divided into two sections: Part I focussed on recommendations for strengthening the use of Tajik as language of administration and education, while Part II focussed on the development of minority languages. The programme recommends the provision of special conditions for education in Eastern Iranian languages (Landau & Kellner-Heinkele, 2001, p. 106). However, reports from MBAP indicate that Pamiri languages are still rarely used in primary education.

Thus, the interrelated language policies have a common theme of encouraging wider use of Tajik and permitting greater use of minority languages than in the Soviet period. However, the policies regarding the use of minority languages are not completely consistent with each other. Speakers of East Iranian languages are considered to be members of linguistic minorities but not national or ethnic minorities, while speakers of Turkic languages are considered members of ethnic, national and linguistic minorities. This means that the policies referring to languages of national or ethnic minorities do not include speakers of the East Iranian languages of Tajikistan.

Thus the constitutional guarantee of free use of minority languages of national groups excludes East Iranian languages. At the same time, in areas of compact settlement of speakers of East Iranian languages, the 1993 Law on Education permits but does not guarantee the use of East Iranian languages as media of instruction, whilst the Dodkhudoeva Commission recommendations on implementation of the Language Law of 1989 do guarantee the use of East Iranian languages as media of instruction.

While post-independence language policy seems to allow the use of Pamiri languages in MBAP in the school system, and to guarantee their use in elementary school, implementation of policy may be delayed for various reasons, such as continued use of Soviet curriculum models, lack of finances for development and printing of new curricula (UNDP 1996).

## Linguistic situation in MBAP schools

Despite recent policy changes, Niyozov claims that teachers of Pamiri-speaking children do not allow free use of Pamiri languages in the school system, partly to avoid clashes with school inspectors. Yet at the same time they have few Tajik language materials to implement Tajik language instruction (Niyozov 2001:243, 270, 338, 343).

Dodykhudoeva (2002a, 2002b) states that all instruction in MBAP is conducted in Tajik with no provision of classes in Tajik as a Second Language (TSL), while Niyozov (2001:361) states that to ease transition to all-Tajik instruction, TSL instruction is provided to Pamiri-speaking children for one year at preschool. However, preschool participation is known to be low, with just 30% of boys and 20% of girls attending (Republic of Tajikistan 2002). Teachers mention teaching Tajik Language & Literature, but there is no systematic teaching of Tajik as a Second Language (Niyozov 2001). On the other hand, some TSL teaching materials are being created and teacher development courses in TSL are being undertaken at the Institute of Professional Development in Khorugh, the capital of MBAP (AKDN 2002).

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<sup>39</sup> Prof D.Karamshoev, personal communication, 6 October 2003. See also Landau & Kellner-Heinkele 2001:114 & 122.

The treatment of Pamiri-speaking minority language children as described by Dodykhudoeva (2002b) and observed by Niyozov (2001:149-277) can be classified as 'submersion', since literacy is introduced and formal teaching is done in a second language, Tajik or Russian. Although teachers in schools with Pamiri-speaking students observed by Niyozov frequently resort to Pamiri language in the classroom, the situation is still one of 'submersion' since there is only incidental support from individual teachers with no systematic official support to overcome the language learning problems of minority-language children, whether through some form of bilingual education as provided for by the language policy of Tajikistan, or through TSL instruction.

## Educational problems associated with language of instruction

Niyozov (2001) conducted a comparative case study of two teachers in two different Tajik-medium schools in MBAP. The methodology of the study involved in-depth interviews and discussions with teachers about their teaching rationale and observing, tape-recording and transcribing lessons and interactions between teachers and students, noting which languages were used. Both of the teachers who were studied claimed that students' learning is hampered by receptive and productive language problems associated with their second language, Tajik, or their third language, Russian.

Some students' Tajik proficiency, according to Niyozov, is insufficient to comprehend lessons adequately (2001:251), especially since the curriculum and texts are too abstract for comprehension in their second language (2001:299). Weak expressive ability in Tajik makes some unable to express their understanding clearly (2001:251, 257) causing them to receive lower marks (2001:259) and to feel reluctant to speak in class due to anxiety about being ridiculed as well as receiving poor marks.

A survey of observations recorded by Niyozov (2001:119-278) was made to identify the extent to which the recommended preconditions for the successful education of minority language students (summarised in Tables 4 and 5 above) are actually available in the education of Pamiri-language children in the classes observed in MBAP. The findings are reported in Tables 7 & 8.

<b>Conditions facilitating success of minority language children</b>	<b>Availability<sup>41</sup></b>
1. School leaders clearly committed to educational success of minority language students	No/Yes
2. L2 is important but L1 is promoted throughout curriculum and perceived as advantage not liability	No
3. Teachers know current effective approaches for teaching minority language children	No/Yes
4. Teachers committed to empowerment of students and participate in activities developing that commitment	Yes
5. Students provided with variety of courses in both languages with small class sizes	No
6. Students provided with career and study counselling and have achievement monitored	No/Yes
7. Parents encouraged to contact teachers and counsellors and participate in meetings	Yes
8. Students provided with high expectations for success and strong support	Yes/No

<sup>40</sup> Based on Lucas, Henze & Donato 1990 and Niyozov 2001

<sup>41</sup> 'Yes/No' and 'No/Yes' indicate that preconditions are not officially present but are provided to some extent by individual teachers.



**Table 8: Availability of facilitating conditions according to Skutnabb-Kangas<sup>42</sup>**

Conditions facilitating success of minority language children	Availability
1. L1 is main medium of education, especially during first 8 years	No
2. All children know or alternate equally between knowing and not knowing language of instruction	No
3. All teachers are bilingual	Yes
4. Foreign languages are taught through children's L1 and/or by teachers who know it	Yes
5. All children study both L1 and L2 as compulsory subjects from Year 1 to Year 12	No

Minority language students may be empowered by having the home language and culture incorporated into the school curriculum, their parents being involved in the children's education, and the learning process being regarded not merely as transmission of knowledge with the learners as passive recipients (Cummins 1986). Niyozov (2001) reported that the teachers whom he observed responded to students' language-related difficulties by adapting their teaching informally to include local language, culture and community in the learning process, thus 'empowering' their students.

One teacher simplified the Tajik of the curriculum so as to make it more comprehensible (Niyozov 2001:251), and provided supplementary explanation in Shugni. Another teacher integrated local experience and environment into lessons through extra-curricular activities where he/she felt more free to use Pamiri for instruction and discussion than in school, despite recent official policy (Niyozov 2001:207-278). Both teachers report a greater need to use Shugni than before, and a greater willingness to 'adapt' the medium of instruction. Yet, in class, teachers merely supplement lessons with Shugni to motivate students and resolve communication failures; their use of the L1 does not go beyond this for fear of being criticised by authorities or parents (Niyozov 2001:138, 236, 249, 362).

### Questions for further research

Niyozov (2001:438-439) proposed several areas for research focusing on language-related issues. These are summarised in Table 9.

**Table 9: Language related topics for further research in MBAP schools<sup>43</sup>**

A. Language of instruction and interaction in education inside and outside classroom
B. Attitudes of stakeholders about the languages of MBAP and the language of instruction : Students, parents, teachers and administrators
C. How students can learn other languages - such as Tajik, Russian and English - without this process leading to the marginalisation of local languages and cultures

<sup>42</sup> Based on Skutnabb-Kangas 1995a and Niyozov 2001

<sup>43</sup> Niyozov 2001:438-439

### **Topics A & B**

In fact, data for research on Topics A and B already exist. Niyozov (2001) provides several transcripts of student-teacher interactions where shifts in language are identified, together with his own comments on the language issue and attitudes of teachers, administrators and parents. Niyozov's raw notes and transcripts of all lessons and interviews with teachers and administrators provide a wealth of data for further research. A detailed re-analysis of this material by a researcher familiar with Pamiri languages, Tajik and Russian would be an invaluable preliminary stage in further research in these areas.

### **Topic C**

The research cited above suggests that far from marginalising them, bilingual education can actually support the maintenance of local language and culture, while simultaneously facilitating acquisition of second, third, fourth and even fifth languages. Conditions of additive bilingualism are needed to replace conditions of subtractive bilingualism.

Here are some possible questions for further research in addition to those proposed by Niyozov (2001):

1. Are there significant differences in participation, transition, completion and achievement between schools or districts in MBAP where students are educated in their first language (Tajik-medium schools in Darvaz and Vanch and Kyrgyz-medium schools in Murgab) and schools in MBAP where students are educated in their second language (Tajik-medium schools in Pamiri-speaking districts)?
2. Under what conditions are higher levels of participation, transition, completion and achievement of minority language and other students found?
3. What are the comparative effects on student participation, transition, completion, and achievement of the four different types of language support for minority-language students in MBAP (i.e. Submersion – minimal support for minority language students; Tajik as a Second Language instruction; Transitional Bilingual Programme; Maintenance Bilingual Programme)?

Preliminary research on Question 1 can be undertaken with existing school data using individual schools or districts as the basis for comparison. Significant differences between schools or districts using L1 and L2 as medium of instruction would suggest that language choice in schools might significantly affect dependent educational variables.

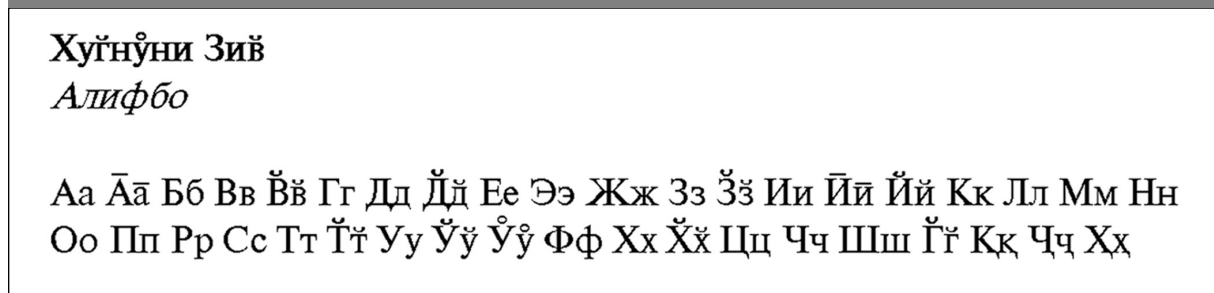
Question 2 could be carried out under present circumstances on a school-by-school or district-by-district basis. To do so, information about student characteristics, teacher characteristics and school characteristics can be gathered allowing comparison with levels of student participation, transition, completion and achievement. Teacher characteristics should include information about teaching practices, especially relating to language of instruction. Student and teacher characteristics should include languages spoken at home and the educational background of the family.

Research on Question 3 can be carried out only to a limited extent at present, since only Options A and B exist in the public school system, and provision of TSL Instruction is uneven throughout the province. With the detailed information outlined in our comment on question 2, careful comparison of Options A and B can be made. In this way a baseline can be established for later comparison of Options C and D.

This research will have to wait until a curriculum, teaching materials and teacher preparation for the delivery of bilingual education in East Iranian languages and Tajik are ready to be implemented. In the interim, preliminary research is needed in these areas. Such work has already begun for TSL instruction. The Institute of Professional Development in Khorugh has begun work on new TSL materials and is providing TSL teacher training (AKDN 2002).

A basis for this work on Pamiri curriculum and materials already exists. Although Pamiri languages are traditionally unwritten, a Latin script was developed for Shugni in the 1920s. More recently a Cyrillic Alphabet for Shugni has been developed (see Figure 7). This is increasingly used in books, in children’s primers, and in the press, mainly for poetry and short stories (Wennberg n.d.; Niyozov 2001:361).

**Figure 7: Professor Karamshoev’s new Shugni alphabet<sup>44</sup>**



Tajikistan’s current language policy is in line with the findings of research on the education of minority language children regarding the need for mother tongue education in MBAP. However, there has been a lag between formation of policy and development of a capacity for instruction in the Pamiri languages, presumably due to financial and logistical restrictions. Professor D.Karamshoev, a leading expert on Pamiri languages and a member of the Dodkhudoeva commission, believes that for Tajikistan’s language policy regarding local languages to be implemented in MBAP, increased support, both material and non-material, for curriculum development and the preparation of teachers of minority languages is required from the Ministries of Education of Tajikistan and MBAP, from national and international language and curriculum experts, and from international education development organisations (personal communication, 6 October 2003).

Research into the experience of the Russian Federation in implementing mother tongue education in ‘smaller’ languages may also prove fruitful. Leontiev (1995) reports 22 minority languages being used in Russia as media of instruction at various levels. These include Ossetian, the only East Iranian language to be used as a medium of instruction in the former USSR (see Table 10). This suggests that mother tongue education in smaller languages in post-Soviet conditions is financially feasible.

**Table 10: Languages used as media of instruction in Russian Federation<sup>45</sup>**

Years used as medium of instruction	Number of languages
Year 1-Higher Education	1 <sup>46</sup>
Years 1-11	3
Years 1-9	1
Years 1-7	3
Years 1-4	15

<sup>44</sup> Source is Wennberg n.d.

<sup>45</sup> Derived from Leontiev 1995.

<sup>46</sup> This is the majority language, i.e. Russian.

The development of a curriculum and the preparation of teachers for Pamiri-language instruction in MBAP provide an opportunity to make the content of the MBAP curriculum more relevant to children, while making the language of the curriculum more accessible, not only to Pamiri-speaking children, but also to their parents. Parental support for and understanding of their children's curriculum are essential for their children's educational success.

Effective mother tongue and TSL instruction ensures that the use of Tajik as a medium of instruction for key subjects does not precede students' development of Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency in Tajik. By creating conditions of Additive Bilingualism, there should be a positive effect on students' comprehension of subject matter, their ability to express their understanding, and proficiency in Tajik as a Second Language, all of which can have positive effects on attitudes of students towards schooling and ultimately their scholastic achievement.

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# Chapter 7: Bridging the Experimentation- Implementation Gap in Bilingual Schooling: The Role of the Researcher<sup>47</sup>

Carol Benson



Education is a very serious business, since it touches strongly on the lives of the people, and so it deserves to be managed in a scientific manner. (Obanya 2002)

## Introduction

Since independence, African countries burdened with colonial school systems have been challenged to reform nearly all aspects of these selective systems to provide a quality basic education for all. Over the past twenty years it has become increasingly clear that the instructional use of exogenous languages has been a significant factor in the high repetition and dropout rates characteristic of post-colonial education systems. As a result, government ministries attempting to manage education 'in a scientific manner' have made the mother tongue an object of experimentation in the schools.

Guinea-Bissau, Mozambique and Niger have all piloted instructional use of the mother tongue at the primary level, with varying results in terms of documentation and further progress toward implementation. This paper will highlight their cases in an exploration of the gap between educational experimentation and practical implementation of mother tongue or bilingual education. I have chosen these three countries because of my involvement in their experimental projects as a researcher or technical assistant, work that will form the basis for this reflection on the role of the researcher in the process of educational innovation.

Some time ago, Nancy Hornberger wrote an article entitled 'Bilingual education success, but policy failure' (Hornberger 1987). She discussed a large and well-supported bilingual primary education project which, though practised within the structure of Peru's educational reform and though demonstrably successful in a number of ways, failed to lead to generalised implementation through official policy. There are similar examples in other parts of the world, perhaps the best documented of which is the Six-Year Yoruba Medium Primary School Project in Nigeria, where once again clear demonstration of the benefits of mother tongue use throughout primary schooling was not sufficient to influence national policy nor to stimulate wider implementation (Bamgbose 1984; Fafunwa et al. 1989). Having been involved in similar situations of practical success where use of the findings was limited, I joined many colleagues in Africa in criticising the 'lack of political will' among leaders about which Neville Alexander speaks (Alexander 2000:11), and in thinking that a brave policy decision on the part of an education ministry or a government was all that was needed to move forward. However, later work in Bolivia made me aware that even well developed policies

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<sup>47</sup> An earlier version of this paper appeared in the proceedings of the African Languages in Education workshop held at Stockholm University in June 2003 and published by the Centre for Research on Bilingualism.



and laws do not necessarily lead to effective bilingual education. Obviously the question of how to close the experimentation-implementation gap is a complicated one, and there are many factors to be considered beyond the pedagogical.

On the basis of his extensive review of the literature on bilingual education in Africa and Latin America, Stroud (2002) has found evidence that a variety of conditions involving different parts of society must be in place. These include parent and community participation from the onset, a felt need for speaking and literacy skills in the mother tongue or other local language used, and a commitment on the part of government to making this part of the curriculum. It seems as if the process of piloting bilingual schooling should allow for the exploration of many of the factors involved, from logistical to pedagogical to governmental, and should raise awareness in many parts of society regarding alternative methods and media of instruction that are more effective than submersion of primary school children in a foreign language. Yet most countries experience a disconnect between experimentation and more widespread practice of bilingual schooling. Somehow this gap needs to be bridged, and it is logical to argue that those involved in the piloting have a part to play in the process.

What is the role of the researcher, then, in this bridging process? To address the part researchers play, this paper will begin with a contextualisation of African educational reform in terms of the historical and philosophical conditions under which experimentation has taken place. The next section will take up the three country cases individually, describing the experiences my colleagues and I have had in trying to report findings and influence policy and practice. Finally, there will be a discussion concerning the role of the researcher in this process, concluding with some implications both for future research and for strategies that are most likely to produce change.

## The context of educational experimentation

To begin with, educational experimentation in African countries can be viewed as a phenomenon of post-colonial processes. According to Obanya (2002), African school reforms have taken four main approaches: radical-revolutionary, realistic-revolutionary, evolutionary, and ad hoc. The radical approach has involved breaking away from colonial systems and practices, with some positive results such as Nyerere's *Education for Self-Reliance* in Tanzania, and the development of African languages for public and educational use in countries like Guinea-Conakry and Ethiopia. The realistic approach, which Obanya says has moderated revolutionary zeal with caution and awareness of constraints, has been taken by many countries that have kept colonial education systems but focused on 'righting the wrongs of the past' by holding conferences, publishing improved national policies, and making relatively superficial structural changes (Obanya 2002:19). The evolutionary approach, which Obanya believes characterises educational reforms in most countries, has been to make changes only when needed and to follow the rest of the world (read: former colonial powers). An example is when France abolished the first *baccalauréat* exams and most of 'francophone' Africa did the same, representing attitudes far from 'decolonisation of the mind' (ibid.:21). Educational experimentation has taken place in the context of all of these approaches, but the ad hoc approach seems especially pertinent to this discussion. This approach has involved addressing one issue at a time without looking at the larger picture or at related factors or actors who should be involved, resulting in a 'culture of pilot projects,' including not surprisingly 'piloting on the use of African languages in Education which have lasted indefinitely (e.g. Sénégal, Côte d'Ivoire, Cameroun)' (ibid.:20).

Behind all but the most revolutionary of these approaches are widely held language attitudes. Throughout his long-term work on educational language policy in South Africa and across the continent, Alexander has written extensively on the debilitating attitudes toward mother tongues and home cultures left in the wake of colonial rule. 'For reasons that have to do with the modalities of colonial oppression,' he explains, 'it seemed as though every newly independent African state was doomed to take the same language policy detour by accepting in practice the primacy of the ex-colonial language, in spite of all the eloquent rhetoric

to the contrary' (Alexander 2000:8). Language policy decisions have not happened in a political vacuum; in fact, deliberate efforts on the part of former colonial powers to promote their respective languages - not only English but also French and Portuguese - have now been exacerbated by globalisation, co-opting national elite decision-makers and further marginalising African languages and their speakers.

There are also widely held attitudes concerning what constitutes research. The point made in the opening quote about handling education scientifically may also provide a key to understanding how research and experimentation are perceived. The terms 'scientific' and 'experiment' both originate in research in the natural sciences and point to a positivistic tradition that is oriented toward 'provability,' which is not very well suited to the study of human social behaviour. While more qualitative and process-oriented research methods are certainly available, many people still have the idea that school research should involve random samples, differential treatments and control groups, and that the success or failure of a bilingual programme, for example, should be determined by comparing test scores. Clearly school research involves a whole collection of overlapping variables that are social, economic, linguistic, gender-related, health-related, and so on, and managing any type of treatment or control group can prove difficult if not nearly impossible when individual choice is involved. However, positivist arguments still abound even in economically developed countries, as evidenced by Jim Cummins' strong work to refute claims like those of Rossell and Baker (1996, as cited in Cummins 1999, 2000) who say that few or no studies of bilingual education can be considered 'methodologically rigorous' enough to constitute proof of superior results. Epistemological arguments by Cummins and others (see e.g. Krashen 1999) may be understood by researchers, but they are not likely to become part of the discourse on educational reform. This discourse is highly influenced by development agencies and dominated by economists, who develop formulae to calculate school 'efficiency' and manage to quantify even educational quality by defining it in terms of numbers of schools, books, trained teachers, and so on.

While there may be other ways to contextualise experimentation in bilingual education in Africa, these attitudes toward language and toward educational research seem to be salient in the countries with which I am familiar. The examples that follow illustrate how these attitudes can play out in practice.

## Experimentation in three countries

As mentioned earlier, Guinea-Bissau, Niger and Mozambique are used as examples here because I have worked in these three countries as researcher, technical assistant, or evaluator of bilingual programmes at some point in the past ten years. I will also discuss some of the experiences of a colleague from the Guinea-Bissau project, Mart Hovens, whose later work to revitalise bilingual education in Niger included long-term evaluation and whose published studies compare findings from Niger with those of Guinea-Bissau (Hovens 2002, 2003). The three countries reflect two different colonial language influences - Portuguese in Guinea-Bissau and Mozambique and French in Niger - where these languages, much like English in other parts of the world, are perceived as global languages representing economic, educational and other opportunity-related links to the North. The three cases also reflect different types of societal multilingualism in terms of what I have called 'levels of language' (Benson 1994, 2003). These are comparable to di- or triglossia in their reference to diverging domains and status, while also reflecting the order in which the languages are most often learned. Mozambique has basically a two-level situation (indigenous mother tongue and Portuguese official language), Niger a two- or three-level one (indigenous mother tongue, often a second indigenous language – Hausa - that serves as lingua franca, and French official language), and Guinea-Bissau a solid three-level one (indigenous mother tongue, Kiriol lingua franca, and Portuguese official language). I mention this because in a three-level situation one practical alternative may be to use a widely spoken second language instead of a number of mother tongues for initial literacy, which is in fact what was attempted in Guinea-Bissau. In each profile that follows, there is a brief description of the linguistic and educational situation in the country followed by an account of bilingual experimentation there and what has resulted, including efforts by researchers, myself and others, to disseminate information and influence policy.

### Guinea-Bissau

Guinea-Bissau has a population currently estimated at 1.4 million (UNESCO 2005) representing 30 ethnolinguistic groups, of which the largest are Balanta at 27% of the population and Fula at 23% (MICEP 1993).<sup>48</sup> Over half of all Guineans are monolingual speakers of an indigenous language; most of the rest are bi- or trilingual in indigenous languages and Kiriol, a Portuguese-substrate creole (Ahlenhed et al. 1991; MICEP 1993). Portuguese is spoken by about 10% of the population as a first, second, or third language (MICEP 1993). It is estimated that about 52% of school-age children are enrolled in primary school (UNDP 2001). Apart from scattered missionary work in mother tongue literacy, there has been one experiment in bilingual education, the CEEF project.

CEEF, or *Centros Experimentais para Educação e Formação de Professores* (Experimental Centres for Education and Teacher Training), began in 1986 at the initiative of the then Vice-Minister of Education, who was a decision-maker and innovator promoting africanist and indigenist values and whose political platform was to change the elitist bias of the school system. Functioning from 1986 to 1994 with European Community sponsorship, the CEEF project had three goals: to develop a ruralised and integrated curriculum, to use Kiriol for beginning literacy and content area instruction to facilitate acquisition of Portuguese, and to train teachers capable of implementing these innovations. The project operated in two schools in each of three very remote regions of the country, and used Kiriol, a widely spoken second language for most, for beginning instruction, transitioning to Portuguese after three years. The rationale was that if this type of bilingual education could be demonstrated to work under difficult circumstances in regions representing different mother tongues and different degrees of Kiriol diffusion, experimental results would convince national decision-makers.

Having learned about the experiment while in Guinea-Bissau doing other work, I requested and was granted permission to conduct a year of fieldwork on the CEEF project for my doctoral dissertation from 1992 to 1993. When I arrived, the CEEF project was in a declining state: although the Vice-Minister had later become Minister, he was replaced in 1991; further, the project was short of funding and the Ministry itself was experiencing financial difficulties that meant educational personnel went without pay for months at a time. The Guinean staff at CEEF, supported by technical assistants from SNV (Netherlands), were attempting to back up bilingual teachers in the field. Meanwhile, the Ministry had not recognised Kiriol in any way, even as the *de facto* language of explanation that it was in all schools, and official teacher training and curriculum development went on without consideration of the potentially new medium of instruction. (Ironically, not only were the CEEF project and the teacher training unit in adjacent offices, they shared the same administrative head.)

Because CEEF had no built-in system for monitoring and evaluation, my dissertation study became the principal evaluation of the project, and as participant observer I was able to work collaboratively with project personnel to develop linguistic and other assessments. Based on the data we collected and analysed together over that year, we could make the following points: (1) that children demonstrated high average levels of Kiriol competence by school age, and nearly universal fluency by grade 2, making it a feasible language of literacy and instruction for the early years; (2) that children demonstrated low average levels of Portuguese competence even after four or more years of schooling, meaning that submersion schooling was not resulting in communicative competence in Portuguese; (3) that there was more and better interaction between teachers and students in bilingual classrooms than in submersion ones; and (4) that virtually all parents and teachers were in favour of bilingual schooling due to the observable benefits in terms of communication, literacy skills, promotion of home cultural values, and more (Benson 1994).

To disseminate these and other results, we conducted a seminar on national languages in education in February of 1993, our goal being to raise awareness on the part of Ministry personnel who might be in a

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<sup>48</sup>Little reliable demographic or educational data is currently available on Guinea-Bissau, which underwent an intense period of civil war from 1998 to 1999 and is in the process of marshalling scarce resources to rebuild basic infrastructure, including the school system.

position to make decisions about instructional languages. The weeklong seminar, funded by SNV (Netherlands) and Sida (Sweden), included Gustave Callewaert, an educational sociologist, and Chérif Mbodj, a Kiriol linguist and director of the Centre of Applied Linguistics in Dakar, both of whom brought a great deal of prestige to the meeting. Other participants included social scientists from the National Institute for Study and Research (INEP) and others working with Guinean languages, and even the new Minister of Education made an appearance. CEEF staff, including school supervisors and directors, also figured prominently. By the end of the week, there was firm consensus about the need to officially recognise oral Kiriol use in the primary schools, which our Guinean colleagues believed was an important first step toward further recognition of the benefits of Kiriol use. Though the Minister gave verbal approval to this recognition, he was replaced soon afterwards, and the official announcement never came.

Before my departure in September 1993, I was invited to conduct a weeklong seminar on bilingual education for all staff of the research unit of the Ministry of Education. While this was well received, participants were working at the technical level and had limited decision-making power, and no official decisions of any kind were made at that time regarding languages or implications for a new curriculum. Shortly afterward I wrote an article in Portuguese summarising our findings for the academic journal published at INEP (Benson 1993), but readership was similarly limited to scholars rather than politicians.

Project support ended in 1994, and with it the experiment, scattering teachers, trainers and other personnel throughout Portuguese-medium schools and teacher training programs. My dissertation, written in English for the University of California, came out in June of that year (Benson 1994). I sent a bound copy to the library at INEP<sup>49</sup> and notified interested parties of its existence, but doubtless few could read it in its English form, and unfortunately I did not have the means at that time to translate the document into Portuguese, or better yet into Kiriol.

Thanks to Sida involvement at the research unit, two Master's theses related to instructional language were written, both of them in Portuguese. The first was published in 1994 by Mart Hovens, who combined the data collected for my study with that of sociolinguist Ibrahima Dialló as well as Hovens' own study of CEEF graduates to present bilingual Kiriol-Portuguese schooling as a highly preferable alternative to submersion in Portuguese (Hovens 1994). The second study by Dialló came out one year later and used sociolinguistic data to discuss the issue of instructional language in primary education (Dialló 1996).

As far as I am aware, the only other direct attempt to influence instructional language policy with information about CEEF findings was made by a German technical assistant at INEP in 1995. Johannes Augel went through my dissertation and wrote a series of detailed summaries in Portuguese along with his own analysis that were published every few weeks in the Bissau newspaper *Banobero* (Augel 1995a-e). Augel called the study 'a thesis that calls us to action' (March 1995) and contextualised the CEEF results by discussing mother tongue schooling evidence from other parts of the world.

Hovens went on to work with SNV support on a community-supported school project which he developed collaboratively with a rural village in southern Guinea-Bissau. This project made use of Kiriol and experience from the CEEF project, but it was on a smaller scale than the experiment had been. He and Guinean colleagues from the Ministry also worked creatively with puppet theatre presentations for national television that brought in some aspects of bilingual education and community use of Kiriol, and aimed to stimulate public discussion. However, the prestige of Portuguese seemed firmly grounded amongst elite decision-makers, and now there have been no further efforts to implement mother tongue-based schooling.

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<sup>49</sup> The INEP library was completely destroyed in the civil war in the late 1990s. Later I sent another copy at the request of an NGO that was attempting to rebuild the library and recover lost documentation.

## Niger

In 2003, Niger was estimated to have 11.8 million inhabitants (World Bank 2005:257). Ten indigenous languages are officially recognised, of which the largest is Hausa, which is spoken by 70% of the population as a first or second language (Hovens 2003). According to UNICEF (1999), only about 28% of the school-age population are currently enrolled in primary school.

Systematic bilingual experimentation began in 1973 with a large-scale USAID-funded project, which involved hundreds of schools and five different mother tongues (Hausa, Zarma/Songhay, Fulfulde/Peul, Tamajaq or Kanouri) to be used in the first three grades, with transition to French in grade 4 but continued study of the L1 as a subject through to grade 6 (Hovens 2002). This experiment received extensive specialist input during the initial years, but when these schools later reverted to Ministry supervision they lost technical support but retained their experimental status. Over time, the original transitional model became more and more diluted, so that when Hovens arrived in 1997 as a technical assistant for GTZ (Germany) there were only about 40 functioning experimental schools that bore varying degrees of resemblance to the original bilingual model (Hovens 2002).

GTZ wanted to revitalise the experimental bilingual schools and bring bilingual education back into policy discussions by starting a special support project, of which Hovens was the director. The GTZ project was part of the Department for Educational Reform at the Ministry of Education as well as the Institute for Education Development, both of whom were involved in the planning and monitoring of the project as well as all the training which was carried out. Hovens and his Nigerien colleagues began with an assessment of the schools, personnel and conditions and found that teachers and school directors were in need of technical training so that they could regain lost bilingual methodologies and gain an understanding of relevant pedagogical concepts that would aid them in supporting bilingual programmes when questioned (Hovens et al. 1997). On this basis, Hovens hired me for a short-term assignment in 1997 to train a multilingual group of teacher trainers and comment on the project design. We were in agreement from our experiences in Guinea-Bissau that Ministry of Education personnel should be involved in all training and awareness activities, not only to build capacity but also to influence future policy, something that 25 years of experimentation had somehow not been able to do. At that time we focused on improving methods for second language instruction and providing information about the basic theories and principles in bilingual schooling. This was considered to be necessary since experimental schools had lost public support over the years due to concern over the perceived loss of time spent in the official language and lack of easily available information about how mother tongue study could support the learning of French.

During his three years with the project, Hovens and his colleagues documented 'experimental' findings and a number of significant successes, framing them within theoretical models and international findings and disseminating them as widely as possible. Hovens also did some unusual things with his research design; for example, students from both bilingual and French submersion programmes were tested through both the mother tongue and French. Interestingly, even students who had not been educated in the L1 were able to understand and succeed on written L1 tests. Overall, test results were best among students who were taught bilingually and tested in the mother tongue, followed by students taught bilingually and tested in the L2, demonstrating that experimental schools achieved better results than French submersion. Lagging behind were students from the all-French system tested in the mother tongue, but they still did better than those from the all-French system tested in French, demonstrating that the best strategy for learning was not exclusive use of French (Hovens 2002).

The results obtained by Hovens and his colleagues were similar to those found in other countries, i.e. that bilingual classrooms were more stimulating, interactive, and relaxed, and that those who gained the most from participating in bilingual programmes were rural children and girls. The majority of parents surveyed were in favour of early schooling in the mother tongue and wished to see national languages used in other public contexts (Hovens 2003). In addition to conducting studies, they did some community advocacy by establishing



several village theatre groups in national languages. Their plays focused on the necessity of school, especially for girls, and the use of national languages in school. Like the puppet theatre in Guinea-Bissau, these presentations were comedies, and the reaction of the public was laughter and a lot of discussion (personal communication with Hovens, 22 July 2003). Their hope was that such events would be a light but sustainable way to influence public opinion – and indirectly the political decision makers - about bilingual education.

These results were disseminated as widely as possible, and when Hovens left his position at the GTZ project the task was taken up by Thomas Buettner and Maman Mallam Garba, the latter a Nigerien specialist in bilingual education who has also published a number of studies. The experimental schools are carrying on to date, but policy in Niger has not yet changed in response (Hovens, personal communication, 22 July 2003). Hovens' study (2003) demonstrates that a significant factor in the failure to implement mother tongue programmes is the reticence of the national political elite.

### **Mozambique**

In 2003, Mozambique was estimated to have a population of 18.8 million (World Bank 2004:257). According to the last published census data, 75% of the population are monolingual speakers of one of 24 indigenous languages, and about 25% are speakers of Portuguese as a first, second or third language (Katupha 1985). Portuguese is the official language of primary schooling, in which about 50% of the school-age population are currently enrolled (UNICEF 1999). An estimated 53% of the population lacks literacy skills (UNESCO 2004).

Beginning in 1989, a small group of linguists from the national Eduardo Mondlane University, along with educators from the research branch of the Ministry of Education known as National Institute for Educational Development (INDE), held a series of public seminars focusing on educational use of indigenous languages. What developed as an outgrowth was an experiment in bilingual education which came to be known as *Projecto de Escolarização Bilingue em Moçambique* (Bilingual Schooling Project in Mozambique) or PEBIMO. The main research question was whether use of the mother tongue could reduce student attrition and improve primary schooling in Mozambique. According to its designers, the experiment was publicly seen as a test of bilingual education, both in general and in Mozambique.

The actual experiment began in 1993 with four Year 1 classes in each of two provinces, using the dominant Bantu language of each province: Cinyanja in the northwestern province of Tete and Xichangana in the south-central province of Gaza. Bilingual classes functioned alongside all-Portuguese submersion classes in regular primary schools. Experimental students were to attend PEBIMO classes from Years 1 to 5, with the same bilingual teachers following along, after which they would move on to the next phase of primary schooling in the national Portuguese-medium system. Funding for the project - a combination of Ministry, UNESCO, and World Bank contributions - supported teacher training, materials development and production, and project monitoring was done by a team of educators at INDE.

As outside evaluator and later technical assistant for the PEBIMO project, I worked with the bilingual education team to evaluate the project and make recommendations to the Ministry of Education regarding bilingual programmes, beginning in 1996 when students were in Year 4 and continuing through 1997 to the end of the project. I also helped plan and execute the actions taken by the INDE team following the evaluations, during the period that we considered at the time to be the post-experimentation, pre-implementation phase of bilingual education in Mozambique.

The evaluations used both quantitative and qualitative methods. We tested academic achievement both years. In 1997 all available PEBIMO students (126 in total) and SNE students in 'comparison'<sup>50</sup> classes (152 in total) were tested in the subjects reflected in the Year 5 curriculum, with Portuguese as the language of

<sup>50</sup> Comparison classes were Portuguese submersion students at the same grade level in the same schools, but they could not be considered a control group in any way because of the high repetition and dropout rates that characterised the national system. Put simply, the grade 4 'comparison' classes were older, had more years of schooling and were the cleverest survivors of the sink or swim system.

testing. (Only bilingual students were tested using the mother tongue.) We also observed 64 classes and interviewed all PEBIMO personnel, Ministry and provincial officials, and parents of experimental students.

My evaluation of the 1996 data was published in Portuguese by INDE the next year and distributed widely. A later translation into English was published by Sida for wider use (Benson 2001). A colleague, Marcelo Soverano, also worked on his Master's study using a combination of data, but he was unable to complete the work. In addition, Samima Patel and I wrote an article for a magazine for teachers sponsored by GTZ (Benson & Patel 1998). Overall, the qualitative results of the 1996 and 1997 evaluations were overwhelmingly positive for bilingual education, while the test results were inconclusive. We knew that the bilingual/non-bilingual group comparison was unfair, and we also knew that the experiment did not use an effective model of bilingual education.<sup>51</sup> This meant that the 'proof' sought by the designers of the experiment was not readily apparent, i.e. it was difficult to show 'scientifically' that bilingual education was indisputably the best form of primary schooling. The PEBIMO team decided to report the research results honestly but with a great deal of explanation. We explained why the qualitative results were valid and worthy of consideration, and why the 'comparative' test scores should not be used exclusively to judge the effectiveness of bilingual education. The INDE team also agreed to report all results in the context of how bilingual education could be or should be applied to the linguistic situation encountered in Mozambique. When dealing with everyone from colleagues at the Ministry to members of the public and the media, we explained that the basic principles of bilingual education had already been established worldwide; what was needed was information about how they could be used to improve primary schooling in Mozambique.

Parents were virtually unanimous in their support for experimental schooling, and both of the provincial bilingual coordinators reported a public outcry at the end of the 1997 school year when it was announced that the bilingual experiment had ended and that INDE would take at least two years off to prepare for the future. Two different school directors reported that families in PEBIMO communities had taken in children from relatives or friends in anticipation of their being able to attend bilingual classrooms. In Gaza, a group of local leaders even submitted a written proposal to the Ministry to expand Xichangana-Portuguese instruction to 25 other schools beginning the next year, and the INDE team was put in the unfortunate position of recommending against the plan due to its unrealistic accounting of the needs for teacher training and materials production. Clearly a demand had been created in both provinces, but time was needed to prepare an adequate response to that demand. The team encouraged the provincial education directorates to track former bilingual students from 1998 on, in an effort to determine whether the experiment would have any lasting effects on their studies and/or their lives. Unfortunately the team itself has not managed to follow up on the investigation (Marcelo Soverano, personal communication, 3 September 2003).

As a result of the team's reports and recommendations, the Ministry of Education tentatively agreed with INDE that bilingual education should be implemented gradually in linguistically homogeneous areas. It would begin in the near future, in the same two provinces where the PEBIMO experiment had taken place, with an improved model and the corresponding methods and materials in the same two languages. Then, after a few more years, it would be introduced in other provinces where there was sufficient interest, with new materials in Bantu languages which would by then be ready to be utilised in terms of standardisation and codification. This would imply greater decentralisation of the Mozambican education system, with transfer of considerable responsibility to the provincial and local levels. It would also mean increasing the technical capacity of INDE's personnel to serve as resources for curriculum design and teacher training in bilingual education. In addition, other institutions such as linguistics departments and teacher training colleges would need to expand their capabilities.

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<sup>51</sup> The PEBIMO model did not introduce Portuguese until the end of grade 2, yet it was expected that students would be taught all subjects except the mother tongue in Portuguese by the end of grade 3. When in practice Portuguese was not introduced until grade 3 due to interruptions in the 1994 school year caused by national elections, instead of delaying the transition until students were ready, the programme was followed as scheduled. PEBIMO students could not be expected to develop basic communication skills in the L2 after such little instruction, much less the type of context-reduced language proficiency (per Cummins 1981) required of content area instruction in the L2.



In 1998, in a partial response to future implementation needs, INDE reorganised its bilingual education department and made plans to adopt an effective model of bilingual education and develop mother tongue materials. The two-year period from 1998 to 1999 was seen as the phase of transition between experimentation and small-scale implementation of bilingual programmes. During that time some additional publications came out, including another summary of my research in an INDE publication (Benson 1998).

Unfortunately, there have still been doubts on the part of Ministry officials about the usefulness of the mother tongue for school purposes, and some members of the elite are more interested in promoting Portuguese-English bilingualism than recognising the real needs of the nation's schools (see e.g. Lopes 1999). During seminars on a wide-scale curriculum reform, at which speakers including myself were invited to present papers, language of instruction remained a topic of discussion. Bilingual programmes in 16 languages were being readied for implementation at the beginning of 2002 (Samima Patel, personal communication, November 2001), but the planned implementation phase was postponed year after year until 2003, when pilot schools finally began using mother tongue-based programs as part of the reform. These programs have experienced delays in starting up and in receiving materials, and there is little support provided except to pilot schools in two provinces where an NGO known as Progresso has been operating, sharing its experience in adult bilingual literacy (Feliciano Chimbutane, personal communication, September 2003). Apparently the necessary commitments in terms of government support have yet to be made.

## The role of the researcher

Does the researcher play a role in the process of closing the gap between experimentation and implementation? After our experience in Guinea-Bissau, both Hovens and I were determined to do whatever we could to keep the findings of bilingual experiments alive in the public discourse on educational quality. We brought this determination to our respective jobs in Niger and Mozambique, yet even with public awareness, information dissemination seminars, publication of results, and discussions with Ministry of Education officials, implementation has remained elusive in these settings.

Clearly an important role of the researcher is to investigate aspects of the innovation and evaluate in some way whether or not the innovation represents an improvement over the status quo. The perceived need for a 'scientific' comparison, however, leads to a reliance on positivistic research, as mentioned above: random samples, control groups and quantification of performance using test scores. As Cummins explains, this dominant research paradigm fails because the assumption is that research will yield clear-cut results upon which policy-makers can base their decisions, yet the treatment variable - a change in language of instruction - is 'intertwined and interacting with hundreds of other variables that will affect program outcomes' (1999:26). We acceded to this paradigm in all three countries when we tried to compare test scores of bilingual and submersion classes even though the comparison was not valid. In addition, in all three experiments, use of the mother tongue (or lingua franca in the case of Guinea-Bissau) fell far short of the recommended period of development (Cummins 2000; Thomas & Collier 2002) needed for significant benefits to manifest themselves in L2 competence and general school performance.

One implication here is that evaluations should be approached from a different paradigm and with alternative methodologies. This has been attempted to some degree. For example, as mentioned above, Hovens (2002, 2003) tested both bilingual and 'control' groups in Niger in both languages, despite the fact that 'control' students had never been taught L1 literacy, and the results clearly demonstrate an advantage for all students when they are tested in a language in which they are competent. Alternatively, I have studied affective and other benefits of bilingual schooling that are less likely to be captured by test scores, for example by using comparative observational data (which reveals much higher levels of participation in bilingual classrooms), or parent interviews (which report observable effects such as how bilingual children take initiative at home, enjoy school, learn cultural and societal values, and so on) (Benson 2002a). Taken together, these data point to the

need for further exploration of the social mechanisms at work and the potential for L1 use to effect change more directly than might be presumed. I have also attempted to organise qualitative results so that policy-makers can relate to the data, as in the following table categorising Mozambican parents' responses to an open question about why they said they were in favour of bilingual schooling.

**Table 1: Top five reasons given by Mozambican parents for supporting bilingual education.<sup>52</sup>**

Reasons given (Open response, categorised for table)	Number of respondents (%age)
Child can read, write, and count in both languages	73 (70 %)
Value of the local language/culture is increased	52 (50 %)
Child can write letters in the L1 to family members living abroad	46 (44 %)
Using the L1 makes learning easier for the child	36 (34 %)
Child can read the Bible in the L1 at religious services	34 (32 %)

A related role of the researcher is to help previously unheeded voices find a forum. In interviewing parents and even teachers, researchers have an opportunity to reveal what people who are integrally involved have to say about bilingual education. Since these people are rarely consulted when projects are designed (projects are often imposed on local schools), this type of empowerment can be important. D'Emilio (2001) has written an entire report based on testimonies from parents and indigenous leaders in Bolivia about the impact of bilingual education on themselves, their children and their communities, and their words are arguably more personal and powerful than a table of test scores could ever be. They also reveal affective benefits for students such as raised self-esteem that echo those described by parents in Guinea-Bissau, Niger and Mozambique, so that taken together these results provide strong support for bilingual schooling.

Another role researchers take on is to disseminate findings of both their own studies and those of others. This helps to contextualise research findings and analyse them from a wider perspective. Part of the task of dissemination is to help non-specialists understand the implications of what the experiment has demonstrated. One of my concerns has been the language of reporting, since we typically publish results in European languages instead of in languages that make the data accessible to the local public. If we are aware of the existence of misinformation such as belief in language myths as mentioned above, perhaps the best way to reach people in developing countries is face to face. In my experience, messages about bilingual education carry less weight if they come directly from the researcher's mouth, and more when they come from those who have experienced the effects of bilingual programmes. In Bolivia, for example, indigenous groups known as *Consejos Educativos de Pueblos Originarios* (Educational Councils of Original Peoples), with technical support from researchers and educators, have taken on the function of disseminating information community by community in their respective ethnolinguistic regions (King & Benson 2004).

Although researchers are expected to maintain their objectivity, many take on the role of advocate at some point in their work. I personally find it difficult to take an impartial stance when reporting results, since so many studies worldwide demonstrate the benefits of mother tongue instruction, especially for marginalised groups. Hornberger (2002) has discussed the sense of urgency which advocates of reform have felt in South America, in part motivated by fear of a backlash once steps have been taken to adopt bilingual programmes. In Bolivia, for example, the Reform has thus far survived three political administrations, demonstrating that some continuity is possible (Contreras 1999:47). However, there is concern that faster

<sup>52</sup> From Benson 2000

progress must be made to guarantee that the Reform will continue to be implemented (Moya 1999; Reforma Educativa 2000; UNICEF 2000) so that critical political and ideological momentum will not be lost. On the other hand, Peru provides a now classic example of attempting to go too far too fast, when in the 1970s sweeping reforms officialised Quechua and made its instruction mandatory for Spanish speakers, resulting in such a negative reaction from the Spanish-speaking majority that the idea was immediately dropped (Hornberger & King 2000). While balancing between these two extremes is difficult, Hornberger has recently urged linguists, educators and researchers to 'work hard alongside language planners and language users to fill the ideological and implementational spaces opened up by multilingual language policies' (2002:19), implying - I believe correctly - that these spaces will not always be available.

Part of advocacy may mean looking for ways to package findings. For example, we found indications in our Guinea-Bissau data that girls seemed to be even more positively impacted by bilingual education than were children as a whole. Both Hovens in Niger and I in Mozambique sought further evidence of this effect, and can now say that bilingual schooling - in contrast to submersion schooling - appears to help all rural children and especially girls to enter and stay in school as well as to have better results (Benson 2002b; Hovens 2003). This and other implications of mother tongue use - facilitating bilingualism and biliteracy, increasing positive affect and self-esteem, revaluing traditionally marginalised languages and cultures, and increasing parent participation - all address aspects of development that low-income countries and donor agencies purport to address. By demonstrating that mother tongue-based bilingual education may be connected to improving girls' school participation, we may positively influence policy decisions.

Finding ways to package findings does not mean hiding the truth, of course. Researchers are obliged to report their findings honestly, in all their complexity, but they should also be aware of how the audience may understand and interpret these findings, and what repercussions there might be. I believe that terminology is especially important. For example, authors often use words with a negative connotation like 'problem' alongside words like 'multilingual' thereby unintentionally supporting the notion that speaking more than one language causes difficulty. Even words like 'complex' when used to describe natural linguistic diversity in a society may fuel the idea that it is impossible to offer mother tongue-based schooling. Similarly, studies that provide detailed descriptions of the difficulties of implementing a change in instructional language without offering alternatives or solutions from other studies, or without balancing costs with benefits, may be used by policymakers to 'throw out the baby with the bath water' instead of making the adjustments needed for the change to work. Neville Alexander is fond of saying that if you are not carrying out your own agenda, you are carrying out someone else's, which may be an important warning for researchers in this field.

## Conclusion

While there are obviously any number of factors involved in implementing an educational innovation like bilingual education in developing countries, this paper has focused on the researcher's role to highlight factors that are under our control. It may be clear by now that my purpose in writing has been to encourage researchers to be aware of what we can do, wherever we are along the continuum between information disseminators and outspoken advocates, to be socially as well as academically responsible for our actions and to recognise that we already play a role in the development process. My suggestion is that we make our role part of a purposeful agenda that aims at improving the quality of basic education for all and in particular for the most marginalised of learners.

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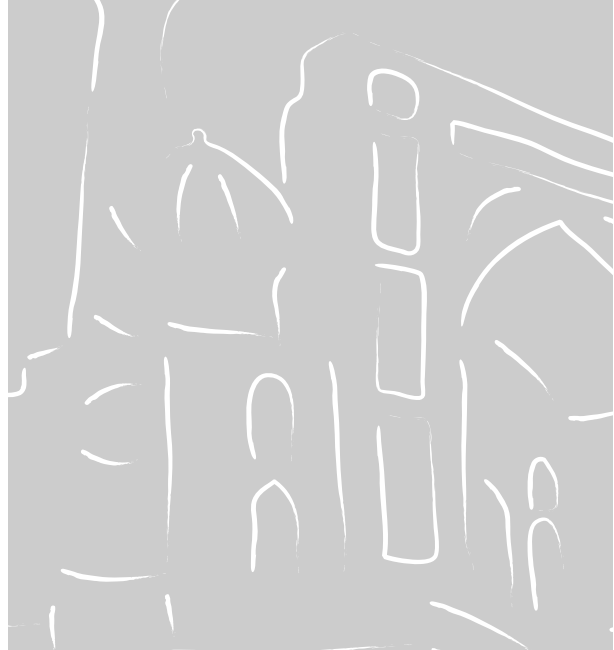
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# Chapter 8: Recognising and Countering Linguistic Disadvantage in English-Medium Education in Africa

John Clegg



## Introduction

You would think that it was important to be able to speak a language fairly well in order to use it as a medium for getting your education. That is not the case in sub-Saharan Africa. There, wherever children are learning through a language of wider communication (LWC) such as English, French or Portuguese, it is common for them to be less than fluent in these languages.

This chapter is about what happens when learners - and often teachers - struggle to use the language of learning. It is also about solutions to this problem. And finally it is about a mystery: why so few people want to take this question seriously.

I should say at the outset that I am going to be saying critical things about English-medium education in Africa and I will be risking the criticism that I am speaking badly of teachers in Africa. I certainly do not want to do that. I am criticising systems, not teachers. I have worked with a lot of teachers in different African countries and my impression of them is that they are doing pretty well in very difficult circumstances.

A word about terms. I will be using *Africa* as a shorthand for sub-Saharan Africa. I will be talking about *English* - rather than about European languages or LWCs in general - but much of what I say is equally applicable to these languages. I will be using the term *second language* (L2) to mean English, whereas it is often a third, fourth, fifth (etc.) language for learners in African classrooms. I will use the term *mother-tongue* (L1) to refer to the language which a child finds most comfortable on entering school, whereas this may be a community language rather than a home language. And I will be using the term *bilingual* to refer to contexts which are often effectively 'multilingual'. And crucially, I am talking about teaching subjects through English, rather than about English teaching.

## Achievement in African schools

Levels of achievement in African schools are much too low. Various measures give us an idea of this:

- numbers of children out of school are high
- dropout rates are high
- matriculation rates are low
- literacy rates are low (Bamgbose 2000; Williams 1996)
- levels of English language ability are low (Heugh 1995; Williams & Cooke 2002)
- students' language and learning abilities on entry to tertiary education are low (Rollnick & Manyatsi 1997).



Why is this? It is clearly to do with, for example:

- socio-economic causes such as poverty and illiteracy, especially in the rural population
- resourcing, including teacher-pupil ratio, class size, schoolbook supply, school fabric etc.
- inadequacies in teacher education.

What I want to suggest is that it is also - some would say mainly (Harlech-Jones 2001; Brock-Utne 2002) - to do with language ability: that is to say, the ability of teachers and learners to use a European language for teaching and learning (Williams & Cooke 2002).

### **Linguistic disadvantage in education**

In a lot of African countries school learning takes place largely through a European language. In most countries where English is the main language of learning, education takes place through an African language in the early years - often for the first three or four years of schooling - and English takes over after that, though widespread code-switching blurs this boundary.

Education through the medium of English in Africa, as it is currently practised, depresses school achievement. Every minister of education, NGO manager, educational aid consultant or TESOL expert needs to have this written in front of their desk in big letters. If you require children to learn through an additional language which they don't know well enough, without offering them support, you are making it difficult for them to get an education. When this situation is enshrined in education policy, it amounts to institutional discrimination: a particular form of educational disadvantage, built into the education system. I will call it 'linguistic' or 'language disadvantage'.

We can see linguistic disadvantage at work in L2-medium education when:

- learners are not fluent enough in the medium of instruction (Mol) to use it as a medium for learning, or when
- teachers are not fluent enough in the Mol to use it as a medium for teaching.

In a school in which either or both of these circumstances occur, a fundamental, far-reaching, decisive barrier is placed in the way of education. It affects every aspect of learning and - crucially - it radically undermines the effectiveness of any other attempt at improving that education system.

### **Language for learning**

The level of English language ability of many learners in African schools from year 1 right through to matriculation falls below what would be considered sufficient for them to use it adequately as a language of learning (Heugh 1995, 1999, 2001; Williams & Cooke 2002).

Language disadvantage is amplified by the fact that learners need to master not only general-purpose English language use, but also the use of English for educational purposes, or language for learning - what Cummins (1984) called cognitive academic language proficiency. (See Table 1 for an outline of the ingredients of this crucial variety of language use.)

**Table 1: Language for school learning**

<p><b>Vocabulary:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Subject-specific</li> <li>• General cross-curricular</li> </ul> <p><b>Cognitive processes, e.g.:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hypothesising</li> <li>• Defining</li> <li>• Classifying</li> <li>• Comparing, contrasting</li> <li>• Showing cause and effect</li> <li>• Showing time sequence</li> <li>• Listing</li> <li>• Adding</li> </ul> <p><b>Discourse:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Genre: text-types for specific purposes (e.g. recounting, persuasion, argument)</li> <li>• Signals of textual organisation (e.g. headings, numbering, paragraphs, connectors, back-reference)</li> </ul>	<p><b>Language skills for learning:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Writing (e.g. planning, drafting, editing, revising written work)</li> <li>• Reading (e.g. predicting, following signals of organisation, skimming, scanning)</li> <li>• Talk (e.g. groupwork talk: setting goals, monitoring progress, keeping on track, evaluating outcomes, reporting back)</li> <li>• Listening (e.g. predicting, following signals of organisation)</li> </ul> <p><b>Study skills:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Making notes</li> <li>• Summarising</li> <li>• Using the internet, a library</li> <li>• Using reference books</li> <li>• Working with charts and graphs</li> </ul>
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In the right conditions, a child can achieve general-purpose L2 ability relatively quickly and in a high-exposure context this can happen without the intervention of a teacher. Acquiring an L2 for learning, however, takes much longer and relies on teaching which is specifically focussed on that goal. In North America it is now widely accepted (Cummins 1996; Thomas & Collier 2000) that a second language learner may take two years to become proficient in the social variety of English, but seven years to use the educational variety successfully for school learning at the level expected of English-fluent learners. This is in a high-exposure context with good resourcing. It is not unproblematic to translate this finding to the context of sub-Saharan Africa, but the point should not be lost: learning in English in African classrooms is difficult and learning through the academic variety of it is even more so.

### **The ingredients of linguistic disadvantage**

In Africa the socio-educational context in which children learn is often in itself capable of making it difficult for them to succeed in school, quite apart from considerations of language. I am talking about such matters as:

- uneducated or illiterate family background
- poor school fabric
- large class size
- poor textbook supply
- inadequate teacher education
- long walking distances to school
- home pressure to leave school early.

In the face of these powerful impediments to education, one would want to ensure that the schooling which these children receive was highly supportive, comprehensible, accessible and securely embedded within their local linguistic and cultural context. Instead, however, what awaits them in school is a whole series of further barriers which language disadvantage places in their way. These are some of the main ingredients of language disadvantage:

1. Learners may be exposed to little English outside the classroom, particularly in rural areas. That means that learning English and especially *in* English is much harder work (Trappes-Lomax 1990).
2. Early education through the medium of a first language may not give children strong foundations in early L1 literacy and cognitive skills. These are vital for learning generally and especially for learning through a second language (Tucker 1999).
3. Most schools do not require children to use L1 for studying cognitively demanding subjects beyond the first three or four years (if that). This means that bilingualism does not offer them the intellectual benefits which we know it can provide (Heugh 1995).
4. Some children may have to handle the difficult task of learning English from the first day of schooling.
5. Most schools do not teach explicitly the language of learning (see 'Language for learning' above).
6. For this reason, the English which children learn up to the formal switch of medium is general-purpose English which does not equip them adequately to learn subjects through English after that.
7. At the switch of medium, there will be a big gap between their English language ability and the language demands of the English-medium curriculum (Macdonald 1990).
8. This gap can get bigger because the curriculum - and the language and conceptual demands which it makes - can expand faster than the language and conceptual ability of the learners.
9. English-medium subject teachers may not use a pedagogy which recognises the fact that education is taking place in a language which is a second (or third, fourth, etc) language for both teacher and learners.
10. The English language ability of both English and subject teachers may sometimes not be adequate for them to use English for teaching (Heugh 1999; Young 1995).
11. Teachers are likely to use a pedagogy which relies a lot on teacher-talk and learner memorisation (Arthur 1993). This makes learning linguistically and cognitively difficult even for children working in their first language.
12. Textbooks are not often written with second-language learners of English in mind and do not therefore display the degree of accessibility and language-supportiveness which English-medium education demands (Peacock 1995).

For many children in schools in Africa, a lot – and sometimes all – of these factors may apply. It is difficult to see how, under all these circumstances, social, educational and linguistic, the educational chances of these children are anything but poor. That is why using a language of wider communication such as English is a major cause of under-achievement in African education.

Language disadvantage, however, has consequences which go beyond the individual and the classroom. In the following section, I will outline what these consequences are.

## The consequences of linguistic disadvantage

I will mention ten consequences of linguistic disadvantage and say a little about each one in turn:

- It raises barriers to learning
- It reinforces unequal access to the curriculum
- It amplifies the effect of poverty on education
- It reinforces power relations in society
- It breaks the bond between school and community
- It damages the child's language and culture
- It inhibits school improvement initiatives
- It skews data on educational performance
- It reduces the effectiveness of teacher-education
- It contributes ultimately to limiting the economic performance of a country.

### School achievement

If children are educated through a second language, without the benefit of language-supportive teaching (see 'Language-supportive teaching of subjects in the L2' below), they find learning difficult and therefore

slow, inefficient and often boring. Many will drop out at the switch of medium or later (Bamgbose 2000; Heugh 1999) and underperform in the classroom, in assessment and – if they make it – at matriculation.

Education through the medium of an LWC in Africa retards the performance of both individuals and schools (Dutcher 2001). It puts a brake on their learning and can place a low upper limit on what they achieve. Schools with large numbers of children who are not fluent enough in the medium of instruction will underperform in comparison with schools where these constraints apply less.

### **Access to the curriculum**

Language is also an equality issue. Language disadvantage bears heaviest on the most disadvantaged social groups and thus reinforces the unequal access to the curriculum which these groups can experience for other reasons. For example, children from educated backgrounds handle English-medium education better than children from uneducated backgrounds (Brock-Utne 2002); and children in rural areas – partly because of low exposure to English – face greater language barriers than those living in urban areas.

### **Poverty**

Language affects poverty. Poverty is associated with low levels of literacy and general education in the family and this makes it difficult to learn through English. So the better-off benefit from English-medium education more than the worse-off. Crucially, given the orientation of current development policy towards poverty reduction, language disadvantage tends to thwart efforts to reduce poverty through education (Dutcher 2001). Poverty reduction strategies in education which do not address language disadvantage will have less impact. And conversely strategies which do address it can be more powerful.

### **Power**

If education through a European language reinforces distinctions between rich and poor, it is also a power issue. European languages are languages of power. Education through a language of power thus becomes a gatekeeper to socio-economic status (Tollefson 1991; Roy-Campbell 2001). You do not get on if you do not speak it well.

### **Relationship between school and community**

A school needs to be in contact with the families of its learners. It needs to respond to what those families want from schooling for their children. It also needs those families to understand and – where possible – reinforce what is happening in school. This bond between school and community is broken when the school uses a language for learning which is not used a lot in the community and which parents may not use confidently, if at all.

### **Language and cultural heritage**

Children's experience is shaped by the language, ideas and practices which are embedded in their family and community and which link them to the past and future of that community. School experience should grow out of this language and culture and feed back into it. When a school uses a language and culture for learning which is different from the child's, it not only makes learning difficult, but it severs the link between child and community language/culture. The school ceases to draw on it and to enrich it. It may also cease to value that language and culture as one which is good enough for school learning.

### **Educational development**

Language is important in development. Because language disadvantage in schools is deep-seated, it can undermine the success of other initiatives to improve the performance of schools in areas such as the following:

- Raising achievement
- School improvement
- Curriculum planning
- Textbook quality.

If education development projects which focus on issues such as these do not take into account that achievement is retarded by the language of instruction, their outcomes in terms of school performance will be much lower than they should be. School improvement projects in African schools often deliver less than we expect, despite considerable and normally unpaid extra effort on the part of teachers to do better. And yet we are still baffled by these disappointing results. In the debate about school achievement (see 'The debate about linguistic disadvantage' below) we still rarely face the fact that children simply do not understand lessons well enough (Dutcher 2001).

### **Educational measurement**

Not only do we fail to draw the obvious conclusions about educational achievement, but we use unreliable instruments to measure it. The measurement issue is important: language disadvantage distorts the measurement of individual and school potential. Data on learning outcomes (e.g. literacy, matriculation) in education which takes place through a European language do not reflect the levels of achievement which could be reached if European languages were not acting as a brake on learning. And here, as in the debate on access, achievement and institutional improvement, there seems to be no public recognition of the fact that the data on which international education policy is founded may be untrustworthy.

### **Teacher-education**

Language is also an issue in teacher education. The impact of teacher-education in English-medium education systems in Africa is inadequate – as measured by standard measures of educational development (literacy rates, matriculation rates, and so on). No doubt there are many reasons for this. But crucial among them is that few teacher-education courses recognise the fact that learners find it difficult to understand lessons. And thus, teacher-educators who are training teachers to teach particular subjects do not, as a rule, train them to teach the subject using the specific pedagogy which is necessary wherever learners are learning in a language in which they are not fluent (see 'Language-supportive teaching of subjects in the L2' below). A published illustration can be seen in Government of the Republic of Namibia 2000. Teachers enter the profession, find that many of their students do not sufficiently understand the language of learning a lot of the time, and do not know what to do about it.

Teachers who cannot teach adequately through a second language get low results. It is not, of course, their fault. But to train these teachers for three years at great expense, without alerting them to the fundamental impediment to learning which the language issue represents, amounts to a waste of training resources on a very large scale indeed.

### **The economy**

Finally language is an issue for the national economy. Current literacy or examination pass rates in African countries must cause concern to governments who aim to develop a skilled national workforce (Alexander 2001a, 2001b). The struggle of many teachers and learners with the language of education (Heugh 1999; Williams & Cooke 2002) is a major contributor to low performance not only in education but also in the economy as a whole.

## **Appropriate education in bilingual settings**

What can be done to improve this situation? I will mention three things:

- Introduce bilingual education
- Improve the effectiveness of education in the junior primary phase
- Train teachers to use language-supportive education to teach subjects through an LWC.

### **Bilingual education**

The most appropriate form of educational response to bi- and multilingualism in society is bi- and multilingual education (see, for example, Alexander 2001b). It is difficult to argue against learning at least partly through the mother-tongue from the point of view of its value:

- to the identity of the individual (Dutcher 2001)

- to community cohesion (Dutcher op.cit.)
- to cultural heritage (Dutcher op.cit.)
- to classroom atmosphere (Brock-Utne 2002)
- to early literacy and cognitive development (Tucker 1999)
- to later education through the medium of English (Cummins 1996; Tucker op.cit.)
- and generally as an entrance to the world of schooling.

In addition, as Heugh (1999) points out, the history of education in Africa is littered with reports which emphasise the importance of learning through indigenous languages. Above all, bilingual education works (Dutcher 2001). It works in industrialised economies where the child's first language has high social status, as in Canadian immersion schooling (e.g. Cummins & Swain 1986) or indeed in former bilingual English/Afrikaans schooling in South Africa. Equally, it works where the first language has low status as in dual-language education in the USA (Thomas & Collier 2000) or in South America (Woodhall 1998, quoted in Alexander 2001b). It can also work in African L1 literacy (Williams 1996), in African L1-medium education, as for example in the Nigerian 6-year primary project (Bamgbose 2000), and in gradually spreading experiments in African bilingual schooling (Plüddemann & Mbude 2001). In all these cases, basic conditions have to be fulfilled (such as those outlined in 'Effective education in the junior primary phase' and 'Language-supportive teaching of subjects in the L2' below). But when they are, it is perfectly reasonable to assume that learners can achieve levels of literacy and subject-matter knowledge which are equal to or better than those which they would achieve in education through an LWC (Dutcher 2001).

Bilingual education in African schools is probably also good for English-medium learning within a bilingual school. In other words, it is easier to teach and learn through English if this is done as one strand in a bilingual school rather than if it is the main or only way of teaching and learning. In largely English-medium education, the language and learning skills which learners acquire in initial L1-medium learning in the early years help them learn later through English (Tucker 1999). Similarly in bilingual education, the skills they learn in an L1-medium strand may well carry over to a parallel English-medium strand in the same way.

Some arguments against bilingual education are, at first glance, compelling. These include:

- the costs of re-orientating major components of the education service, e.g. teacher-education, inspection etc
- the costs of mother-tongue medium textbook publishing
- the planning of African languages so that they can function as media of instruction in different subjects.

I will not reproduce this debate here. These questions are discussed at length elsewhere and have been found to be solvable (Dutcher 2001). Teachers can be trained to teach in African languages. African languages can be elaborated for educational purposes, as other languages have been (Heugh & Siegrühn 1995; Mwansoko 1990). Textbooks in African languages can be published (McCallum 1995) and, with the accessibility of desktop publishing, this is now possible for languages with small numbers of speakers. What I will emphasise is that few of these arguments weigh heavily against bilingual education when compared to the negative consequences of unsupported education through a European language (Heugh & Siegrühn 1995) which I have outlined above. In addition, money will have to be spent anyway. Sticking with English-medium education will cost money. If, as I argue, it is not working as currently practised, it must be improved (see 'Language-supportive teaching of subjects in the L2' below) and this will not be cheap.

Furthermore, if bilingual education is going to be viable in the future, it is important to experiment with it now (Dutcher 2001). It would not be difficult in present circumstances for governments in Africa to initiate it at least on an experimental basis (Alexander 2001a; Harlech-Jones 2001). Indeed, in the face of the ineffectiveness of current L2-medium education and of the damage it can cause, not to pilot bilingual education could be seen as a dereliction of duty.

At this point we should add that largely monolingual L1-medium education works too (Desai 2001). It is the medium of choice in most industrialised economies; indeed most people in these contexts cannot – unfortunately – imagine any other form of education. It should also be an option for countries in sub-Saharan Africa. African children would be able to achieve good levels of language ability in a European language through normal good *foreign* language teaching, just as they do, for example, in European countries (Brock-Utne 2002). They would even have a head start, because the European language is used widely for important societal functions in their country, which is not normally the case in Europe. But if it is difficult to get bilingual education accepted as a solution in Africa, monolingual education through an African language is at the moment almost unmentionable. In time, however, we should hope that it will become acceptable and that African children can also have the benefit of using the educational language medium which richer countries prefer: their mother-tongue.

### **Effective education in the junior primary phase**

The early years of education are important for all children, because they need to develop effective foundations in cognitive and literacy skills. Children in Africa need to develop these skills in their first language and they need these skills to be especially effective because they will be necessary not only for learning generally, but also for later learning through a European language (Cummins 1996).

However, these African-language skills are often not strong enough. The reasons for this include language status, the quality of teacher-education and the quality of schoolbooks. As far as status is concerned, speakers of an African language may not see it as having educational value which is equal to that of a European language. At best, they see it as a bridge to learning in English. In teacher-education, training teachers to teach African languages may not be seen as a high status occupation (Bamgbose 2000). Books in African languages are often not as well produced as those in European languages and may be in shorter supply in the school (op. cit.). There may be few available titles overall. This is especially the case if we are talking about languages for which schoolbooks have only recently been published (for example Namibian languages), but it is also true of languages with a much longer history of educational publication. In particular, even in countries where early education takes place in an African language, the quality and quantity of books for teaching *subjects through the language* may be especially poor. Thus, at the very point where children need the best education, in order to prepare them to jump the hurdle of learning through a European language, school may let them down.

However, I do not want to give the impression that good practice in learning through an African L1 is hard to find, or that the language is never recognised as educationally valuable by communities. There is plenty of good L1 literacy development. See, for example, Bloch 2001; the Molteno Project also does it particularly well.<sup>53</sup> Many communities respond enthusiastically to early years teaching in their local language (Dutcher 2001). They do not need convincing that it is good for their relations with school, for strengthening their cultural heritage and for linking children with their families. This is something that governments can build on when they introduce bilingual education.

There is, however, another aspect to early language development in a school system which operates either partly or largely through L2. To prepare children for learning through the L2, they need a special form of L2 development. It needs to be one which focuses on language for learning across the curriculum, as well as general-purpose language. And it should be one which emphasises literacy and cognitive skills and which is coordinated with literacy development in the L1. There are plenty of examples of this variant of ELT in African schools, but, by and large, it is not what teacher-education in Africa trains primary teachers to do. They are normally taught to teach a form of English which is not specifically related to subjects or to cross-curricular cognitive development and which may be uncoordinated with L1 literacy teaching.

This thin diet will not help children to switch medium half-way through primary education. Instead, it will face them with something of a chasm between the English ability they have and the ability they need to

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<sup>53</sup>See [www.molteno.co.za](http://www.molteno.co.za)



deal with the linguistic and cognitive demands of the English-medium curriculum (Macdonald 1990). As long as education authorities do not recognise that teaching the main Mol up to and around the switch of medium requires specialist skills orientated to the educational use of language, many children will continue to respond to the switch of medium either with a slump in their performance or by dropping out.

### **Language-supportive teaching of subjects in the L2**

The need for a specialist form of teaching is even more urgent after a switch of medium. Even in bilingual education, there will always be a lot of L2-medium learning in schools in Africa. Teachers who teach subjects through the L2 need to use a very distinct pedagogy which supports learners in learning both subject-matter knowledge and the language skills which are the vehicle for that learning. This is what is meant by 'supported' or 'language-supportive' or 'language-sensitive' English-medium education as opposed to 'unsupported' pedagogy.

Language-supportive subject-teaching is familiar in ESL contexts such as multilingual schools in the UK, USA and Australia, but even in these contexts it is often not widespread enough (Clegg 1996). It is also used in Africa, but few authorities acknowledge its central importance in curriculum design, teacher-education or textbook publishing. It requires subject teachers to do two main things:

- a) Identify the main language and cognitive demands of their lessons
- b) Build in appropriate language and cognitive support to help their learners meet these demands (Burkett et al. 2001).

Teachers can provide this support in several ways, including the following:

- Use a range of language-supportive tasks for reading, writing, listening, and talk within subjects
- Use a talking style which presents concepts and shows lesson structure clearly (for example by using signals of organisation, signalling key logical moves, and so on; and by scaffolding learning through employing a range of question types, cues and prompts)
- Use a wide variety of visuals
- Use a range of forms of interaction, including front-of-class teacher presentation, group- and pairwork, and teacher-pupil 1 to 1
- Use the learners' first language and encourage the learners to do the same, under specific circumstances; in other words, refine pedagogically the bilingual practice which takes place in most English-medium classrooms (Cleghorn & Rollnick 2002)
- Teach learners some strategies for learning subjects in a second language.

In addition, language-supportive subject teaching works best when it is embodied in school policy as a whole; for example, by getting staff agreement on the use of specific cross-curricular teaching strategies.

This is a very specialist kind of teaching for a very specialised context. It is one in which learners are engaging in two learning processes at the same time; they are studying subject-matter content as well as the language by which that content is acquired. It needs to be taught; it is not easily 'caught'. If teacher-educators do not teach it then teachers will not use it; and in that case education through a European language of the kind which characterises African schools will not work.

However, although this is a pedagogical specialism, it is not difficult to learn. Teacher-trainees can easily learn it from scratch as an integral part of their subject-teaching pedagogy. This is especially the case if it is incorporated into textbooks, which then give powerful support to teachers working in this way in the classroom. The problem is not that this pedagogy is difficult; it is that education authorities and teacher-educators do not acknowledge it.

The most difficult aspect of installing this kind of teaching in schools in Africa is to convince influential figures in the education establishment - education authorities, teacher-trainers, inspectors, etc - that pedagogy matters. We are not used to the idea that the detail of pedagogy is important. Economic debate in particular fights shy

of coming to grips with it and tends to leave it largely unexplored. In development discourse, pedagogical practice is felt to be too soft and elusive a thing to count for much. But whatever the link is between educational performance and economic achievement, the fine texture of classroom practice is a crucial ingredient in it. And, in education through a second language, pedagogy matters even more. It can make the difference between an education system which works and one which does not. As long as development policy avoids this crucial aspect of schooling, there will not be too much improvement in African education.

## The debate about linguistic disadvantage

At this point I would like to say a few words about the public debate on language disadvantage. The main thing to establish is that it is not happening. There is an eerie silence about it (Brock-Utne 2000; Dutcher 2001). That is not the case in academic circles in Africa, however. There is a debate there; it is not yet powerful enough, but it is lively and informed.

The absence of debate is especially noticeable:

- in government circles
- amongst educational aid agencies
- in much of African teacher education
- amongst African textbook publishers
- in academic circles in the industrialised world
- and, oddly enough, in TESOL circles.

We do find occasional voices amongst experts in education in developing countries, in the World Bank and the United Nations, and in particular in UNESCO (for example UNESCO 2003), which raise the issue of language disadvantage. But this acknowledgement remains mainly at the level of discussion and is rarely translated into school practice. It is also important to recognise the limits of this debate. What these voices are talking about tends to be the use of the mother-tongue for literacy development in the early years of schooling. Now, teaching children to be literate in their L1 is something which is difficult to disagree with. It makes sense for a smooth entry into schooling. It also makes good cultural sense; it is not nowadays politically correct to argue against it.

What is not discussed is what happens after that, when education through a European language begins. The idea of continuing bilingual education is avoided. The concept of language-supportive education in the L2 is barely mentioned. And the idea of monolingual education (see 'Bilingual education' above) in the mother-tongue - as we prefer it in much of the industrialised world - is largely unheard of. So the kind of early years education in the L1 - which is not now widely contested - is in fact a transitional form of bilingual education: you learn in your L1 as a bridge to the L2. It does not produce an additive bilingualism.

Additive bilingual education enables you not only to add a language to your repertoire, but also to use both languages for cognitively demanding purposes throughout schooling and in society. In schools in English-medium education systems in Africa, a mother-tongue is normally acceptable as a medium, but only until an early switch of medium to a European language. After that, even if you carry on using the L1 in its own curricular slot, it no longer has crucial educational value. And the form of English-medium education which it gives way to often leads to the low achievement levels and the wider social, educational and economic damage which I have discussed.

In some countries of the world – including countries in Africa – getting a mother-tongue accepted as a language of education at all is an achievement. Similarly, when governments and international agencies acknowledge the value of early L1 literacy, they present this as a step which leads to educational gains. But in English-medium education in Africa, where the language has for a long time been a medium of learning in the early years as well as a language taught throughout schooling, even this role must now be

seen to have very limited long-term educational and economic advantages. It is an initial step to raising achievement and no more. If this is the only place a school system can offer to the L1, it will continue to damage the status of the language in the community and raise barriers to learning. So what is often praised as an advance amounts in fact only to a limited reduction in the degree of language disadvantage.

It is still accurate to say that in Africa it is common:

- for governments to develop curricula
- for teachers to be educated
- for publishers to produce textbooks
- for aid agencies to design education projects
- for academics to discuss education
- and for researchers to gather data

(all with relation to African education systems which operate through a European language) without seriously taking on board the fact that this form of education - as it is currently practised - can be fatal to long-term widespread educational improvement (Heugh 2001). Even in South Africa, where so much emphasis has been placed and so much money spent on a new outcomes-based curriculum to suit the new political dawn, the fact that most people in schools are either learning or teaching through an L2 has hardly entered this debate (Heugh 1999, 2001). This is a country in which academic debate on language in education is sophisticated and where government educational language policy encourages the use of African languages as media of instruction.

I have always found it difficult to put my finger on why the necessary debate on language choice in education in Africa is not taking place in the circles which are most influential. Alexander (2001b) is surely right to suggest that it stems partly from a sense of resignation in governments at the powerlessness of indigenous languages. It also has something to do with ignorance at high levels, since not enough key people in education departments understand the issues (Dutcher 2001). It is also related to a lack of expertise, since knowledge about how to teach and learn in a second language in developing countries is still thin on the ground both in Africa and in the industrialised North.

It may also be linked to racism. That is certainly the case in Southern Africa where apartheid governments used mother-tongue medium education to put a cap on levels of education among Africans (Heugh 1999), and where this has now tainted the concept of learning in local languages. Amongst former colonial governments it is also a form of racism to claim that, although in their countries children are educated through their mother-tongue, in Africa that is not possible. Here too, the language issue is an eminently political one. It is unlikely to suit the interests of Western countries – nor of Western publishing houses – to adopt a policy towards education in Africa which undermines the role of European languages (Brock-Utne 2002; Alexander 2001a).

With TESOL specialists, especially those from the UK, I think it is a problem of tunnel vision. We are trained to deal with issues of English as a foreign language, not as a second language. We tend not to know what learners are doing with English in the African science or history classroom, or even in multicultural classrooms in our own countries. We are still offering language-teaching solutions to what are fundamental problems of education in multilingual settings and in doing so we are prolonging the current misery of English-medium education (Phillipson 1992).

With parents, it is surely a question of wanting the best for their children and mistakenly thinking that English-medium education *is* the best. But, in addition, it is probably also a deep-seated and often tacit conviction that people use languages for different purposes (Munganda 2001; Robinson 2003). It is perceived that African languages are used in the intimate surroundings of the family and for the lively cut-and-thrust of family, street and community life; they are not thought appropriate for the rather distant and high-flown domain of education.

## Appropriate language policy for education in Africa

Two main things should be done:

- Stimulate public debate on the issue of language medium in education
- Formulate and implement appropriate education policy.

### Public debate

Key stakeholders in education (e.g. education authorities, teacher-educators, educational publishers, teachers, parents, NGOs) need to acknowledge that L2-medium education tends to act as a brake on learning, and they need to launch a public debate about it. The debate will have to deal with some widespread myths (Phillipson 1992). I will mention four of them.

### **Myth 1: The more English-medium teaching children receive and the earlier they receive it, the better they will learn through English.**

More and earlier English-medium education will not necessarily lead to better English-medium learning (Bamgbose 2000). What will do this is (see 'Appropriate education in bilingual settings' above):

- Bilingual education
- Better L1-medium education in the early years
- Language-supportive teaching of subjects through L2.

### **Myth 2: Teaching through the medium of a second language requires the same skills as teaching through the first.**

Teaching in an L2 and using the same pedagogy as teaching in the L1 - i.e. same assessment, textbooks, teacher-education and school policy - are what makes learning difficult, not easy. Education through a second language is very different from education through the L1. It possesses a describable, teachable body of pedagogical expertise in its own right which teacher-education should teach.

### **Myth 3: Improving English language teaching is the best way to improve English-medium learning.**

If we improve the practice of English language teachers, it does not have much impact on the ability of students to raise their level of achievement in subjects (Clegg 2001). A lot of money has been poured over decades into the black hole of the English language slot in the curriculum. By contrast, we can get reliable improvement in English-medium learning if we increase subject teachers' expertise in the language-supportive teaching of subjects in English. Even if we improve the general-purpose English language ability of students, it does not easily increase their performance in the educational use of the language. And finally, in the USA, UK, Australia, Canada and New Zealand, schools have for many years very much restricted the teaching of English language *per se* to minority language students. They prefer cross-curricular and subject-specific solutions (Clegg 1996).

### **Myth 4: Improving English medium teaching is the best way to improve English-language learning.**

We can easily achieve good levels of ability in English if it is taught in a foreign language slot in the curriculum, especially in countries in which English is used outside school, such as in current 'anglophone' Africa (Brock-Utne 2002). Learning English by using it as a medium for learning can help a great deal, but it is not necessary.

### Education policy

I will mention four policy measures which can help improve school effectiveness:

- a) Start implementing bilingual education through pilot schemes in the short term and plan to expand it in the longer term.

- b) Train teachers - especially in initial training - to use language-supportive practice to teach subjects in English.
- c) Introduce language-supportive principles to the other mainstays of the education system, for example, the training of trainers and inspectors, curriculum development and the production of textbooks.
- d) Finally, nurture expertise in effective education in multilingual settings in developing countries. There is not enough of it about either in Africa or elsewhere. And nurture it especially at the most influential levels of the education service, including government, universities, teacher-education institutions, educational publishing and inspectorates.

Excellent practice exists, of course, in Africa. It is found in some higher education institutions including, for example, the University of Port Elizabeth (Burkett et al. 2001) and PRAESA, the Project for the Study of Alternative Education in South Africa, at the University of Cape Town (Beckett 2001). But more commonly it is found at the lower levels of the education service, in good schools and in NGOs (Dutcher 2001). It is not common in teacher-education. What this means is that, in the immediate term, there is a need for teacher education to learn from schools by embracing good practitioners and helping them to become trainers. The traditions of teacher-education institutions and education departments are often hostile to this bottom-up process of taking expertise up the system from the base. But in the short term this is probably the only quick way of getting expertise in language-supportive teaching and bilingual education into teacher-training.

I have linked under-achievement in African schools with the question of language medium. It is important to take up this question urgently in the practice of education and especially at levels which make policy on Education for All. But it is also important to debate it in those agencies which are engaged in larger social processes such as poverty reduction and the battle against HIV/AIDS. Education is vital if there is to be progress in these enterprises. Language medium is a fault at the heart of African education. To repair this fault will not only improve education; it will also make it easier to achieve other broader goals for which effective education is necessary.

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## **Strand 3:**

English  
language  
teaching  
development  
projects

# Chapter 9: ‘The Hedgehog and the Fox’: Approaches to English for Peacekeeping in Central and Eastern Europe and Central Asia

Paul Woods



## Introduction

This chapter compares British and American approaches to support for the teaching of English to the military in Central and Eastern Europe and Central Asia. English is needed by multinational peacekeeping forces to prevent, reduce and resolve conflict, as a prerequisite for development. The use of English facilitates ‘interoperability’, enabling military and other security forces from different countries to collaborate effectively in multinational peace support operations.

## The hedgehog and the fox

Anyone who has read Tolstoy’s *War and Peace* will have been somewhat puzzled by the epilogue, a lengthy discussion of determinism and free will which seems to sit oddly with the rest of the novel. One of the UK’s best known 20th century philosophers, Sir Isaiah Berlin, wrote a famous essay entitled *The Hedgehog and the Fox* (Berlin 1953). This title is taken from a quotation by the Greek philosopher Archilocus who said, ‘The hedgehog knows one big thing, the fox many things.’

Berlin’s argument was:

... taken figuratively, the words can be made to yield a sense in which they mark one of the deepest differences which divide writers and thinkers, and, it may be, human beings in general. For there exists a great chasm between those, on one side, who relate everything to a single central vision, one system less or more coherent or articulate, in terms of which they understand, think and feel - a single, universal, organising principle in terms of which alone all that they are and say has significance - and, on the other side, those who pursue many ends, often unrelated and even contradictory, connected, if at all, only in some *de facto* way.

Berlin claims in his essay that Tolstoy was by nature a fox, seeing many things, but believed in being a hedgehog, with one big idea to which everything else was subordinated.

‘What has all this got to do with Peacekeeping English?’ you may ask. In this paper I will compare and contrast British and American approaches to the teaching of English to the military in Central and Eastern Europe and Central Asia.

English is needed by multinational peacekeeping forces involved in preventing, reducing and resolving conflict, the absence of which could be seen as a necessary prerequisite for meaningful and sustainable development. The use of English for, to use the jargon word, 'interoperability', enables military and other security forces from many different countries and linguistic backgrounds to work together effectively with a common aim in multinational peace support operations. Take the example of the Polish-led peacekeeping force which was posted to central Iraq in 2003.<sup>54</sup> At first sight this was a motley crew, led by a Polish Commander and split into three brigades. The first brigade was composed of peacekeepers from Poland, Bulgaria, Romania, Hungary and Lithuania. The second brigade, commanded by a Ukrainian officer, included troops from Ukraine and Kazakhstan. Spain commanded and led a third brigade supported by units from Honduras, the Dominican Republic and El Salvador. A commentator<sup>55</sup> quite correctly pointed out that this force would be entirely dependent on English as a common means of communication, and questioned its viability, given that in the recent past Polish forces had had difficulty filling all the posts they were meant to at NATO headquarters because of the poor level of English of senior Polish military officials.

In this chapter I argue that there are fundamental differences between the British and American approaches to peacekeeping English. The US approach is that of the hedgehog, monolithic, 'one best way', using an integrated system, thoroughly tried and tested, technology-based, method-driven and heavily dependent on US inputs of both personnel and funding. The British approach is that of the fox, context-sensitive, no one best way, dependent on building local capacity and systems, responding to local needs, employing and training local teachers, less dependent on continuing external donor support, and therefore, one would hope, ultimately more sustainable in the longer term. I would not wish to claim one approach is necessarily more valid or 'better' in some way than the other; they are both effective in terms of their own objectives, and both are being used to teach English successfully to the military in an extensive list of countries.

## Aims and objectives

First let us look at the aims and objectives of the two programmes. The aim of the UK Peacekeeping English Project (PEP) is to 'provide English language training for military and other security forces, to facilitate interoperability and to enable a greater UK contribution to international peacekeeping and relief operations' (British Council 2003a).

The mission of the American Defense Language Institute (DLI) is 'to train international military and civilian personnel to speak and teach English'. The DLI web site states:

From the point of view of US national interests, the mission of an in-country English Language Teaching Program (ELTP) is to produce a sufficient number of English-language-qualified personnel to support US Security Assistance objectives. ... The English-language-qualified personnel produced by in-country ELTPs are essential to the success of US arms sales ... because their graduates are the individuals who are trained ... to maintain and operate the weapon-systems received from the US. The in-country ELTPs also feed students into US military schools of Professional Military Education (PME). Therefore, the goal of an in-country ELTP is to train the student to a required level of English language proficiency sufficient for technical training or PME as measured by the ECL<sup>56</sup> test.<sup>57</sup>

We can see that the aims and objectives of the two programmes are quite different. The British programme is primarily designed to facilitate interoperability within NATO, EU or UN peacekeeping forces, to enable communication with staff of NGOs and relief organisations such as the Red Cross/Red Crescent,

<sup>54</sup> Source: <http://www.talkingproud.us/International062703.html>

<sup>55</sup> EL Gazette, September 2003

<sup>56</sup> ECL = English Comprehension Level test; see below for details

<sup>57</sup> Source: [http://www.dlielc.org/overseas\\_programs/general.html#mission](http://www.dlielc.org/overseas_programs/general.html#mission)

and to enable students to benefit from in-country military training, such as that given under the British Military Assistance Technical Training (BMATT) programme. The DLI programme, in contrast, is designed primarily to bring students up to a level where they can benefit from professional military training in the US and to support foreign arms sales.

## Programme structures

The structures of the two programmes are very different. We will examine them separately, in some detail.

### American approach

DLI programmes in-country use the same integrated syllabus tests and materials as are used back in San Antonio, Texas. The core of the programme is generally the American Language Course (ALC), a series of 36 weekly units designed for use on intensive programmes in the US, where students are taught for six hours per day, five days per week, for periods of several months. The courses are technology-driven, being designed for use with American supplied language laboratories, which come in four types, ranging from a basic listening lab, through audio-active and audio-active comparative, to the latest computer labs using CD ROM technology. High technology can be a problem at times. For example in Dushanbe the US government had to supply a generator to make the lab work because the local electricity supply is pretty unreliable.

The underlying language teaching philosophy behind the ALC programme is audiolingualism, where students learn patterns and structures by listening and repeating without necessarily being made aware of appropriate use of language. One could argue that the ALC course misses a trick by paying only lip-service to military language and military terminology. The argument goes that it is necessary to teach general English first and only later, once the 36 units have been completed, are students ready for technical and military vocabulary – something with which the proponents of an English for Specific Purposes (ESP) approach to English for the military would disagree.

Testing is very closely integrated with the course content. Because the same course is used worldwide it is cost-effective and relatively straightforward to develop a global testing system which relates closely to the content and methodology of the course. To quote from the DLI website:

DLIELC [Defense Language Institute English Language Center] conducts English language proficiency testing using the Oral Proficiency Interview (OPI), a face-to-face or telephonic interview, and the English Comprehension Level (ECL) test, a multiple choice test of listening and reading comprehension. DLIELC also makes available the American Language Course Placement Test (ALCPT) for English language programs conducted outside of DLIELC. ... Achievement testing of American Language Course (ALC) objectives is conducted using book quizzes and performance tests, which can be obtained with the course materials.<sup>58</sup>

Where American teachers are sent overseas, they are often on 13 week assignments. This means they can do little more than teach the ALC materials in exactly the same way as they would teach them if they were still back home in San Antonio, Texas. There are some DLI staff on longer term assignments of two or more years, but this seems to be the exception rather than the rule.

Around the world, the US budget for English language teaching for the military doubled in the aftermath of 11th September from \$50 million p.a. to \$100 million p.a. This does raise some doubts about the sustainability and affordability of the American approach. As far as I am aware, there is no conscious effort on the part of the US authorities to develop sustainable local systems, and if US financial support were withdrawn there is a strong likelihood that the systems they have set up would quickly collapse.

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<sup>58</sup> Source: [www.dlielc.org/testing/index.html](http://www.dlielc.org/testing/index.html)

### British approach

Because the British programme is designed to help develop sustainable local systems, it is much more difficult to capture its essence, which varies from country to country depending on the local context. In Central and Eastern Europe and Central Asia there is an agreed project management plan (British Council 2003b), with five central objectives, which are:

- To facilitate the short term rapid build up of a specific number/target of English language users to meet a country's regional and multinational obligations or facilitate international contact for senior personnel.
- To promote the development of a long-term sustainable host nation infrastructure to eventually enable a self-sufficient strategy to meet that country's needs. This should include improved procedures for trainee selection, establishing positions for trainer trainers in the personnel structure, and establishing an independent initial testing system.
- To assist with the provision of short and long term functional ELT for specific purposes; e.g. conference participation, preparation for international assignments, work requirements, preparation for international exchanges and training courses, career development and promotion.
- To promote greater regional co-operation, understanding, interoperability and dialogue between Armed Forces in the region.
- Through exposure to UK values and ethos, to contribute to the improvement of the professionalism, standards and capabilities of the Armed Forces and public security agencies, particularly with regard to their respect for human rights, the rule of law and the primacy of a democratically elected executive.

Each country has its own country project plan which sets out local objectives and activities for a three-year period, related to the central objectives in the overall management plan.

Each country is encouraged to set up a country project management team, with representatives of key stakeholders, including the local Ministry of Defence, and in some countries also Justice and Home Affairs or the Interior, the UK Defence Attaché, a representative of the British Embassy (often the Deputy Head of Mission), and the British-recruited country project manager. Agreeing the country plan and monitoring its implementation are the responsibility of this team.

There is no set course book recommended by the project. UK publishers are hurrying to fill the gap in course books with a military context, for example DELTA are working on a course called *At Ease in English*, designed specifically with peacekeepers in mind, and Macmillan are producing a three level course called *Campaign* which will take students from false beginner level to STANAG<sup>59</sup> Level 3. In some cases the PEP project has helped to develop locally relevant context-specific ESP materials; examples include English for the air force in Hungary, English for police and border guards in Romania, and a tactical English for peace support operations CD ROM in Lithuania. In other projects, for instance in Ukraine, standard General English course books such as *Headway* are used and supplemented with materials set in a military context.

There is a very strong emphasis on teacher development. A programme of summer and winter schools is run each year, covering a wide range of topics, including methodology, project management, classroom management, curriculum and materials development, testing, teacher training and trainer training. These courses are open to teachers of English to the military and other security forces from any of the countries where the project operates.

Test development is designed, not to link in with courses in the UK, but to underpin NATO systems. Sixteen project staff have been working on postgraduate level testing courses at Lancaster University, and in twelve countries there are now trained testing teams which are responsible for setting and administering standardised NATO tests based on the NATO STANAG test descriptors. Those countries which are already in NATO (Poland, Hungary, Czech Republic) now have well-developed testing systems. Aspirant NATO members have Membership Action Plans which specify the number of posts at NATO headquarters they are expected to fill and the levels of English which will be required for effective membership of NATO.

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<sup>59</sup> STANAG = Standardised Agreement

UK recruited staff employed by the British Council are all employed on renewable one-year contracts, but the assumption is that they will normally stay in the same country for several years. This allows them to gain a good understanding of the local context and culture and to make a more significant contribution than staff on very short term contracts. In general, the preference is for projects to make use of local teachers employed by the local Ministry, on a local salary, because this is more sustainable in the longer term. In a few cases local teachers are employed directly, or they are paid a modest salary supplement in addition to their local salary, so as to discourage them from taking on two or three different jobs in order to make ends meet.

The costs of the UK programme are approximately 1/10 of the American programme. This means that the demands on local ministries' budgets are relatively modest. At the time of writing, all aspects of sustainability of the UK programme are being looked at, in order to try to ensure that projects have a good chance of continuing once UK financial inputs are withdrawn.

The focus on sustainability includes ensuring that projects have a clearly stated shared purpose. This implies that long-term mutually beneficial collaborative relationships and a shared vision exist amongst project staff, collaborators and stakeholders. Everyone gains from the success of the project. Goals are clearly articulated, periodically revisited and consensus re-affirmed.

There is a strong emphasis on the need for locally-owned long-term planning. The expectation in each individual project is that the ministry will have a long-term plan for language teaching which incorporates input from all external donors/collaborators, that the ministry is seen to be in control of the planning process and that identified posts in the relevant ministry or key institutions have responsibility for the development and management of language training.

Emphasis is put on knowledge and skills training, ensuring that training provision (including type, level, quantity, and availability) matches current and planned needs; that selection for training is based on needs and carried out through transparent impartial procedures; and that the organisational structure clearly identifies the status of language training personnel (civilian or military) and recognises levels of expertise and specialist skills.

Efforts are made to ensure that decision-making and power are distributed, with power being shared so that everyone feels responsible for the project, wide participation in the programme is developed, and decisions are reached by consensus as far as possible.

Procedures for selection, induction, and management of teaching staff are reviewed to ensure that language training personnel are selected on merit, that there is a standard procedure for inducting new language trainers and that existing institutional processes are used to meet project needs.

Attention is paid to budgeting and planning. Ministries/institutions are encouraged to develop training plans for agreed volumes of training at specified levels, with adequate resources to plan, deliver and evaluate courses. Where possible resources are shared (e.g. by using materials developed in other countries, or by sharing training and resource between military and non-military security forces).

Efforts are made to ensure that resources available to learners are adequate to enable them to participate fully in the programme of training and to achieve specified course objectives, including offering opportunities to enhance proficiency through self-study and to improve/maintain skills after completion of formal training. Materials are developed targeted to specific groups of learners. Self-access learning is promoted and facilities for this are developed. Programmes are designed to educate students for a variety of situations, enhancing their employability and the marketability/flexibility of the training programme. Evaluation of programmes is carried out regularly and results are clearly documented.

Finally an important element of sustainability is included ensuring that assessment procedures for language skills proficiency are valid, reliable, practical and moderated to an internationally accepted standard.

## Conclusion

In preparing this chapter I posted an early draft on the IATEFL Global Issues website. Some of the comments I received were very perceptive and thought-provoking.

For example, Bill Templar<sup>60</sup> referred me to Subcomandante Insurgente Marcos's classic essay 'The Fourth World War', published in *In Motion* magazine.<sup>61</sup> Marcos argues that during the Third World War, or the Cold War, Russia and America faced each other as superpowers. But with the collapse of communism at the start of the 21st century we moved into the era of the Fourth World War.

Globalisation means that the threat to world peace is no longer seen as coming from national armies. Russia and the US are both focussed on a war against terrorism, with the Russians fighting the Chechens and the Americans pursuing regime change in Afghanistan and Iraq. Marcos claims:

... throughout the entire world, the restructuring of armies is so that they can confront a local conflict with international support under supranational cover, and under the disguise of a humanitarian war. ... Military doctrine moves from what is called 'system' to what is called 'versatility' ... I have got to be ready to do anything at any moment. And that is going to define the entire new military doctrine of armies ... Under the new doctrine, national armies go on to play the role of local police ... The point is no longer defending the nation. Since the main enemy of national stability is drug trafficking, and drug trafficking is international, national armies which operate under the banner of national stability accept international aid or international interference from other countries.

In this brave new world, armies have to be fleet of foot, able to deploy rapidly within days to any corner of the world, acting under the auspices of the EU, UN or other international bodies, fighting hidden enemies who can strike in unexpected places at any moment, and with a massive shift towards policing functions. This raises all kinds of dilemmas. For example, how do you deal with the problem that the peacekeepers for one side might be seen as oppressors or aggressors by the other? 'Terrorists' for one side might be freedom fighters for another. Northern Ireland and Iraq are both cases in point.<sup>62</sup> *If this* is so, how do you decide what is a just cause and what is not?

In this brave new world, whether we like it or not, language is going to play a vital role as the medium of communication for security forces, and the English language will inevitably be the main linguistic vehicle for promoting interoperability.

The UK and the US are approaching this issue in very different ways. As Bill Templar from Vientiane comments:

The DLI is military, the British Council will never be. So 'hedgehog/fox' might be better labelled: hegemonic [top-down] vs. perspectivist [multifocal].<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>60</sup> <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/gisig/message/510>

<sup>61</sup> <http://www.inmotionmagazine.com/auto/fourth.html>

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<sup>63</sup> <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/gisig/message/496>



# Chapter 10: The New Prescriptivism

Psyche Kennett



## Introduction

For training to be effective it must change both attitude and behaviour – but which comes first? Many ELT training projects fail because teachers are required to be reflective practitioners before they have the core skills to reflect with. This chapter rejects the Western European platitude that a prescriptive approach to training is ‘bad’ and looks instead at what happens to teachers who have undergone highly structured methodology training and are then encouraged to follow more reflective professional development. New Prescriptivism is about a ‘right way’ of doing things; in other words it is about how, by getting the practice right, the rest will follow. Examples are drawn from in-service teacher training in the Vietnamese school system where teachers were empowered to implement positive change in their classrooms. The chapter explores the pragmatic issues of such a didactic approach: what to prescribe, getting the balance right between pressure and support, what to reflect on and the interdependency of training and professional development.

## A rationale for prescriptivism

Most people would be unhappy with a doctor who did not prescribe treatment. Yoga is based on the very principle of freedom through discipline. Musicians, dancers and athletes are admired by TV audiences for the master classes they attend. Yet many teacher educators recoil from the idea of ‘a right way’ of teaching. They feel uncomfortable prescribing systematic, discipline-based acquisition of teaching techniques, materials development or classroom management skills, even when teacher-participants are crying out for them. A common complaint on in-service courses is about the lack of input, the lack of ‘ways of doing’, the trainer’s reluctance to state an opinion or ‘demonstrate’ a technique. Trainers, particularly in the British postgraduate system, have often intimated that their direct input may in some way unduly influence participants. But this is a type of inverted arrogance. Participants the world over are sharp enough to take or leave what they want from anyone’s input, once they have had time to process it. Assimilation includes a range of attitudinal change; not only acceptance but also modification and rejection.

Wallace’s discussion of prescriptivism versus reflective professional development (1998) quotes research that showed pre-service teachers were the ones who complained most about prescriptive approaches to teacher training. Already practising teachers were much more open to the ‘recipes’ of trainers they considered more experienced than themselves. Of course, no-one wants to be told what to do by an incompetent, but the opposite also applies: many in-service teachers are more than willing to work with a master practitioner who can hone their skills and demonstrate very practical ways in which to increase productive learning in the classroom. In less progressive settings, in-service teachers who have worked for many years in a traditional grammar-translation, chalk and talk environment need not only to be convinced of the value of a learner centred approach, but also to be shown how to implement such an approach. By giving teachers a very pragmatic, task-bound framework, which includes lesson ‘shapes’, steps, techniques, materials and lesson plans, and the classroom management skills to carry them out, learner centred learning will take place. Teachers become convinced of learner centred effectiveness by witnessing its results.

The rationale for New Prescriptivism is therefore twofold: to provide toolkits for teachers who already have the 'why' but need the 'how', and to provide the 'why' through the 'how' for those teachers who are stuck in the old inefficiency of chalk-and-talk. New Prescriptivism achieves attitudinal change through first changing behaviour – the reverse of usual approaches. In some ways it is a deep-end approach. By throwing teachers into structured teaching practice and making them try out new techniques within a given framework, they see the results through the change in their students' behaviour. They witness increased participation and creativity in the classroom, and attitudes begin to change organically. In this sense prescriptivism is similar to some alternative health programmes: instead of objecting, try it for thirty days and see if it works.

As well as the argument that prescriptive approaches may 'unduly influence' participants, prescriptivism may limit the reflective practitioner's ability to connect old and new classroom practice or it may create a negative loop in a process approach. But more often than not the main objection to it comes from threatened academics who are not master practitioners themselves, promoters of methodology who have neither experienced nor mastered the discipline of a core skills training. For years these university based educators have hidden behind the reflective 'process', insisting the real input must come from the participants, and in one thing they are right: it is not possible to be prescriptive unless one knows more than the learners in the class. If we do not know more than those we teach, things go round in circles. Only the master practitioner has the right to prescribe. Expertise in this sense should not be seen as threatening or elitist, but as a given standard that teacher educators must earn. It may, however, disinherit many university methodology 'lecturers'.

All education systems should be seen as 'developing' when it comes to school systems. There is nothing more colonial than prescribing from a sense of national 'rightness': 'This is how we do things in Britain'. It must be stressed that New Prescriptivism is not Neo-Colonialism, nor is it something that Asian teachers want but European teachers do not want. In the national evaluation of the implementation of the Literacy and Numeracy Strategies for primary education in Britain (Earl et al. 2003b), it was reported that most teachers wanted to be told how to conduct the 'literacy hour'. Lesson plans and guidelines for specific classes were equally in demand on this national UK project as they were on the sub-national English Language Teacher Training Project in Vietnam. At the same time, both countries face the problem of a significant number of teachers who follow the prescription but do not understand the rationale behind it. This, of course, is where the real danger lies, and where this chapter eventually leads. In short, New Prescriptivism, as described here, is neither east nor west, but a third thing: practice that has emerged from working in secondary school systems across hemispheres that can be used anywhere in the world.

Advocating a right way of doing things in Asian school environments does have an added advantage though. Vietnamese teachers belong to a model-based culture which creates an expectation of 'right ways' of doing things. By building on this expectation, trainers are building on what teachers already know, which in itself is a strong principle in all in-service teacher education. Under the same token, asking teachers to accept multiple 'right ways', to see approaches and methods multiply with equal value, to advocate the 'rightness' of 'no right way' is, ironically, culturally insensitive.

## What to prescribe

Of course not everything could or should be prescribed but it helps if the basics are. There is nothing worse than assuming that the core skills are there when they are not, of getting teachers to reflect on thin air. As a supervisor who has helped teachers with classroom research projects during in-service programmes - teachers who have been practising for ten, fifteen, twenty years yet who have never learned their core skills - I experience a sinking feeling every time a project on 'Does Groupwork Work?' is put before me. For me, projects like this are no more than a cry for help, for this is a simple classroom management issue, not a topic for research. Teachers cannot research the efficacy of groupwork in a

secondary school situation with large classes without knowing how to put students into groups in the first place. When they try to carry out this research without the core classroom management skills, they usually conclude that groupwork does not work simply because they cannot manage the logistics. This only goes to reinforce the worst conservative force in classroom practice: 'I cannot do it, therefore it cannot be done.' But when teachers learn how to manage mixed ability classes of over fifty students in fixed-bench rows, how to appoint, elicit and manage group roles, how to progress from controlled to less controlled, from open pairwork to closed pairwork to groupwork, the question 'does it work?' becomes irrelevant. The teacher learns to create a system and an environment in which students cannot help but work in groups and talk to each other in order to complete the task they have been set.

Prescribed recipes for such things jump start the classroom researcher into real issues to reflect on: Are thirteen year old students mature enough to work in mixed-ability groups or is it more realistic to put them into same-ability groups? How do students deal with turn-taking and what task elements encourage a better spread of turns? Are Asian lower secondary school students inspired or de-skilled by watching stronger students 'perform' for the teacher? What groupwork elements encourage students to improvise with language? What elements stunt communicative flow?

So, prescriptivism is for mastering the core skills in teaching, to avoid reinventing the wheel, to use the recipe of 'steps' as a jump off point for professional development. It makes teacher education more efficient, more cost effective, less labour intensive than discovery or reflective or school based learning would. It is useful, then, to list what can be taught prescriptively, drawing on the initial years of the English Language Teacher Training Project (1998-2003) which trained teachers and teacher trainers for the in-service lower secondary school system in about one third of Vietnam.

- In terms of **methodology**, providing 'core skills' for teaching: increasing teachers' repertoires and providing toolkits of techniques for teaching vocabulary, practising grammar items, pre-reading activities etc., lesson 'shapes' for new language and the four skills, and classroom management for eliciting, checking understanding, giving instructions, monitoring, managing work arrangements and so on;
- In terms of **course management**, providing 'time budgets': how long it takes to do things, and how to calculate the ratio of participants, trainers, course length, learning curves, intensity and achievement;
- In terms of **trainer training**, providing standards and techniques for teaching practice observation and feedback: giving oral feedback, written reports, etc.; session delivery: input-task-output, etc.; and programme design: matching training modules to teachers' needs; developing new courses, etc;
- In terms of **materials development**, providing the content and process for developing task based materials: guidelines for syllabus and item writing, layout skills for textbooks and self study materials, piloting and evaluation techniques, etc;
- In terms of **professional development**, providing presentation techniques, teacher development skills, keeping journals, etc.; providing tools for information retrieval and small scale classroom research; providing access to teacher networks and associations.

As to this last point, I see no inherent contradiction in the fact that teachers need to be 'trained' how to develop professionally. Prescription and reflection, training and development: these things are not mutually exclusive. They exist in complementary relationships within teacher education. Teacher development cannot be achieved without some elements of training. It is not a question of espousing one or the other. Without input in research methods or results analysis, teachers simply cannot carry out small scale research. For anyone who has worked with teachers who have never 'done' professional development before, it comes as no surprise to learn that teachers have to be taught how

to use journals, for example, as a tool for reflection. Without specific journal training, most teachers will use their journal to keep regular course notes in, or as personal diaries with no professional significance.

By increasing teachers' core skills - their sense of 'can do' - we increase what is possible in the classroom. Increased repertoires mean increased confidence and flexibility. A teacher who is able to use a variety of techniques is catering for a variety of learning styles. In this way, New Prescriptivism becomes an appropriate approach for national educational change in the school system. It addresses the problems of efficiency and cost effectiveness on a large scale. In a small, educationally sophisticated, time rich, resource rich, skill rich environment it may not be necessary. But, ultimately, prescriptive learning of core skills is about honouring our commitment to children in the school system, when we are working with a large, inexperienced work force. We have to look beyond teachers' professional development needs to children's basic school needs. In HIV prone communities, where the teaching force has been decimated, and new teachers' life expectancy is tragically low, initial training must be achieved in a matter of months. The pressure to become pedagogically functional as soon as possible is overwhelming; there is little time to reflect.

## Pressure and support

In less drastic settings, national reform in education requires a balance of pressure and support: pressure to force teachers to change, support to encourage them to change (Watson 2003). New Prescriptivism is the 'pressure' but it can also be seen as the 'support'. There is nothing more stressful for a semi-skilled teaching force to be told to make changes without being told how to make them. For example, in Vietnam, the introduction of the new Grade 6 English textbook nation-wide was highly threatening to the majority of teachers who did not understand communicative methodology, let alone were able to use it. But with the accompanying Lesson Plan Books provided by the English Language Teacher Training Project - a lesson by lesson prescription of what techniques to use - English language teachers felt much more supported than their colleagues teaching other subjects who had no such set of recipes.

New Prescriptivism, embodied here as skills driven, intensive, supervised teaching practice type training courses, is the 'Outward Bound' of teacher education. Teachers must follow a prescribed course which is physically, mentally and emotionally challenging. It is a high stakes experience, but they are supported from 'falling' in the way the skills are transferred and the way teaching practice is managed. Participants achieve results in the classroom and in their own personal development that they really had not expected to. Through this pressure-support process they are empowered.

For behavioural change to happen in the way teachers teach (for example, to specifically introduce learner centred learning into traditional chalk and talk classrooms), a balance between pressure and support must exist. Reflective approaches can lack the pressure element and fail just as prescriptive approaches can lack the support element and fail. In a parallel ELT training project in Vietnam, out of a group of 50 in-service methodology teachers from colleges who designed small scale classroom research projects, only one actually carried out the research because implementation was voluntary and unsupervised in the trainee's own institute. This was support without pressure. Likewise, in national reform projects, without adequate follow-up support mechanisms (for example, a system of school-based mentors, or working with the whole school as the unit of change) momentum is lost and practitioners become isolated and return to their old ways. This is pressure without support. It is therefore important from the outset to include pressure and support both in the prescriptive kick-start and in the more long term reflective professional development that follows. The support element of Prescriptivism is the 'New' of my title, just as the pressure element should become the 'New' in a paper on New Reflection.

## From prescription to reflection

New Prescriptivism kick-starts core skills transfer in teacher education but is not an end in itself. The key question is, if you buy into the practicality of an initially prescriptive approach, how do teachers progress from there? Their behaviour has changed and with it they have a more learner-centred view of the world. I have already discussed the consequences of a reflective approach without adequate core skills mastery. But what happens the other way round, with a prescriptive approach without adequate reflective skills to move on?

The best scenario is that teachers accept a prescriptive start in order to enhance their teaching repertoires. They are skilled enough and grounded enough in the new skills to accept, reject or modify what they have learned. Reflective on-going professional development grows out of this strong, generative foundation. Their first hand experience of what works and their sense of 'can do' empowerment give them the right criteria to assess new styles and approaches. They learn to transfer what they have learnt in one field to another because they can move up and down the experiential ladder of learner to teacher to researcher and back.

The worst scenario is that teachers identify with the prescriptive approach too unquestioningly. They learn the steps without the rationale and become caught up in a set of behaviours that they follow mechanically, without understanding why. They lose sight of learning objectives; their lessons become filled with activities, rather than a sequence of activities that lead to a learning aim. It may still be very participatory, but without a considered employment of recipes and techniques, both teachers and students are jumping through a series of hoops for no particular reason. Students become good at school rather than becoming good at English. Neither teacher nor students can move on because they cannot transfer what they have learnt in a generative way to new situations. Even worse, some teachers become locked into counterproductive processes. Many of us have seen variations on the theme of the teacher who tells the students to get into groups (because that is what one is supposed to do) and then asks them, in their groups, to sit and write in silence.

## What to reflect on

If a reflective approach is best used once teachers already possess core skills, what areas should they reflect on? What should be their focus, so that they can take charge of their on-going professional development? In the English Language Teacher Training Project, once a strong cohort of teacher trainers had been established, the last year of inputs focussed on professional development through MA TESOL modules and through two-week stand-alone professional development courses for tutors and trainers. In some ways, this cohort had started as 'false pre-service teachers' (on the analogy of 'false beginners'). Four years down the line, they had now arrived at true in-service status, where a reflective approach was much more appropriate. Their focus areas for professional development were classroom research, networking and outside influences.

- **Classroom research.** This includes getting teachers to experiment with lesson formulas, reorganise them, develop them, turn them around. It also includes getting teachers to engage in less culturally obvious topics such as conducting market research amongst students to find out what they are really interested in, how students think they learn, and so on. In one study of Grade 6 students, the teacher discovered the 'awful truth' that her students truly preferred competitive, team based, winner-takes-all type language games to the more politically correct, language focussed, non competitive small groupwork tasks in which 'real learning' is supposed to take place. Readers may not be surprised by this finding. However, what is important is that the teacher in question was surprised, because she then had to deal with student wants versus student needs and the whole issue of - in the learner-centred approach - who chooses how to learn: the teacher or the students?

- **Networking.** This includes getting teachers to work together on school based initiatives, project work and team teaching. Another aspect is getting teachers to form or join support networks and to make presentations at conferences.

- **Outside influences.** This area includes helping teachers to access the internet for teachers' sites and web based publications, teaching teachers how to use methodology books in resource centres and elsewhere, getting teachers to make connections between what they have learnt to do and what teachers in other countries do.

## Working towards synthesis

The Project's last year of inputs in professional development rather than core skills training came too late for us to see any long term results. Instead, the 'Outward Bound' empowerment of our New Prescriptivism had manifested itself so strongly amongst the Vietnamese trainers that they often behaved like religious converts. They had discovered 'The Way' and in consequence all other ways were seen as being inferior, if not rejected out of hand. The cascade was very pure; the behavioural change deep. Observing second generation training course graduates (Vietnamese teachers trained by all-Vietnamese training teams) we were amazed (and sometimes dismayed) at the real shift to learner centredness, how impeccable the teaching and learning steps were, how undiluted the techniques were. We were watching the machine – the same sort of duplicable energy and efficiency in the classroom that will make Vietnam the newly industrialised superno of South East Asia within the decade. The acronym 'ELTTP' (the English Language Teacher Training Project) Vietnam became a mantra across the country. Those who had not yet had the training wanted it; those who had gone through the training were seen as special. Above all, students were really happy about what had happened to their lessons, and this positive feedback created a job satisfaction amongst the ELTTP teachers that they had never experienced previously.

But something about the precision and pragmatism of the ELTTP training system was too finite, too encapsulated, too suggestive of 'all you really need to know'. Had the toolkit lid been closed too tightly by the end of the course, ensuring vastly improved classroom activity but excluding the outside world? One group of senior trainers attending a British Council workshop run by Mario Rinvoluceri were convinced that he had *stolen* the dictation techniques he was demonstrating from the ELTTP! They had no conception of where the methodology they had espoused came from, in a wider sense, its roots, eclecticism, connections. For efficiency's sake, and because of the vast scale of the project in such a limited time frame, they had been presented with a highly pragmatic, synthesised, country-specific version of something which is in fact fairly universal - the communicative approach - and they concluded that it was uniquely theirs.

In many ways that sense of ownership is exactly the sort of power development which projects seek to generate in order to build capacity and sustainability. But, for the Vietnamese trainers to develop further, they need to retain their sense of ownership and at the same time become part of a larger community of principled practitioners. They need to go through a sort of methodological globalisation. And they need to relax a bit. A culture of exploration exists in the Vietnamese university of education English departments, mainly because many of their staff have postgraduate degrees from Australian or American universities. But to bring such a culture of exploration to the Provincial Education and Training Services and the lower secondary schools at a district level is the real challenge.

The possibility of on-going professional development is greatly enhanced by the existence of a professional network. One simple advantage of intensive, prescriptive training courses is that they establish strong professional relationships amongst participants and these in turn support contact networks for professional development. A positive use of technical assistance to follow up from there is to provide regular (but not necessarily frequent) international visits to strengthen such a professional network - sometimes to



facilitate, sometimes to train - to provide insights into professional innovation and challenges from the outside. It is important to note that such technical assistance is only appropriate at this late stage in the project. 'Jet in jet out' technical assistance would have spelt disaster in the early stages of the ELTTP (as indeed it is proving to be in the World Bank DFID Primary Teachers Project Vietnam at the time of writing), but in terms of stimulating professional development and moving on from basic standards and core skills, it really has a role.

## Time to develop

Time is needed for teachers to really assimilate and come to 'own' skills accrued prescriptively. By 'assimilate' I mean going beyond the 'steps', the recipes, the techniques and the reflection until one comes to the stage of mastering a repertoire, adapting it and making its potential generate what is required for a specific situation. If we were to draw a diagram of this process, it would look more like a concertina than the ubiquitous cycle (see Figure 1).

**Figure 1: The assimilation concertina**

- awareness raising (which can include challenge and even hostility)
  - over-acceptance (the 'convert' syndrome),  
where all behaviour is interpreted through the same model
    - over-use
- time to let things settle, filter, become less black and white, less either/or
  - harmonisation of new skills with old skills; personalisation
    - adaptation and experimentation
      - assimilation
      - optimum use

As in the acquisition of all new skills, the process includes several stages. If we think back to a time when we genuinely learnt something new, something radical, something that captured our imagination, something empowering, we can probably remember that we were guilty of overkill, of over-applying newly acquired rules. However, given time - and in this case I mean unobserved regular school teaching hours - the new gradually gets sifted with the old. A more balanced set of behaviours emerges. The new process, once learnt, gradually occupies less and less conscious brain space. It becomes more automatic, like learning to ride a bicycle or wordprocess a document.

The biggest obstacle to validating this theory is that education projects are not allowed this filtering down time in their budgets. Longer term impact studies are rarely carried out. Educational change involving a) behavioural change in teachers, b) the assimilation concertina and c) on-going professional development is an interlocking case of money budgets and time budgets. To their credit, AusAID and the Banks have used 'add-on' consultancies in which, having worked as a long term consultant in a host country, the consultant returns on a semi-annual or annual basis over a period of several years, to follow things up. This need not be seen as another case of jobs-for-the-boys, especially when considering the need for Vietnamese teachers to be exposed to a variety of international technical assistance on a regular basis. It would be better, in fact, if the visitors were not the original long term consultants. In this way, recipients could be exposed to a wider variety of acceptable training and facilitating styles. Again, this would have been singularly inappropriate at the beginning of the project but it had become highly appropriate by the end.



## Conclusion

In the presentation of this paper at the 6th International Conference on Language and Development, I used a DVD of talking heads to rest my case. The talking heads were a group of Vietnamese teacher trainers from across the country, responding to the New Prescriptivism of the ELTTP. They were able to describe, on camera, the challenges, benefits and drawbacks of the approach. Their analyses were detailed and personalised and have enabled me to write this chapter. By talking as they did on camera they unconsciously demonstrated their ability to reflect, to go beyond the 'recipes' – something which they could never have done at the project outset. They stand as the evidence of how strong-models-that-work strongly empower. Naturally, those who spoke were the brightest and the best. However, without a long term impact study, involving classroom observation of a more representative group of lower secondary school teachers, the progression from prescription to reflection cannot be validated. Only time will tell - but in fact time will not tell if the budget is not there.

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# Chapter 11: Sustainability in Education Development Projects: What are the Limits?

Hywel Coleman and Marta Šigutová



## Introduction

This chapter uses an evaluation of British Council support for teacher education in the Czech Republic as an opportunity to explore the concept of sustainability as an element in the design and evaluation of education projects. The overall evaluation consisted of seven parallel studies; Masters training in Britain for pre-service teacher educators from Czech institutions was the focus of one of these studies. The chapter focuses on the finding that Masters degrees awarded by British universities are not recognised in the Czech education system; the non-recognition of their qualifications therefore creates problems for Czech teacher educators when they return home after studying in the UK. This problem provides a prompt for a discussion of the limits to sustainability.

## Sustainability: Some definitions

A simple database search for journal articles and other documents published between 1985 and 2005, using the search terms 'sustainability' and 'development', generates a list of 2900 references.<sup>64</sup> 'Sustainability', then, is clearly a very frequently used concept, but what exactly is meant by it and what are its limits?

One of the best known definitions of sustainability is the one formulated by the World Commission on Environment and Development, sometimes known as the Brundtland Commission:

Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.  
(World Commission on Environment and Development 1987)

The Brundtland Commission was primarily concerned with environmental issues, and the environmental arena is one in which the concept of sustainability continues to play a central role.

Over the last twenty years, however, 'sustainability' has been borrowed as a concept, as a value, and as an evaluation criterion in many different fields of activity. It has even been incorporated into the Constitution of the Swiss Confederation. For example, Article 73 of the Constitution, on Sustainable Development, urges the Confederation and its constituent cantons to work to:

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<sup>64</sup>ISI Web of Science was accessed through the University of Leeds Library on 9th July 2005. The search looked for all documents in English published between 1985 and 2005 which contained the keywords 'development' and 'sustainability'. A more focussed search using the keywords 'development', 'sustainability' and 'education' revealed 172 documents published in the same period.

... establish a lasting equilibrium with nature, in particular enhancing both its capacity to renew itself and the way it is used by man. (Swiss Confederation 1999)

However, as the Federal Office for Spatial Development - a Swiss Government agency - itself observes, the term sustainability as employed here reflects an aspiration rather than anything concrete:

Since no direct supplementary legislation has been enacted in support of these constitutional provisions, their primary role is as a vision to guide future action. (Federal Office for Spatial Development 2005:3)

'Sustainability' is frequently employed as a core concept in the appraisal, planning and evaluation of development projects. Here it can take on a primarily financial meaning, as in the following extract from a policy statement on the economic evaluation of investment operations issued by OED, the World Bank's Operations Evaluation Department:

Assessing sustainability includes evaluating the project's financial impact in the implementing/sponsoring institution and estimating the direct effect on public finances of the project's capital outlays and recurrent costs. (OED n.d., quoted by White 2005:13)

Elsewhere, OED (2005) defines sustainability in this way:

OED's sustainability measure assesses the resilience to risk of net benefits flows over time ... Will the project continue to produce net benefits, as long as intended, or even longer? ... Sustainability reflects the resiliency to risks of a project as measured by the likelihood that its estimated net benefits will be maintained or exceeded over the project's intended useful life.

What is significant in the OED (2005) definition is the concern with activity being sustained only throughout the planned lifetime of the project. This formulation shows relatively little interest ('or even longer') in what happens in the longer term, after the end of the project.

A strikingly different emphasis appears in the definition proposed by the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), even though one phrase in the DAC formulation is identical to the OED's:

Sustainability: The continuation of benefits from a development intervention after major development assistance has been completed. The probability of continued long-term benefit. The resilience to risk of the net benefit flows over time. (DAC 2002:36)

In marked contrast to the World Bank's OED definition, therefore, the OECD's Development Assistance Committee emphasises the long term maintenance of achievements beyond the lifetime of a project as being the principal focus of sustainability.

When we move to the level of individual development projects we find the term 'sustainability' used in multiple ways, which may or may not reflect the definitions used by the major development agencies. An instance is offered by Samuelson and Harrity (1999) in their discussion of a book aid project in South Africa. They say:

We attempt a definition of this concept. We believe that the meaning of sustainability comprises two aspects: the first is changed perceptions in individuals ... the second is the extent to which the project activities will continue after the donor's financial support has been withdrawn. The second aspect is impossible without the first. (Samuelson & Harrity 1999:155)

At the core of this statement is the formulation ‘the extent to which the project activities will continue after ... financial support has been withdrawn.’ Here is a definition of sustainability (not dissimilar to the DAC’s concern with post-project activity) which is embedded within a proposal about how to achieve it (i.e. by changing ‘perceptions in individuals’). What is at issue is how far an innovation which is established with special funding can continue to function after that special funding is no longer available.<sup>65</sup>

A wider-ranging and more idealistic view of sustainability is offered by Hemmati (2001:40) in a discussion of core concepts in development:

... the concept of sustainable development ... is based on the fundamental values of respect for nature, respect for an all-encompassing interdependence of people and the planet, and of inter- and intragenerational justice.

It remains unclear, however, what precisely Hemmati believes sustainability to be.

So far we have seen that the concept of sustainability may reflect a central concern with the environment, or it may be interpreted largely in financial terms, or it may be used to refer to any one of a wide range of other issues. The concept may be largely timebound within the duration of the project, or it may be specifically concerned with what happens after a project has ended. Clearly, therefore, it has become extremely difficult to define ‘sustainability’ in a comprehensive way. As we find so often in other areas of development work (see Coleman 2002), then, an apparently core concept becomes more difficult to grasp the closer we look at it.

Finally, it is worth observing that much of the literature on sustainability emphasises the need for communication between stakeholders in order for sustainability to be achieved. We saw this in the definition by Samuelson and Harrity, above, and another typical example can be found in Hemmati’s discussion (2001:40):

Sustainable development requires a process of dialogue and ultimately consensus-building of all stakeholders as partners who together define the problems, design possible solutions, collaborate to implement them, and monitor and evaluate the outcome.

How easy is it in reality to create environments and mechanisms which enable stakeholders to communicate meaningfully with each other, especially in contexts where some stakeholders may be much more powerful (economically or in other ways) than other stakeholders? We will return to this issue later in the chapter.

## Teacher education in the Czech Republic

The context for our discussion is a participatory evaluation of ten years of British Council teacher education projects in the Czech Republic (Coleman & Griffiths 2003). The evaluation can be termed ‘participatory’ because it was designed by nine Czech teacher educators who had themselves participated in the projects which were being evaluated. These same nine people also collected data, analysed the data and wrote the final evaluation reports. As no baseline studies were available, the evaluations were purely retrospective. They were also largely qualitative in nature.

As the evaluations were performed by people who had been directly involved in the projects and because they involved looking back over an extended period of time, two particular challenges were faced by the evaluation team.

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<sup>65</sup> Incidentally, as far as defining sustainability is concerned, it is irrelevant whether the ‘financial support’ comes from ‘donors’, from a loan-funded project, or from routine government funding.

The first of these challenges was to ‘achieve distance’ (Lincoln & Guba 1985) between the evaluators and the projects which they were evaluating. This required the evaluators to stand back from work in which they themselves had been deeply involved. This was done by employing rigorous qualitative research procedures aimed at satisfying three criteria:

- credibility of data, achieved through triangulation
- dependability of data, achieved by making the whole process of qualitative data gathering and analysis open to scrutiny by others
- confirmability of findings, achieved by archiving data so that it is available for consultation by others if required.

The second challenge was to fill the gaps in institutional memory of the projects being evaluated. The task of looking back in time was done by collecting data from two sources:

- interviews with stakeholders who had played a role in or had been affected by the projects over the ten year period
- extensive archival work within stakeholder institutions (especially in the British Council offices in Prague and London).<sup>66</sup>

These dual challenges of standing back and looking back (without falling over!) were successfully met by the evaluation team. The outcome was a series of seven rich pictures – detailed retrospective qualitative studies - of a selection of teacher education projects. One of these seven studies was an analysis of the impact of a programme of Masters training in the UK carried out between 1994 and 2001 for pre-service teacher educators from universities in the Czech Republic.<sup>67</sup> We use this particular investigation as a context in which to examine the concept of sustainability.

## Masters courses for pre-service teacher educators

### Aims

During the 1990s the Departments of English in Czech universities were challenged to meet a sudden and rapid increase in demand for more English language teacher education courses. The shortage of English teachers which the country faced at that time was the consequence of the national policy, before 1989 and the collapse of communism, of severely limiting the numbers of foreign language teachers (except for teachers of Russian).

At first, the British Council supported university English departments by providing their own trained staff. However, for reasons of sustainability, the policy soon changed to one of helping Czech trainers to obtain higher qualifications in appropriate disciplines at British universities. A project was established to provide curriculum development and training for ten key faculties of education across the country. One objective of the project was ‘to provide short- and long-term training for faculty staff’.<sup>68</sup> Consequently between 1994 and 2001 thirty trainers from Czech universities were sponsored by the British Council to undertake Masters courses in the UK. Twenty-eight people successfully completed Masters in ELT, applied linguistics, education management, British Studies and literature.

The evaluation looked at the Czech trainers’ perceptions of their professional development after completing their Masters courses in the UK. Data was collected using a questionnaire (twenty completed, coded as Q1-Q20), follow-up email correspondence with thirteen trainers (coded as E1-E13), three interviews, and content analysis of documents found in the British Council archives in Prague.

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<sup>66</sup> For a detailed discussion of the whole research process, see Coleman 2003.

<sup>67</sup> A full report on the investigation can be found in Šigutová 2003.

<sup>68</sup> Taken from a document ‘Pre-Service Teacher Training (Presett) Project 1991/2 to 1993/4’, British Council Archives, Prague.

### What informants gained

When respondents evaluated their Masters degree experience, they identified three areas in which they felt that they had benefited. Firstly, they reported that their knowledge of research procedures and their competence as researchers had increased. One said:

With experience one learns how best to phrase questions and what pitfalls are to be avoided. (Q14)

Secondly, the trainers reported that they felt more confident in doing research after completing the Masters:

I doubt I would ever [have] been able to do some research without the course. (Q10)

After carrying out research connected with my MA dissertation I realised I could do it successfully. (Q17)

Thirdly, trainers frequently claimed that their awareness of developments in trainer training had increased, and they identified changes in their own training behaviour. They stressed that they constantly drew upon their Masters course experience when:

- designing and implementing pre-service teacher education courses
- tutoring trainees' research activities
- including small scale research into the design of the curriculum and syllabus
- introducing new ideas into pre-service teacher education syllabi
- evaluating the effectiveness of changes in the syllabi.

Respondents were also asked to indicate how frequently they had given presentations at conferences, published papers, written handbooks and other pedagogical materials, and undertaken other dissemination activities, since completing their Masters courses. The results are impressive:

- 12 out of the 20 informants had delivered 85 conference presentations; 57 of these had been at international conferences
- 11 respondents had published 69 journal articles, of which 3 had appeared in international journals
- 4 respondents had published 15 handbooks or readers, 3 teachers' books, and 1 video with accompanying teachers' book
- Some respondents had taken on national and international advisory roles, including joining the national board for the organisation of the European Year of Languages 2001, joining the board of the British Council's English Language Teaching Contacts Scheme (ELTeCS), acting as oral examiner for the University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate (UCLES), joining the board of AMATE (Asociace metodiků/Association of Teacher Educators) and becoming President of the Association of Teachers of English in the Czech Republic (ATECR).

Clearly, therefore, the impact of the Masters training which this cadre of senior specialists in English had been exposed to was being felt throughout the Czech education system and indeed beyond.

### Perceived constraints

However, the respondents also reported a number of problems which they were experiencing associated with their Masters study in the UK. By far the most frequently mentioned of these problems was the lack of official recognition in the Czech Republic of foreign degrees. The difficulty arose because the one year British Masters programme does not match anything in the Czech sequence of academic qualifications of Magister (Mgr), Candidate of Science (CSc), Doctorate, Docent and Professor. At first glance, it might seem as though a British Masters might be roughly equivalent to a Czech Magister, but in fact in the Czech system the Magister is a first degree, awarded at the end of a five year programme of study.

In reply to a question as to whether a British MA or MLitt is recognised as a postgraduate qualification in their home institutions, 8 respondents said that British Masters were not recognised; 3 people said they were unsure; 2 said that they found it 'difficult' to investigate this issue; and 7 people did not answer the question at all. In other words, none of the 20 respondents claimed that their British Masters degree was recognised locally as a postgraduate qualification.

Most respondents expressed confusion over the matter and identified a range of bureaucratic problems which they had experienced after returning home. The following is a typical response:

... when a new salary scale was discussed at university ... I realised that this qualification meant nothing. ... the [British Masters] degree wasn't considered satisfactory even by the Accreditation Committee. (E7)

Another respondent reported:

There have been queries at our university about my right to use MA in official materials. I was told I should not use it unless I have formal approval by the Ministry of Education. (E4)

And a third Masters graduate argued that a mechanism was required to enable comparison between British and Czech qualifications:

I have absolutely no idea what the Masters degree should be equal to in the Czech context. This should be solved by the responsible authorities ... I am sure it [the British Masters degree] should be given proper recognition and maybe it should be put on some scale where one would be able to find out where he or she has got to due to finishing the studies of this kind. (E8)

The lack of equivalence has direct implications for the security of respondents' posts, for their status within their own institutions, for the accreditation of new study programmes for which they are responsible, and so on.

In 2002, a spokesperson for the Ministry of Education in Prague (quoted by Šigutová 2003:93) confirmed the official position:

People who have an MA or a similar degree from good UK universities can automatically assume that the MA will be equal to the Czech Mgr. ... There is no evidence that the MA should be a higher qualification than an Mgr.

Even now, several years after the end of the project, this issue remains unresolved. However, the recent accession of the Czech Republic to the European Union offers the possibility that, at some point in the future, initiatives may be taken to harmonise academic qualifications across the EU.

### **Summary**

On the basis of the data gathered in our evaluation study, to what extent did the 'long-term training for faculty staff' actually meet the priorities of the host institutions? In brief, it may be said that there was a considerable mismatch; the Masters degree, which is a valuable qualification in Britain and which provides a route leading towards the PhD, is unknown in the Czech Republic. It is therefore discounted by Czech higher education institutions. Moreover, Masters degrees in TEFL or Applied Linguistics are not perceived to be sufficiently academic.



When offering opportunities to pursue Masters degrees in the UK, the British Council project intended to support the professional development of pre-service teacher trainers at Czech universities and to enhance teacher trainers' status by improving their qualifications.

The Masters training had obvious impact in improving participants' skills as researchers, in increasing their professional confidence and in changing the way they designed and implemented training activities. They have become highly productive members of the English language teaching profession in the Czech Republic and beyond.

However, an examination of the wider educational context has revealed that the official lack of recognition of British Masters qualifications has had a demotivating effect on participants, is a potential threat to their professional careers, and is even giving rise to questions about the sustainability of their academic departments because they are perceived as being insufficiently qualified.

A lesson to be learned is that negotiations with the Ministry of Education and other bodies which have a say on accreditation issues should have been carried out beforehand, with clearly defined terms for the recognition and status of MA graduates. Training trainers alone will not provide sustainability. Institutional and government support is crucial for sustaining the expertise.

### The limits of sustainability: Attempting to understand what went wrong

This case from the Czech Republic gives rise to a number of important questions and hypotheses which in turn can help us to specify the limits of sustainability (at least within the context of projects such as the one which has been described above).

Firstly, why did the situation develop in such a way and to such an extent that thirty people were sent to the UK to study for qualifications which had no official standing in their own education system? One possibility is that insufficient research was done before the project was designed, so that nobody was in a position to be able to predict that the UK qualifications were likely to be of only ambiguous relevance in the Czech Republic. Realistically, though, to what extent is it ever possible for stakeholders to predict every single issue which might pose a threat to the sustainability of a project at an indeterminate point in the future? The difficulty is to know where to look - and where to stop looking - when designing a new project. There is a precise parallel when carrying out a baseline study, as Roche (1999) observes: before a project begins it is practically impossible to know where a project is likely to have greatest impact and - thus - it is impossible to know exactly what baseline data should be collected. There is yet another parallel in undertaking an impact study, particularly if we are interested in tracking the unpredicted impact of a development project; it is ultimately impossible to predict where the unpredictable outcomes will be and so measuring them is immensely difficult (Coleman 2002).

Secondly, and at least as likely, is the possibility that in the early stages of the project - as in many development projects - all stakeholders emphasised the development of harmonious relationships and tended to avoid areas of complexity and potential conflict. A closely related hypothesis is that the Czech Ministry of Education was preoccupied with other more immediately pressing issues; the Ministry, in a spirit of 'benign neglect' (a term used by one informant) trusted the British Council and was happy to allow it to get on with its work. The mutual avoidance of awkward difficulties and the distraction posed by more urgent problems combined to permit a situation to develop until it was too late to do anything about it.

Thirdly, were the principal stakeholders really unaware that there was a potential problem in the fundamental design of this project? In fact, the evaluation has revealed that the potential problem was

raised in internal British Council documents on a number of occasions throughout the lifetime of the project. However, it was not broached with the Czech authorities. Two years after the Masters training programme had ended Nolan made the following observation:

... recognition of foreign qualifications within local structures and contexts is obviously a sensitive [question] and very little progress seems to have been made on this.  
(Nolan 2003:13)

Again, it would appear that a reluctance to muddy the waters was the explanation.

Fourthly, once the British Council realised that there was a potential problem, would there have been any scope for them to try to influence the local academic qualifications system in such a way that the UK Masters qualifications would be acceptable to the Czech system and so the long-term sustainability of the project could be maintained? And even if this was possible, how ethical would such intervention be? And even if such intervention had been attempted, is there any likelihood that it would have been successful. National education and qualification systems are so complex and so interwoven with other elements of the social system that tinkering by an external agency is unlikely to have much impact.

Fifthly, when external development agencies claim that they intend to meet the priorities of the host institutions with which they are working or that they are being responsive to local needs – in order to guarantee the sustainability of their development activities - is it ever really possible for this to happen? External agencies all have their own agendas, their own mission statements, their own priorities. With the best will in the world, then, it is likely that claims to be responsive to local needs can only ever represent a selective responsiveness.

Of course, the difficulty of meeting local needs applies not only to projects implemented by the British Council in the Czech Republic. For example, in his article on language educators as agents of change, Heyworth (2003:99) asks: 'Are we doing the right things?' (this relates to a project's objectives), and 'Are we doing things right?' (this refers to the quality of a project). It is obvious that the first of these questions is of utmost importance as it will not be of much use to perform an action well if it is not perceived as important in a given context.

Sixthly, one commentator on the Czech case study suggested that the real 'mistake' was a 'failure to manage expectations'. In other words, presumably, if the British Council had forewarned Czech stakeholders about the way in which UK Masters qualifications would probably be perceived, the difficulties experienced by Masters degree graduates on their return home could have been minimised. But what does a 'failure to manage expectations' really mean? Who raised the expectations in the first place? And who has the right to 'manage' anybody else's expectations? The very suggestion implies a power differential, with the weaker party having expectations which are susceptible to manipulation and the more powerful party having both the capability and the right to do the manipulating. What does all of this say about being responsive to local needs?

Finally, is the problem which has been described here simply another example of 'tissue rejection'<sup>69</sup>? But if this is the case, why does tissue rejection keep on happening? We have been aware of the problem for more than three decades (since Hoyle 1970), so why does the phenomenon continue to occur? Or is 'tissue rejection' itself simply another way of looking at the question of sustainability? It may be that - with increasing understanding of what sustainability means and why it is sometimes not achieved – we will come to see that 'tissue rejection' is merely a label that covers a wide range of phenomena, a symptom rather than a diagnosis. Yet another possibility is that tissue rejection is both inevitable and – up to a point – healthy; an analogy might be the inevitability and desirability of errors in learning.

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<sup>69</sup> 'Tissue rejection: A medical phenomenon in which transplanted organs are sometimes rejected by the host body. An analogy originally proposed by Eric Hoyle and later developed by Adrian Holliday, which suggests that even well-intentioned curriculum innovations may fail to take root in their host institution.' (Coleman 1996:232)

## Conclusions

At the beginning of this chapter we questioned the way in which the concept of 'sustainability' is employed in the literature on development. We noted that, among other meanings, it may be used with a focus on environmental matters, with a narrow financial emphasis or with a broad and idealistic – though undefined – sense. Phillis and Andriantiatsaholiniaina (2001:435) believe that sustainability is both an 'ill-defined' and an 'inherently vague' concept.

Even if we can agree on what sustainability means, how will we recognise it? A discussion document from the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) suggests that:

Once sustainability is identified as an objective or a targeted result, it then becomes a criterion for measuring success. How this should be done, however, remains largely unclear. (CIDA 2002)

White (2005) also recognises that there are major flaws in the methodology employed to measure the quality of development projects. One of three issues which requires improvement, White argues, is the analysis of sustainability, which 'needs to move beyond its current crude and cursory treatment' (White 2005:iii).

Many other questions remain regarding the idea of sustainability. They include:

- Should sustainability be thought of as a static phenomenon or can it be dynamic?
- How does sustainability relate to institutional and personal development?
- What exactly is it that we want to be 'sustained' when we think about sustainability (a concrete innovation or the less tangible long-term impact of that innovation, for example)?
- Is it actually necessary for every innovation to be sustained?
- And at what level should we be looking when we search for evidence of sustainability? <sup>70</sup>

To conclude, the Czech case study indicates that there are limits to sustainability in so far as there are limits to the extent to which long-term predictions can be made at the planning stage of a development project. Moreover, sustainability is constrained by the inevitable limits to the extent to which changes can be brought to bear on local systems.

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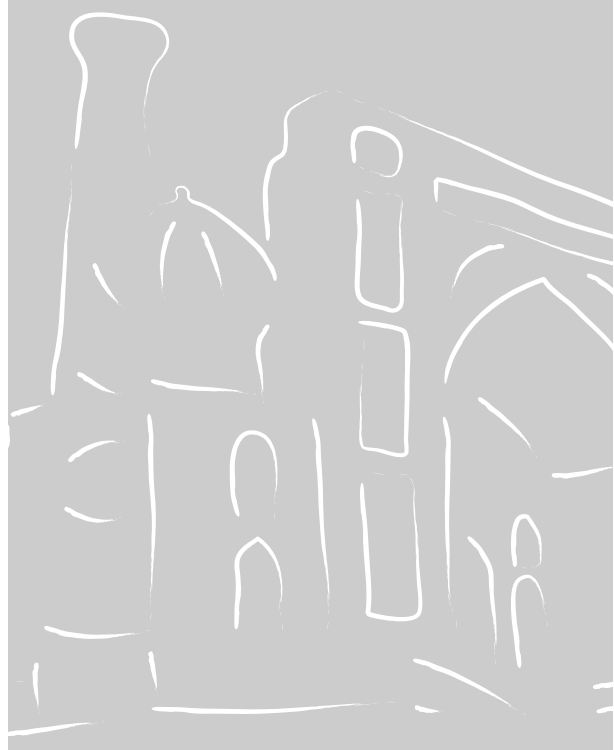
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# Chapter 12: Teacher Involvement in Language Education: Materials Development and Implementation

Amol Padwad, Ragsana Mammadova  
and Tan Bee Tin



## Introduction

This chapter explores the issue of involving and empowering teachers in language education particularly in terms of materials development and implementation. Teachers working in TESEP situations ('tertiary, secondary, primary' state education in non-native English speaking contexts, Holliday 1994:12) have little control over the selection of teaching materials. Very often, teachers in such situations are required to follow a prescribed textbook or curriculum. The chapter explores ways of involving teachers in materials development and supplementing prescribed materials. Project activities implemented in three different countries are described in order to illustrate ways of involving teachers working in TESEP situations in language education processes, particularly in terms of materials development and networking.

## Involving teachers in language education

With increasing emphasis on student-centredness and students' active participation in the process of language learning, the role of teachers and their active involvement in language education have often been neglected. Teachers working in TESEP situations are frequently unable to influence educational activities and practices in their contexts. In particular, teachers working in such situations are often required to follow a prescribed curriculum and use prescribed textbooks; they have very little control over the language teaching materials to be used in their language classrooms.

However, problems are often encountered with published materials. First, many published materials are developed in BANA situations ('private language schools or annexes to university departments in Britain, Australasia and North America', Holliday 1994:12) and imported to TESEP situations. In such cases, the materials may not reflect the needs and contexts of students and teachers working in different situations. Another problem that teachers using published materials face is the tension between authenticity and appropriacy. Even if the language found in some published materials may be called 'authentic' (in so far as it has been produced by native speakers), the content of such materials may not be appropriate and may fail to engage the students' interests in a particular context. There is thus a need to localise and repair language-teaching materials in accordance with the local situation and students' needs. At the same time, teachers need to be empowered and involved in materials development and implementation activities. Localising materials does not however mean limiting students' exposure only to local culture and issues; they also need to be exposed to other cultures. As there are now increasingly close contacts between

different cultures and English often serves as a channel of communication between cultures, it may be fruitful to adopt a cross-cultural approach in materials development for language education.

## Three projects

This section describes three projects conducted in three different countries - Azerbaijan, India and Thailand - which have attempted to involve teachers in language education mainly in terms of materials development and networking. The three projects described here were conducted by the authors of this chapter individually in their respective contexts and were funded by the Hornby Alumni Bids Scheme, part of the Hornby Educational Trust.<sup>71</sup> The language education contexts in these three different countries will also be considered in an attempt to identify common issues and to justify a joint materials development project which is aimed at addressing these issues.

### Azerbaijan

The Azerbaijan English Teachers' Association (AzETA) is a non-governmental organisation which was established and officially registered in 1996. The main focus of the Association is to provide support for the professional development of English language teachers in Azerbaijan. AzETA has a strategy of supporting English language teaching (ELT) through a range of projects, including teacher training, materials development, study tours, TV matinees, conversation groups, workshops, conferences and mini-conferences. Unlike support which is given to just one or two individual institutions, this strategy enables AzETA to assist the professional development of teachers of secondary schools and universities throughout the country. Such a strategy has produced impressive results and builds networks of teachers who are committed and empowered to implement the education reform programme launched by the Government of Azerbaijan.

With the financial support of the Hornby Educational Trust AzETA implemented a project on in-service teacher training between September 2002 and March 2003. The project targeted six of the 61 regions<sup>72</sup> of Azerbaijan.

The objectives of the project were:

- To enable the participants to handle the new communicative curricula and teaching materials – textbooks, workbooks, teachers' guides – developed by the Ministry of Education.
- To raise the participants' awareness of active and interactive methods of teaching English as a foreign language.
- To promote AzETA and establish good networking of the English teachers throughout the country through the beneficiaries of the project.

The project activities took place in two stages and included the following:

#### Stage 1: Preparation

- 12 teachers were trained as teacher trainers in September-October 2002.
- Materials for the workshops were produced.

#### Stage 2: Workshops in the Regions

- Workshop 1: A) How to teach reading, B) Teaching listening (November 2002)
- Workshop 2: C) Teaching grammar communicatively, D) Teaching English through games (January 2003)
- Workshop 3: E) Teaching writing, F) How to teach speaking (March 2003).

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<sup>71</sup> For information about the Trust see <http://www.britishcouncil.org/learning-elt-hornby.htm> .

<sup>72</sup> The term 'region' in the former Soviet Union republics means a town with some nearby villages.

The project was successful for the following reasons:

- The project helped AzETA to regain the respect and recognition of stakeholders. For a number of reasons – including the unfortunate loss of its office premises – the reputation of AzETA had been declining; the membership too had been in decline. However, the British Council's decision to collaborate with the Association meant that the status of AzETA was immediately improved. In consequence, a number of schools and universities offered the Association office space; among them was Baku Slavic University which is where AzETA's head office is now located.
- AzETA had a branch in one of the project regions. After the successful implementation of the project AzETA opened a branch in another project region and appointed coordinators in the other project regions to establish 'starting points' for future co-operation; in due course it is intended that these will develop into AzETA branches.
- AzETA members involved in the project as teacher trainers gained experience on materials development and outreach teacher training. Workshops organised through the project introduced teachers to communicative approaches to English language teaching for the first time.

Many lessons were learnt from the project. The project showed how teacher involvement could achieve sustainable results. This can be seen from the fact that we opened branches in the project regions and the beneficiaries of the project had opportunities to share knowledge through these workshops. Now most of these teachers are teacher trainers themselves in their respective regions. The project also helped to extend networking among ELT professionals in the region so that they could better understand each others' needs and interests.

Furthermore, the project demonstrated that our work could be more effective than it had been previously. Originally, we would visit the regions to give workshops for teachers, but – as these were neither regular nor systematic – we did not achieve much. Different groups of teachers would attend each workshop, so we had no chance to gain feedback on our work because we were always meeting different people. In the project, however, we worked with the same group of teachers and so by the end we could assess the effectiveness of workshops by asking participants to give us feedback. After each workshop teachers were expected to implement the techniques to which they had just been exposed; in the following workshop they would let us know what worked and what did not. Then, together, we would endeavour to find out why certain techniques had been successful in certain contexts and why other techniques had not.

### **India**

This was a project taken up with the support of the Hornby Educational Trust. The purpose was to try to set up small English Teachers' Clubs (ETCs) involving primary and secondary teachers of English in a district in central India. The idea of the experiment came from the persistently felt need by the teachers for various avenues for their own professional development and the previous experience of voluntary initiatives taken by small groups of teachers for self-orientation and self-training when a new syllabus was introduced a few years earlier. While working in small groups it was realised that there was a greater sense of involvement and ownership in the activities leading to professional development. It also became apparent that there was huge potential for this to be taken up on a more lasting basis.

During the project period, groups of teachers in four different parts of the district were encouraged to set up their own clubs, to plan for themselves their way of working, their finances and the kind of activities they would like to organise for themselves during the year, and then try to put these into practice. In the end, six ETCs were formed because in two places the teachers decided to set up separate clubs for primary and secondary teachers. The ETCs organised activities related to their professional development, with regular support provided by the core project team. Most of the ETCs had a very fruitful year of activities.



Some important benefits noticed in this way of working were:

- Small groups were more manageable and better capable of catering to the diversity of needs and interests of their members.
- There was a strong sense of ownership and commitment as the members themselves had full control over what was happening; they were free to make their own decisions.
- The ETCs undertook what the members felt was necessary and relevant in their contexts.
- The ETCs offered a cheaper and easier way of networking, sharing and self-developing.
- The ETCs also served as nodal points for many members, bringing them into wider professional networks, and giving them exposure to new ideas. For example, some participants joined the national ELT association, whilst others were able to attend ELT conferences for the first time.

Perhaps the most important lesson we learnt was that teacher involvement in any future ELT activities was not merely possible but actually essential and helpful for the success of any project. If something is directly related to classroom practice, then teacher involvement is a must.

### **Thailand**

Published English language teaching materials are easily available in Bangkok, Thailand, but the focus of many popular textbooks is on oral skills, intensive reading and language analysis. Thai students are often described as 'oral' and 'visual' learners; many of them do not like reading or writing very much. Although writing plays an important role in the curriculum and examination, this skill is rarely taught. Writing is also not well integrated with reading in language teaching programmes.

A project was conducted with a group of MA ELT students, all non-native English speakers coming from different Asian countries, at the Institute for English Language Education (IELE), Assumption University, Thailand. The project ran alongside the students' teaching practicum, where they were assigned to teach English to first year undergraduates using a set of simplified literary texts. They were responsible for designing supplementary activities and tasks. One of the problems which they encountered was concerned with developing materials for teaching writing: it was difficult for the trainees to assemble a number of sample texts which they could use as input for their writing classes.

The objectives of the project were:

- To raise the trainees' critical awareness of the effectiveness of the teaching methods, activities and materials which they planned to use with their students;
- To produce a set of trainee-made sample texts (mainly written texts) which would be modified and used as a resource for teaching, in particular teaching writing in their practicum classes and in future teaching;
- To build up the trainees' confidence and awareness about using their own resources and team resources when designing teaching materials in addition to published ELT materials.

The following activities were conducted in order to achieve the aims of the project:

- Conducting and participating in demonstration lessons (peer teaching) for teaching writing
- Peer-evaluation and self-evaluation of the demonstration lessons
- Materials development based on the written texts produced in the demonstration lessons
- Trying out these materials in the classes in which student-teachers were practice teaching
- Publishing the materials.

Each of the team members (eleven student-teachers) took turns in conducting a demonstration lesson every week. In total, nineteen such lessons were conducted between August and September 2002. Writing was the major focus of the demonstrations. The team members brought with them different personal styles and expertise to the lessons which they conducted. After each demonstration lesson, both

the demonstration teacher and the other participants were given a questionnaire to evaluate the lesson. The aims of the evaluation were to help the student-teachers see, hear and feel the lessons which they and their peers conducted from the point of view of both student and teacher, and to find ways of improving their lessons.

The written texts produced in the demonstration lessons were collected, typed and distributed to the project participants who were then encouraged to modify and use these texts for their writing lessons in their 'practicum' (teaching practice) class. They were encouraged to exploit the texts in various ways in their writing lessons: as a sample text for imitation, as a text for analysis and examination, or as a reading text for generating ideas in writing lessons. This activity was intended to help the student-teachers become aware of how to exploit peer- and self-originated resources in materials development. To obtain or write several written texts would have been a daunting task for an individual teacher on his or her own. In the project, the texts were produced collaboratively by a group of student-teachers taking student roles. The participants also came to appreciate the need to provide students with enough input and exposure to the type of texts students were required to produce, and the importance of presenting students with a variety of example texts. The materials developed by various student-teachers were compiled and edited by the project coordinator, Tan Bee Tin, and then published in the form of a supplementary writing skill textbook for use with future students in the first year undergraduate English course at IELE.

The project offers several implications for teacher education. First, it indicates that the teachers themselves can write their own teaching materials as a team. Second, the fact that student-teachers themselves have written the texts helps them become aware of the process which they as writers go through in producing these texts and how they could facilitate this process when they ask their students to write. Moreover, the texts that they produce are interesting and rich in terms of content, and their diverse cultural and personal experiences are reflected in them. Despite its lack of 'accuracy' in terms of language, the ideas and contents are personal, interesting, authentic and appropriate. The fact that the student-teachers themselves are the owners of these texts gives them more confidence in modifying and designing materials based on them, whereas with so-called authentic texts produced by native speakers in another context teachers sometimes have the problem of understanding the content themselves due to cultural and ideological differences.

## Conclusions

The experiences of three different projects carried out in three different countries and focusing on three different issues have underlined the fact that there are many common issues and concerns in ELT worldwide. These projects have also pointed out some similar lessons for future activity. Above all, they have shown the importance of involving the important stake-holders – the teachers – in projects at all stages, in order to ensure project efficacy and sustainability.

Taking this realisation a step further, the authors of this chapter feel strongly that inter-cultural cooperation and interaction among teachers from different contexts may add to the impact and relevance of any activity that involves teachers. There is now a realistic possibility to explore the potential advantages of cross-cultural interaction and cooperation, while at the same time trying to work in very context-specific, locally valid and relevant ways. This dual benefit of involving teachers in language education initiatives and doing this in a multi-cultural way is likely to produce stronger and longer impact on the teachers' own development too.

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# Chapter 13: Facilitating Languages, Participation and Change: National and Regional Cases

Kath Copley, Graham Haylor  
and William Savage



## Introduction

Activities across the themes of STREAM<sup>73</sup> - livelihoods, institutions, policy development and communications - require processes and practices for working with complex multitudes of perspectives, perceptions, experiences and 'wants and needs' of colleagues, partners and other stakeholders.

STREAM is working with Indian partners on a policy change project that brings together tribal communities' experiences of service provision with those of government implementing institutions and policy-makers. The project is working through Bangla, English, Hindi and Oriya.

In partnership with SPARK<sup>74</sup>, STREAM is embarking on a learning and communications process concerned with livelihoods and languages. The aims of this process are to build understandings of concepts of and approaches to livelihoods; to understand how livelihood concepts are manifested in the languages of regional countries; and to generate awareness of issues related to language, participation and power.

In both the Indian national case and the Asian regional one, facilitated workshop processes and practices encourage understanding and potential subsequent strengthening and changing of relationships.

## STREAM and its themes

STREAM, or Support to Regional Aquatic Resources Management, is an initiative of NACA (Network of Aquaculture Centres in Asia-Pacific), an inter-governmental organisation based in Bangkok, Thailand. Of NACA's sixteen member countries, STREAM is currently operating fully in Cambodia, India, Nepal, the Philippines and Vietnam, with plans for expansion into China's Yunnan Province, Indonesia, Laos and Myanmar. STREAM is requested by member governments to work in their countries when opportunities are realised to support capacity-building with agencies and institutions to:

- Utilise existing and emerging information more effectively
- Better understand poor people's livelihoods<sup>75</sup>, and
- Enable poor people to exert greater influence over policies and processes that impact on their lives.

<sup>73</sup> Support to Regional Aquatic Resources Management

<sup>74</sup> Sharing and Promotion of Awareness and Regional Knowledge, a programme of Voluntary Service Overseas (VSO)

<sup>75</sup> STREAM takes a 'livelihoods approach' to its work. This is a way of learning about how people live, i.e. how they make a living, in contrast to approaches to working with people in communities which centre around a particular discipline, e.g., aquatic resources, education or health. Through participatory rural appraisal tools, a 'livelihoods analysis' process builds understandings of people's access to human, social, natural, physical and financial resources, external influences on and vulnerabilities in their lives, and their livelihoods strategies.

STREAM's communications strategy aims to increase impact by ensuring that existing knowledge and expertise inform ongoing change processes around the region, and that the lessons learned are disseminated throughout Asia-Pacific.

The STREAM Initiative is based around partnerships, involving at the outset a coalition of founding partners (AusAID, DFID, FAO and VSO<sup>76</sup>) supporting NACA. It has adopted an inclusive approach, reaching out to link stakeholders engaged in aquatic resources management and supporting them to influence the Initiative's design, implementation and management.

The partnerships' work is coordinated in each Country Office through a National Coordinator (a senior national government colleague) and a Communications Hub Manager (a full-time national colleague). The Country Office Communications Hub links national stakeholders through an Internet-based virtual regional network.

The STREAM Regional Office (at the NACA Secretariat in Bangkok) directs the Initiative, provides a regional coordination function, and funds and manages cross-cutting activities dealing with livelihoods, institutions, policy development and communications, the four outcomes-based STREAM themes.

## Stakeholders

As with other words in our development jargon, the term 'stakeholders' only becomes real and understandable when we are able to describe what it means in practice. STREAM stakeholders include any person, agency or organisation whose lives and work affect - or are affected by - the Initiative's activities. The ultimate goal of STREAM activities is to improve the livelihoods of people who depend wholly or partly on aquatic resources, and in particular fishing or aquaculture, the small-scale farming of fish to increase protein availability in diets and to generate income. Thus STREAM stakeholders are women and men in poor rural communities, officials of local and provincial or state government implementing agencies, central government policy- and decision-makers, staff of local and international non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and STREAM colleagues.

Each person holding a stake in the outputs, outcomes and impacts of our work will come with their own perspectives on the issues to be addressed, their own perceptions of what should be done, their own experiences of development efforts that have succeeded or failed, and their own ideas about what people living in poor rural communities want and need. Whilst there are often conflicting differences among the complex multitudes of understandings and knowledge, each one is valued as 'a true picture'. The challenge we face and welcome, as we believe all development practitioners should, is to facilitate processes and practices - approaches and methods - that allow for understandings to be shared and relationships to be built, so that appropriate and effective activities can be designed and implemented to improve the lives of poor people. Amartya Sen, the 1998 Nobel Laureate for Economics, talks about people's *functionings*, or 'What people can positively achieve [being] influenced by economic opportunities, political liberties, social powers, and the enabling conditions of good health, basic education, and the encouragement and cultivation of initiatives' (Sen 2000:351).

Facilitating the building of shared understandings requires us to pay attention to the power of language as a mediating channel, to the genuine participation of all stakeholders, and to the significant changes that people are able to articulate in their lives. To illustrate these ambitions, consideration will be given to two cases of STREAM's work, one national and one regional. The first is a policy change project in India and the second a collaboration with an international NGO on a process for learning and communicating about livelihoods. In conclusion, we will return to the notion of processes and practices for sharing understandings and building relationships, and some lessons we have learned.

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<sup>76</sup> Australian Agency for International Development, Department for International Development of the UK, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, Voluntary Service Overseas

## Policy and people in India

From March 2002 through May 2003, STREAM implemented a fifteen month project called 'Investigating Improved Policy on Aquaculture Service Provision to Poor People', with an aim to 'contribute to "giving people a voice" in policy-making processes that have an impact on their livelihoods' (Haylor, Savage & Tripathi 2003). The people are fishers and farmers in tribal communities, practitioners who work directly with them, and government officials who make and implement policies which affect their lives. The project was funded by DFID's NRSP (Natural Resources Systems Programme). It started in tribal villages in the three Indian states of Jharkhand, Orissa and West Bengal, in and around India's eastern plateau region, and culminated in Delhi, the capital.

The project worked with people known officially as 'Scheduled Tribes' and 'Scheduled Castes', who are among India's most socially and economically disadvantaged, and politically marginalised. Their livelihoods include raising fish in seasonal water bodies in and around villages, and fishing in ponds, tanks, reservoirs and rivers. More generally, Sengupta & Gazdar (1996) write that the people of 'West Bengal, Bihar [including Jharkhand] and Orissa have had some of the highest proportions of rural population below the poverty line ever since these indicators have been published for Indian states.' As representatives of fishers and farmers across India who would ultimately benefit from the project, our colleagues joined other stakeholders including national and state policy actors, local and state government officials from Departments of Fisheries and the Indian NGO Gramin Vikas Trust, all of whom are involved in the provision of aquaculture services and support.

### Voices

In describing the aim of the project, we wrote 'giving people a voice' in quotation marks because we know that people have their own voices, and question whether anyone could think that they are 'giving a voice' to others. Dreze & Sen (2002) write that lack of voice of disadvantaged groups is a particular issue in Indian society and politics. For example, the interests of so-called scheduled tribes (8% of the population) have received extraordinarily little attention in Indian politics. Large sections of the population have limited opportunities to speak for themselves. The daily struggle for survival leaves them with little leisure to engage in political activity, and the efforts to do so sometimes invite physical repression. Lack of formal education and access to information restricts their ability to intervene in public discussion and electoral debate or to make effective use of the media, the courts and other democratic institutions.

There could be said to be three key ways out of 'voicelessness'. The first is *assertion* (self-assertion) such as that practised by talented individuals as characterised by Dreze & Sen (2002) above. The second is *solidarity*, by outsiders with people who are underprivileged. This necessarily involves some form of uncomfortable dependency on people whose interests and commitments are in some way broadly linked, often temporally, but who are better placed by virtue of their own privileges, e.g., formal education, access to media, economic resources, political connections. This is, for example, the role played by STREAM in some communities in India. Solidarity is undependable because the motivations of outsiders will always be different from those of concerned communities. The argument might go that we 'join forces' against those who deprive fishers of a voice. We throw in our professional credibility, about which we care, and play our hand with the fishers in support of them and our own (contrived) vested interest.

The third way out is *assertion* and *solidarity*. Solidarity works best when the assertion element is quite strong, not representing others but supporting them to represent themselves, the *facilitated advocacy* of Haylor & Savage (2002). Although this is potentially the most effective approach, according to Dreze & Sen (2002), solidarity often coexists with significantly different perspectives among concerned parties. As described in Haylor & Savage (2002), a lesson to be learned is the value of building trust and mutual respect.

Through *facilitated advocacy* - in this case the thoughtful facilitation of inclusive events across the three states and the creative use of film and drama - the project provided opportunities for people's voices to be heard as they talked about their experiences of state and central government service provision around fisheries, aquaculture and aquatic resources.

### **Activities and outcomes**

The project activities included field visits, workshops, case studies (using text, CD-ROM film documentaries, photographs and PowerPoint presentations), a literature review, a consensus-building process, and a street-play written by a tribal playwright and performed by a fifteen member theatre troupe. Through dialogue, music and dance, the street-play interpreted the stories told in the case studies and the participants' recommendations for policy change, the ideas for which had grown throughout the project.

The project activities, especially the workshops, provided rich learning experiences in managing communication across the four languages of the range of stakeholders: Bangla, English, Hindi and Oriya. This was made possible by highly capable multilingual co-facilitators, language considerations in participant grouping and transcription in the four languages.

In the final Policy Review Workshop held in Delhi with representatives of government policy-makers, participants expressed their views on the project and its policy recommendations, at times engaging in lively debate around issues of fisher and farmer livelihoods and how they are affected by government policy. People also began talking about different stakeholders' perceptions of the issues and how trust needs to be gained through relationship-building. We also discussed the kinds of commitments that could be made to follow up the project and to consider its policy recommendations. The statements of commitment have formed the basis of a second DFID-funded project called 'Promoting Pro-Poor Policy Lessons with Key Policy Actors in India'.

## **The SPARK-STREAM process**

In April 2003, SPARK and STREAM colleagues got together to explore relationships between language and livelihoods approaches and analysis, and to examine the ways in which the language(s) we use and the ways we communicate with others can make a difference in the lives of the people with whom we work (Copley & Savage 2003). SPARK and STREAM, like other regional initiatives, work with many different national and local language groups.

The SPARK-STREAM Learning and Communications Process on Livelihoods and Languages involved two three-day workshops<sup>77</sup> at the beginning and end of a two-month period<sup>78</sup>. The aims of the process were to build understandings of participatory livelihoods concepts and approaches and their meanings, and to generate awareness of issues related to language, participation and power. As a result of the process, we initially thought that we were going to produce a 'guide to livelihoods and languages' in fourteen languages of regional countries<sup>79</sup>.

### **Understandings and conversations**

The idea for the process and its two workshops originated from perceived problems of miscommunication that we were experiencing in our work, and the recognition that there are differences in the ways that individuals and groups communicate with each other (Haylor & Santos 2003). It cannot be assumed that

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<sup>77</sup> The Second SPARK-STREAM Workshop on Livelihoods and Languages was supported through an FAO Technical Cooperation Programme.

<sup>78</sup> Reports of the First and Second SPARK-STREAM Workshops on Livelihoods and Languages can be accessed at <http://www.streaminitiative.org/Library/Livelihoods/livelihoods.html>

<sup>79</sup> The fourteen languages are Bahasa Indonesia, Bangla, Cebuano (Philippines), Chotanagpuri (a tribal language of eastern India), English, Hindi, Ilonggo (Philippines), Khmer, Nepali, Oriya (the language of Orissa state in India), Tagalog (Philippines), Thai, Vietnamese and Waray (Philippines).



people have shared understandings of the meanings of words, nor that they communicate in similar ways. We need to become more aware of what the differences are, and how they are related to language use, how people have opportunities to build relationships, and the effect of power statuses.

Through our discussions, we decided that a participatory approach to livelihoods analysis is not just about going in, taking information, and then leaving. It is much more than that. It is a 'conversation' about how people experience their lives, a conversation which builds trusting relationships that offer communities opportunities to improve their livelihoods.

### **From language to learning and communicating**

By listening to and talking with each other, we began to understand more clearly about what would help us in our work. We did not want another manual on livelihoods analysis or a document that would explain concepts and terms. We wanted something more dynamic, more communicative and more people-oriented. We needed a process for establishing trusting relationships, which in turn, would allow us to work together to plan and implement activities. We needed a 'guide' to help us use language more inclusively and reflectively.

Our sharing of experiences during and between the workshops led us to understand more about the nature of the guidance which we required (Haylor & Santos 2003). The intended 'guide to livelihoods and languages' thus became a 'Guide for Learning and Communicating about Livelihoods'. In its current stage of development, the Guide describes a process to be carried out with the help of a 'tool box'. (See Figure 1.) The three-phase process involves:

1. Defining the Conversation Group, using tools called Conversation Partners, Relationships, Communication Issues, and Languages and Dialects
2. Sharing Meanings, through an agreed strategy, with examples, stories and glossaries, and
3. Sharing Understandings, with reference to livelihoods methods, explanations and resources such as existing livelihoods analysis documents.

We think that this process will benefit the building of trusting relationships by helping us to:

- Define our conversation partners
- Make explicit our relationships with them and with other stakeholders
- Raise awareness of communication issues that could possibly emerge, and
- Identify the languages and dialects through which we all work.

### **Emerging value**

The process and tool box are works-in-progress, with all participants of the Livelihoods and Languages Workshops trying them out 'at home', and reporting back their experiences as the Guide takes shape. It is already proving to be of some value, as the following cases illustrate.

Case 1 STREAM countries (Gonzales et al. 2003) are developing a broader understanding of livelihoods concepts (more than just 'economic') through stories, conversations and glossaries in India, Nepal and the Philippines. In Cambodia, the development of an 'interview guide' for use in the field (rather than a glossary of livelihoods terms) is being considered. And in Vietnam, a large glossary is being developed to help promote better understanding of terms used in livelihoods analysis.

Case 2 Tool 1 (Conversation Partners) helped SPARK Thailand as they captured and analysed 'significant changes' in people's lives and in the behaviours and practices of service-providers (Langkulsane 2003). Tool 2 (Relationships) allowed the 'conversation group' to focus their discussions on changes that really happened and the roles of different stakeholders in their achievement, rather than on the results of inputs. This facilitated two-way communication where SPARK and its partners were sharing and learning together. Tool 3 (Communication Issues) helped to analyse power relationships and the validity of information

gathered. A sustainable livelihoods framework helped to understand the diversity of people's livelihoods and how government policies affect them.

Case 3 Adaptations of Tool 1 (Conversation Partners) and Tool 2 (Relationships), along with a sustainable livelihoods framework, were used by participants in an assessment workshop in the Philippines (de Jesus & Bantug 2003). This was prompted by a request from a provincial governor for assistance in implementing the province's natural resources management programme. The workshop led to a better understanding of what needs to be done, and provided a basis for designing appropriate development interventions.

Case 4 Tool 1 (Conversation Partners) and an agreed strategy for sharing meanings (Phase 2) were used to clarify understandings of the concept of 'community-managed area' (Phase 3) within the Indonesian forestry sector, with conversation partners exchanging opinions based on their own interpretations (Aliadi 2003).

It would seem that when organisations openly share their difficulties, appreciate the complexity of livelihoods work, and search together for guidance, they can not only come together to develop and test processes and tools, but can also build strong, enduring and trusting relationships. These relationships lead to more effective work with community and government partners.

## Processes and practices: Sharing understandings and building relationships

As we noted above, in both the Indian national case and the Asian regional case, facilitated workshop processes and practices encourage understanding and potential subsequent strengthening and changing of relationships. So what lessons are we learning about sharing understandings and building relationships?

### **Relationship building**

The first is the importance of taking time to build trusting, on-going relationships among all stakeholders. Essential to this in India was our determination to continue working with the same people, villages, agencies and organizations. In the words of one of the fishers from Jharkhand state, 'You came back, no one ever comes back.' Listening to such voices enabled people to express their views in a supportive and constructive atmosphere.

### **Empowering less-heard voices**

We have argued already that it is not possible for anyone to 'give people a voice'. Whether or not people can be 'empowered' by others is also debatable. What we may be able to do is to address issues of power and its use, through inclusive and reflective activities which enable equitable participation.

### **Transcending hierarchical structures**

We all work and live within organisational, political and social structures which largely determine how people at different structural locations interact with each other. Taking people away from their usual places and working together in the 'neutral' space of a workshop or meeting room may temporarily minimise perceptions of hierarchical constraints, although in reality we can never have 'conversations' that are not influenced by power relationships.

### **Learning, not telling**

There is a common conception that people working with government agencies, non-governmental organisations and development projects are 'experts' whose job is to tell people living in villages 'what to do and how' to improve their livelihoods. In reality, it is fishers and farmers who possess expertise - gained through their own life experiences - relevant to their situation and who have opinions about what they think needs to be done to change it. We must learn from them, and any 'telling' should be about what we can do

to support their own efforts. Such a listening role requires us to reconsider how we behave in our relationships.

### **Understanding people's livelihoods**

Related to behavioural change is the need to understand the contexts of livelihoods before embarking on projects of policy change or livelihoods improvement activities. Such an approach is founded on the negotiation of a commitment from all stakeholders to build an understanding of the aspirations and complex livelihoods strategies of so-called recipients, i.e., poor women and men, including tribal and other disadvantaged and marginalised groups.

### **Telling and listening to stories**

Told through the lives of fishers and farmers, case studies and stories allow us to have deeper understandings of the realities of people's lives, providing a rich source of material for discussion and offering 'entry points' for working together. Listen to the voice of the screenwriting coach, Robert McKee (2003:52), whose students' credits include *The Color Purple*, *Gandhi* and *Nixon*:

Essentially, a story expresses how and why life changes ... [It] describes what it's like to deal with ... opposing forces, calling on the protagonist to dig deeper, work with scarce resources, make difficult decisions, take action despite risks, and ultimately discover the truth.

### **Tolerance and diversity**

Every effort should be made for all stakeholders to understand existing processes and to engage with each other in a spirit of tolerance. A potential conflict here is the diversity of ideological principles and professional stances of a range of stakeholders. Therefore, to promote tolerance amid diversity requires a kind of advocacy that respects differences. This is not advocacy in the literal sense, but may be thought of as a *facilitated advocacy*, as discussed previously. The term *facilitation* literally means 'to make the process easier' (Webne-Behrman 1998). We are not aiming to speak *for* people but to make it easier for them to speak for themselves, to create opportunities for potential recipients of service provision to add their voices to the shaping of development processes from which practical support can flow.

### **Rights-based approaches**

Finally, we are learning how to express our work in terms of what have come to be called 'rights-based approaches to development', where efforts are made to address underlying causes of poverty and social injustice. These may include displacement, loss of livelihood, destruction of local environments and, from the perspective of local people, an intrusive, unsustainable and unplanned influx of outsiders into traditional territories.

Rights-based approaches require a high degree of participation from communities, civil society, minorities, local people, women and others. These approaches give due attention to issues of accessibility, including access to development processes, institutions, information and complaints mechanisms. They necessarily opt for process-based development methodologies and techniques, rather than externally-conceived 'quick fixes' and imported technical models. In short, these are approaches that contribute to 'giving people a voice' in processes that have an impact on the livelihoods of these same people.

## **A poem**

We would like to conclude with a poem that was written by Kath as we listened to participants' stories of their livelihoods analysis work during the First SPARK-STREAM Workshop on Livelihoods and Languages:

**Livelihoods and languages**

Stories,  
Exchanges,  
Listening and talking,  
Discussing common things ...

Tell me, friend,  
In your everyday life,  
Where do you go?  
What do you take with you?  
What do you bring back?

I want to know who you are  
I want to listen

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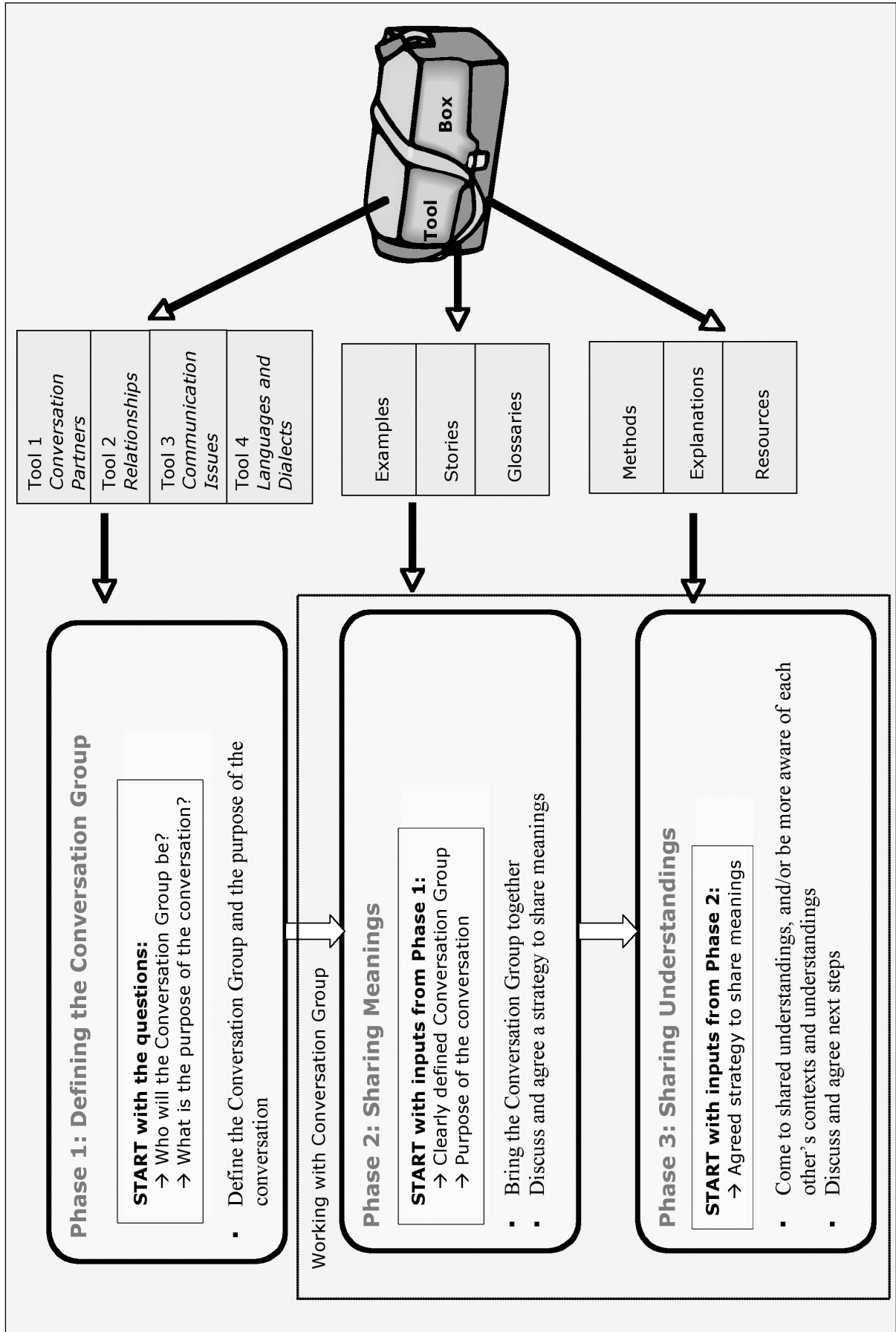
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Figure 1: Process for Learning and Communicating about Livelihoods



# Chapter 14: A View from the Ground in Uzbekistan

Chris Duff and Mark Dickens



## Introduction

This chapter arises from our experience of running several small projects aimed at providing training, resources and support for English teachers in Uzbekistan's Ferghana Valley. We have lived in the valley for ten years and six years, respectively.

We have called our chapter 'A view *from the ground* in Uzbekistan' because we want to signal that this does not claim to be an objective overview. We are not able to back up our observations with many references or with detailed statistics. Instead our method of verification has been to ask about ten expatriate colleagues involved in English teaching throughout Uzbekistan to read earlier versions of the chapter and to comment on them.

In essence, this chapter is a proposal for educational development programmes to take account of the real conditions in which the majority of the population of Uzbekistan receive their education.

## Rural and Urban Uzbekistan

Like most countries, Uzbekistan has both rural and urban populations. The proportion of the population living in major cities is very small. By far the largest portion of the population (about 62%) lives in rural areas. A major challenge for education, therefore, is to reach the rural population.

## Profile of English teaching in Uzbekistan

For the majority of the population living in rural areas English teaching has the following characteristics.

Firstly, based on our newsletter distribution figures, we estimate that, in our region, there is approximately one teacher who teaches English (although not necessarily full time) per 1000 to 2000 population<sup>80</sup>. This means that most school-children have an English teacher.

Secondly, in rural areas teaching and healthcare are the most significant non-agricultural career opportunities for women, who, therefore, represent a significant proportion of the teachers in rural areas.

Generally, resources in rural schools are insufficient, with insufficient textbooks and other teaching resources.

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<sup>80</sup>This calculation is derived from the fact that in Kokand – an area with a population of approximately one million - we distribute approximately 1000 copies of the teachers' newsletter Teacher's Companion. The decision to produce 1000 copies in turn was based on a figure obtained from the district office of the Ministry of Public Education. We recognise that this is a very rough calculation, even for our region, and that it would be rather risky to extrapolate to other parts of the country.



As a result of Uzbekistan's previous isolation the English language skills of most teachers are underdeveloped. Working as we do in the Kokand area, we are often the first contact that English teachers have with a native English speaker and, as a result, many of them lack confidence in communication. Standard practice in the language classroom has been inherited from the pre-independence era. What is still thought of and referred to as 'Soviet methodology' is the grammar-translation method, which involves much copying from the blackboard and learning set texts. Teachers have some awareness of and interest in communicative teaching methods, but they have little experience of how these methods can actually be implemented.

A further challenge is that teachers often work long extra hours as private tutors and take other part time jobs to generate additional income.

Nevertheless we meet many teachers in rural areas who are extremely committed. Uzbeks have always held teachers in high esteem. This traditional respect remains high in rural areas<sup>81</sup>.

## Innovations in English language teaching

Against this background there are many good programmes and projects taking place. Indeed there is quite a buzz and synergy about English teaching in Uzbekistan at the moment and we have heard that teachers of other subjects wish that similar things were being done in their fields. It is not within our scope to document all that is being done but of particular note is UzTEA, the Uzbekistan Teachers of English Association.

UzTEA has branches in many parts of the country, it runs two well equipped regional resource centres in Ferghana and Samarkand, and it organises an excellent annual conference. The British Council and the Public Affairs Section of the US embassy also have good programmes. Of particular interest are the textbooks developed by the British Council and the work of the Regional English Language Officer and English Language Fellows at the US Public Affairs Section.

Our organisation, Central Asian Free Exchange (CAFE), is a US based non-governmental organisation (NGO) which was founded in 1991 in response to the emerging humanitarian needs after the collapse of the Soviet Union. CAFE has 80 expatriate volunteers from over 20 different countries currently working in Central Asia and we are implementing projects in the agriculture, education, small business, medical and relief sectors.

In Kokand we run a small educational centre which combines an English library (with related services), a computer centre and English teaching. Many of our other regional offices provide similar programmes and facilities.

Some time ago we began to move the focus in English from teaching to teacher education and provision of resources. Our first plans were to help form a local branch of UzTEA and to set up a resource centre from which teachers could borrow textbooks and methodology books.

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<sup>81</sup> For example, in the Kokand region the same term (domla) is used to refer to a teacher and to an older man who can recite the Qur'an.

We will have more to say later about development theories but at this point a crucial role was played by our funder, PMU InterLife. In a project application we had to present our development objectives. This forced us to examine who would benefit from what we were planning. What we realised, and this was subsequently borne out in reality, was that an UzTEA branch in the city would be serving mainly those in the city and a very small number of outstanding village teachers. Similarly a resource centre would be used by more or less the same clientele - the best teachers in the 'best' locations.

These and similar initiatives are valuable and important, and hopefully will help raise standards in the whole system. Nevertheless if this was all that was done then education might become more economically differentiated in Uzbekistan and gaps between city and village might widen and these interventions might benefit primarily those who are already enjoying better conditions. If this were to happen then the initiatives would be contributing to a widening rather than a diminution of social inequality.<sup>82</sup>

### 'Teacher's Companion'

It was as we wrestled with this question while writing our project application that we came to our key idea: that we have to find ways of putting usable resources directly into the hands of rural teachers. The primary way we have done this is through *Teacher's Companion* (TC).

TC is a quarterly newsletter which presents a combination of practical English language teaching activities, along with articles on topics such as grammar, pronunciation, vocabulary, idioms and teaching methodology. Currently, we distribute the newsletter to over 2,000 teachers in the provinces of Ferghana and Andijon, with plans to expand distribution to most areas of Uzbekistan.

Four factors are important in our design of *Teacher's Companion*. We believe that these same factors should be considered in other similar situations.

1) As we have already noted, TC is delivered directly to teachers' hands. In most cases it is the only new teaching resource they ever receive. The majority of local teachers cannot afford to travel with any regularity to provincial capitals. These cities may seem to be small and 'provincial' when viewed from the capital. However, from the perspective of the village they are perceived as being distant metropolises. If a programme is to benefit villages then it must aim deliberately to reach out into villages. We achieve this by taking TC out to the district education offices who then distribute it to teachers<sup>83</sup>.

2) The second factor to be considered in the design of TC was the need to simplify. TC is based on existing teaching materials which are simplified. More complex linguistic terms are replaced with terms that are understandable to non-native speakers and concepts are explained using grammar that is easier to understand. In addition we review even the most basic aspects of English. Normal teaching resources are beyond the average rural teacher both in language and in assumptions about methodology. (We emphasise here again that there are many excellent teachers in Uzbekistan, but it is important not to assume that all teachers are equally competent.) Even having simplified TC as much as we can, we still get comments from teachers who say that they cannot understand it. Indeed some of our colleagues think that TC is less than fully useful for this reason.

3) TC is technology free. Our starting point is that the only mode of reproduction which is possible is that of a student copying from the blackboard into their note book. Rural teachers do not have access to photocopiers. There are photocopiers in district centres, but the cost of using them is beyond most teachers' means.

<sup>82</sup> While our focus is on reaching rural areas, we recognise that differences also exist in urban centres.

<sup>83</sup> This system seems to work, based on the spot checks which we carry out.

For this reason we include in TC teaching activities which require only a blackboard, pens and paper, or simple aids which a teacher could produce themselves. We do not include activities which involve worksheets or information gap activities relying on differentiated printed information being given to students.

4) The final characteristic of TC which we feel to be important is that we try to make it personal. It is not so much like a lecture but more like a letter from 'Mr Mark', which helps to build a sense of pride and community and which shows teachers that someone is thinking of them and is making an effort for them. This can be achieved by including simple things that are valued in Uzbekistan, such as writing good wishes on the major holidays. Anything that helps teachers to feel valued is worthwhile. Judging by the letters we receive we are achieving something here. More general feedback indicates that how we do things - the attitudes and values which we communicate to teachers - is as important as what we actually do.

## Implications for future developments

From this description it can be seen that TC stands by itself and, importantly, only the teacher needs to have a copy. There have been several excellent textbooks written for Uzbekistan – such as the British Council's *Fly High* (e.g. Juraev et al. 2000a, 2000b, 2000c, 2001a, 2001b, 2002) and Macmillan's *English Matters* (e.g. Volkova et al. 2002a, 2002b) - but the issue is whether these books can be got into the hands of pupils. The real cost of a textbook is prohibitive for the majority and so extensive subsidy or loan schemes are necessary (Read 2003).

A rental scheme is in place for *Fly High* but it is difficult to ensure that the scheme works as it is meant to. For example, it has not always been possible to distribute the book and the accompanying audio tape together, which has created a shortage of audio tapes in schools in Andijon province. The more components a teaching package<sup>84</sup> has the more complex the task of distributing all the components equally, failure to do which reduces the effectiveness of the package. More modest interventions would be well advised which consist of a minimum of components, ideally ones which stand alone.<sup>85</sup>

Returning to technology, at the other end of the scale from the blackboard and notebook there is a push for the use of the internet in education in developing country contexts. At the present time (and as far as we can judge for the foreseeable future) this is unhelpful for the majority of teachers in Uzbekistan. Even supposing that a teacher has access to a computer and that their home or school has consistent power and telephone connections (which would be unusual in most rural settings), the cost alone of a twenty minute telephone call to an internet service provider in the provincial capital would still be close to one day's salary (not including charges by the internet service provider). Internet cafés are found only in provincial capitals and one hour's use costs close to what the teacher earns for their day's work.

Nevertheless this international momentum for use of the internet skews interventions in this sort of context. We approached one international agency which has funded educational publications to discuss the possibility of publishing TC as a teachers' resource book. The answer was that the agency's strategy was now to concentrate on publishing via the internet. Similarly, we sent several rural teachers to the US for an otherwise excellent training programme designed specifically for teachers from this area. Part of the programme focused on how to access ideas for English lessons from the internet, to which, as mentioned above, not all teachers have access.

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<sup>84</sup> This includes not only resources which have both a teacher's version and a pupils' version, but also materials with mutually dependent components such as a curriculum, textbooks and a teacher education element. Also Uzarski 2003.

<sup>85</sup> For example, see the emphasis on generative methods (textbook which is curriculum independent) in the project described by Kennett (2005).

Looking between the internet and blackboard, although we cannot assume that teachers have photocopiers, providing schools with photocopiers would be much more helpful than giving them computers<sup>86</sup>. It cannot be assumed that schools have television or video players but almost every household has a television and video players are widespread<sup>87</sup>. Thus television programming - such as that which the British Council is producing in conjunction with local television stations (see Prescott Thomas 2003) - is useful, although programmes should be envisaged as being watched at home, not in the classroom. Similarly, there are possibilities for using videos for demonstrating new teaching methods, but the situation is not yet appropriate for using videos in classrooms.

However, it seems to us that the most underused technology in Uzbekistan today is the humble cassette player. We are not aware of any serious attempts to promote its widespread use but - in a country where not even the teachers have had substantial exposure to live English – a cassette player in every English classroom would make a huge difference.

Functioning as a point of contact is one of the most important roles which the TC and our education centre play. Through TC, teachers in rural areas become aware of wider opportunities and resources such as UzTEA conferences, ACCELS training activities and competitions, British Council programmes and so on. All of these are of potential value to the bright rural teacher, but – because of geographical factors and the tendency of information to flow in only one direction - the teacher would never otherwise become aware of these possibilities. With TC acting as an intermediary, teachers are able to communicate effectively.

As we try to bridge the gap between the village teacher and the mainstream of educational development we have become more aware of the need to develop a synthesis between various approaches to teaching. Firstly, the lecture method, primarily Soviet in origin, is widely used. Then we find communicative methods which are being promoted and which are being implemented in exactly the same way as practised elsewhere<sup>88</sup>. Also in the picture are traditional Central Asian literary genres such as stories, proverbs, jokes, riddles and poetry. Are there ways of integrating all these ideas so that they can fit naturally and harmoniously with what is already being done? An example would be helping teachers to work with a) a widespread expectation that the most important thing in education is the information which is copied from the blackboard and b) an assumption that large amounts of information should be memorised and then reproduced orally.

## Hindrances

In the preceding section we have identified some of the factors which we believe would be important in improving language teaching throughout Uzbekistan. Now we will turn to some aspects of current development 'orthodoxy' which we believe can sometimes be hindrances. Each of these may be based on a sound principle and constitute core policies of donor organisations and other international bodies, but they are sometimes applied regardless of context.

Firstly, many international organisations strongly emphasise the value of local NGOs. They may even have a policy of working only through NGOs. But the NGO sector in Uzbekistan is very underdeveloped and much of what exists is simply a response to foreign funding, with very little constituency or voluntary basis. The further development of this sector may indeed be an important development goal, but decisions should not be made without regard to the sector's actual capacity; otherwise other parts of the development process may be compromised.

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<sup>86</sup> This is particularly the case since a photocopier can easily cover its own running costs at the same time as serving its educational purpose.

<sup>87</sup> Making and watching video recordings of family and community events and feasts, and generally watching videos, are features of Uzbek life.

<sup>88</sup> For example, the concerns raised by English (2003) concerning the context-independent export of communicative language teaching methodology.

For example, we approached the agency of one donor government to discuss the possibility of receiving assistance with distributing helpful resources to English teachers. However, the policy of this agency was to distribute resources only via local NGOs, which in this case meant UzTEA. Yet UzTEA, for all its merits, has no capacity to organise resource distribution. Indeed, UzTEA branches vary in the extent to which they are merely self-help groups or whether they take a wider proactive focus. No doubt this policy does create a push to develop the NGO sector, but the result is that the resources which were available could not be distributed. We believe that this is a great loss in the short and medium term.

Another example can be found in international organisations' concern for sustainability. For funders, sustainability implies short term investment, long term results. But in our view this can also be a hindrance. Given the current economic situation short-term sustainable projects are almost always nonsense. The landscape is littered with the remains of 'sustainable projects'. Local NGOs simply try to go from project to project and thus very few are able to think strategically. Ideally, some things would need to be funded for ten years in order for sustainable change to take place.

Thankfully, though, English teaching in Uzbekistan is an area where many positive things are happening, where change is contingent not just on one project. A more helpful view of sustainability, therefore, would be to build on and reinforce existing processes rather than expect ongoing results to emerge after a short period of investment.

Another issue, associated with sustainability, is localisation. This principle argues that the role of internationals should be phased out quickly. On the contrary, we are acutely aware of the need for more native speakers of English (or, more accurately, good speakers of English who use modern teaching methods) to be involved in teacher training. This is not only because of the low language level of many English teachers but so that the new methods that all have heard about but few can visualise can be modelled. Uzbekistan is very unlike parts of the world which have been learning and using English for decades or even longer. Of course there are teachers who speak the language well and who are trained in communicative methods, but there are simply not enough of them. Until the number of good local teachers is sufficient there will be a need for native or near-native English speakers to be involved in teacher training. This need not be too expensive; much could be achieved by the judicious use of young volunteers from various international organisations.

Thus, from many angles, development interventions must be devised in a way that takes into account the real context of the targeted situation rather than too slavishly following generalised principles or tailoring what is done to the possibilities and desires of an elite sector.

## Conclusions

We will conclude this chapter by suggesting a number of possible areas of intervention which fit the needs of Uzbekistan.

1. Firstly, attention should be given to the existing system of in-service training for teachers. Known as *malaka oshirish* (upgrading of qualifications), this involves teachers spending several weeks following a training programme in the provincial capital once every few years. In general, the training provided is insufficient. New programmes to ensure that these in-service training opportunities are exploited to the maximum are required. (A good example is described by Khan and Seviour 2003.)
2. Self-contained resources in teachers' hands will always be helpful. One good book in the hands of every teacher could transform the situation.

3. The district centres, of which there are about 180 throughout Uzbekistan, contain markets that villagers use frequently and so, unlike the provincial capitals, these are places that teachers visit regularly. Facilities such as libraries and teacher's resource centres located in district centres would be accessible to nearly every teacher. An alternative is mobile units such as those provided in Ferghana by UzTEA (teachers' resources) and by CAFE (library).
4. Further efforts are needed to take teacher training to rural areas. A good example is the seminar programme organised by the Ferghana UzTEA branch and other partners, including the Public Affairs Section of the American Embassy.
5. Current textbook rental schemes should be expanded so that every student has access to one of these books.
6. The cassette player is an underused tool. More use could be made of television and video resources.
7. Finally, there is a need to provide dedicated teacher trainers. These should be both at a high level (such as the English Language Fellows employed by the US Embassy Public Affairs Section) and through careful use of less experienced volunteers by organisations which have the capacity to train and deploy them well.

It is not easy to have 'a view from the ground' and simultaneously a view from another perspective. This is beyond our expertise. We are not in a position to assess the viability of these suggestions beyond the local level. We offer them, however, as a guide to the type of interventions which would have the most widespread positive effect.

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# Chapter 15: Unpacking Words

Svetlana Khan and Diana Lubelska



## Introduction

This chapter explores the role of language in the success or failure of an innovation. We use the Uzbekistan Basic Education and Textbook Development Project as a case study. A major goal of this project was to introduce a more participatory approach to teaching and learning, but early on in the life of the project it became clear that the various stakeholders interpreted key concepts differently and this led to a number of difficulties. In many cases the various stakeholders were not even aware that their understanding of concepts was different from that of others. In this chapter, we take a few key terms and concepts which are in wide use in the countries of the former Soviet Union and in other parts of the world, and then we describe the different understandings underlying these terms and the difficulties that can result from these differences. Based on our experience we suggest a number of steps which those engaging in projects can take to smooth the process of coming to shared understandings.

## Three types of language difficulty

The Uzbekistan Ministry of Public Education's Basic Education and Textbook Development Project (BETDP) ran from 2000 to 2003. The project had many goals including author training, production of modern textbooks and teacher's guides in line with the new State Education Standards, and the textbook rental scheme to ensure that books are available at an affordable price. The project targeted six key curriculum areas (maths, science, economics, environmental studies, English and ICT) and international consultants worked together with experts from Uzbekistan to achieve project goals. Things did not always go smoothly. Sometimes the experts from Uzbekistan felt frustrated because their international colleagues seemed confused, bored or unable to understand them. And it was just the same the other way round: international consultants had difficulties in communicating new ideas successfully to local experts.

All of us working on the project struggled to understand one another. Through a long and hard process of repeated discussion and exchange, we came to realise how different are the concepts behind certain terms in Uzbekistan (and other countries of the former Soviet Union) and in other parts of the world. We came to understand how careful one must be in translating terminology if one of the languages involved in the translation process lacks a particular concept.

We identified three types of language difficulty in such situations.

1 The first type of difficulty is experienced when an apparently similar word or an apparently obvious translation is available, and when there is some overlap in meaning. An example is the Russian word *komplekt* (also used in Uzbek), which means *a set (of books)*. This is the easiest category of difficulty to deal with. Once the equivalent word has been found translation becomes easy. In this particular case, the appropriate English equivalent for *komplekt* is not 'complex', as one might assume at first sight, but 'set'.

2 The second type of difficulty is experienced when there is an apparently similar word or an apparently obvious translation available, although in fact the concepts underlying the terms are completely different from each other. An example is the term *piloting*. Table 1 is based on our experience as published authors in both Uzbekistan and other parts of the world. It shows that, although the same word exists in Uzbek, Russian and English, what is meant by the term in other parts of the world is very different from what is meant by it in Uzbekistan. This type of word is tricky because all parties may think that they share the same understanding, but in fact they may well be talking at cross-purposes.

	<b>Uzbekistan</b>	<b>West</b>
<b>Timing</b>	After publication, the first year in use	Before publication
<b>Purpose</b>	To decide if the book is satisfactory (e.g. to find mistakes, including typographical mistakes)	To establish whether the material is at the right level for the intended audience, whether the extent of the material is suitable for the time available, if it is suitable for teachers to handle, if the topics are interesting for the intended audience, etc.
<b>Participants</b>	All teachers (or a large sample, e.g. 100 schools) use the material; selected experienced 'good' teachers in 'good' schools are designated as piloting teachers and are asked to give feedback on the materials	A representative sample of schools, teachers and pupils (urban/rural; in different regions of the country; experienced/inexperienced; strong/weak) is asked to give feedback using a standardised questionnaire (perhaps 30/40 teachers/schools in all)
<b>Preparation</b>	Authors tell piloting teachers how to work with the book; a briefing conference is organised for ministry personnel, institute of pedagogical science personnel and school representatives	Teachers are given training in how to work with the materials by teacher trainers/authors
<b>Extent</b>	Whole book, so piloting lasts for one year	Two or three units (10-20%) of the book (Students' book, Workbook and Teacher's book), so piloting lasts for 2-4 weeks, or sometimes larger amounts are piloted over longer periods
<b>Monitoring</b>	A few visits by regional inspectors to observe classes, or no visits at all. No input expected from pupils. Limited input expected from teachers.	Authors, teacher trainers, publishers contribute. Observation of classes; questionnaires for teachers; questionnaires for pupils.
<b>Results</b>	Feedback given to authors and authors make changes if necessary. Federal Experts' Committee (FEC) reviews the feedback. Authors make any changes required by FEC. Most changes are typographical.	Detailed report compiled and circulated to authors, sponsors and other stakeholders (publisher, ministry, project). Major changes to content, topics, amount of material per lesson, exercise types used may result.
<b>Outcome/ Action/ Follow up</b>	FEC confirms book's status or rejects the book.	Materials revised and adjusted in line with feedback in the report.

3 The third type of difficulty is experienced when there is no similar word or translation available and when the concept does not exist in one of the languages. An example is *student-centred*. This is the most difficult problem to deal with. In particular, there is a danger of using a so-called 'equivalent' translation which itself sets up misleading and wrong ideas. All parties may feel confident that they have understood –

although this may not be true at all. This can be illustrated with reference to an issue which has been experienced in Uzbekistan and which in fact is still current there.

As we noted above, one of the objectives of the BETDP was to develop new textbooks with new types of learning activities, and with the help of these materials to introduce more student-centred approaches to learning in primary and secondary schools. The problem is that there is no equivalent in Uzbek or Russian for the term 'student-centred learning'.

Translators struggled to find words for it and in the end they used Russian and Uzbek equivalents of 'interactive teaching'. One might think that this was clear enough. Experience has shown that it is not, however, because what teachers understand as 'interactive teaching' turns out to be something quite different from student-centred learning.

In 2002, as part of the BETDP, a research study on 'Existing teaching methods and use of student-centred learning and teaching in basic education schools in Uzbekistan' was carried out. In the initial study 50% of teachers claimed to be using 'student-centred learning'. Everyone involved in the project was very surprised by this. If 50% of teachers were already using this new methodology, why was it necessary to introduce new teaching and learning approaches as part of the project?

When further investigation was carried out, it became clear that teachers in Uzbekistan understood 'interactive teaching' in a completely different way from that intended. The first part of Table 2 shows the most common definitions of 'interactive teaching' given by teachers in Uzbekistan and compares them with the characteristics of student-centred learning as understood in the West. The second part of the table

<b>'Interactive teaching', Uzbekistan</b>	<b>'Student-centred learning', West</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Δ involves the whole class (not just the bright students)</li> <li>Δ pupils take part in knowledge competitions</li> <li>Δ teachers work with small groups</li> <li>Δ pupils participate actively in class, e.g. if translation is being done, then all pupils must do it quietly; they should not just sit and listen to the one who is doing it in front of the class</li> <li>Δ pupils memorise factual information</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Δ learning starts from the pupils' current understanding of the topic</li> <li>Δ pupils make some input into the learning process, e.g. by expressing their ideas/ opinions</li> <li>Δ social dimension of the classroom is used: pupils work cooperatively and collaboratively</li> <li>Δ learners use critical thinking skills, e.g. they are given a sample of sentences or a text and work out rules from the sample, rather than being told the rule and finding examples in the text</li> <li>Δ learners take co-responsibility for their learning, e.g. by setting personal goals and by evaluating themselves</li> </ul>
<b>'Interactive teaching' activities, Uzbekistan</b>	<b>'Student-centred learning' activities, West</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Δ questioning of pupils</li> <li>Δ a pupil answers a question and writes his/her answer on the blackboard</li> <li>Δ pupils do exercises in the class</li> <li>Δ multiple choice tests</li> <li>Δ explanation of course material using textbook</li> <li>Δ routine checks and discussions of homework</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Δ role play</li> <li>Δ problem-solving in pairs/groups</li> <li>Δ researching</li> <li>Δ project work (including making presentations)</li> <li>Δ language awareness activities</li> <li>Δ read/listen and match/do/find/categorise, etc.</li> </ul>

shows the activities which teachers in Uzbekistan felt characterised 'interactive teaching' and those which are generally associated in the West with student-centred learning.

It is clear that the majority of teachers in Uzbekistan (including those involved in the BETDP project) have an understanding of 'interactive teaching' which is very different from the Western understanding of 'student-centred learning'. A great deal of time, frustration, and emotional energy could have been saved if some simple steps had been followed early in the history of BETDP to clarify differences in terminology.

## Recommendations

To avoid misunderstandings, facilitate communication and avoid wasting project time it is recommended that international development projects adopt the following seven steps.

1 Create a climate of discussion and dialogue. There are various strategies that can be used to establish such a climate:

- Use a 'terminology bin' or 'terminology poster' to deposit ideas and words that are giving a group problems. Clear them up from time to time.
- When chairing a meeting, stop from time to time and ask 'Is there anything we've discussed that anyone is unclear about or any terms which are causing a problem?' This will not work in some cultures because people do not want to say they do not understand. They would lose face.
- When chairing a meeting, be sensitive to people's body language. In this way it is possible to pick up on things without anyone losing face. The chairperson can then say 'Can we just stop for a moment and see if we all understand this in the same way?' and elicit understanding or explain a point him/herself.

2 Factor in time for listening and discussions to establish common understandings of terms and concepts in the project design. These sessions will help to establish the glossary (see Recommendation 5 below).

3 Plan time for discussions not just at the beginning but also at regular intervals throughout the project. Part of learning new ways of thinking and doing involves recognising that this process is never ending. At the beginning, we do not know what we have not understood completely. It is only with more and more experience that we begin to see what we have not understood.

4 If at all possible, include in the team an interculturalist to help with such issues and/or have someone whose role is only to listen and to stop discussions when it seems that there may be a misunderstanding, so that participants can clarify things before continuing.

5 Draw up a glossary as early in the project as possible, preferably before project activity begins. Circulate the glossary widely. 'Glossing' involves the speaker or writer perceiving the world from the listener's or reader's point of view. A glossary is explanatory and expository so it includes examples and illustrations. For this reason it is much more helpful than a simple definition would be. A definition is given only from the perspective of the generator of an idea, offering less help for the receiver in understanding the idea and fitting it into his/her frame of reference.

A glossary can be useful in a number of ways:

- to establish within a project a shared and agreed understanding of a term and the concept it represents;
- to educate a particular group or community within a society or a country so that they understand terms and concepts in the same way;
- to provide a common language to cooperate with others on an international level.

A glossary is needed not just to help teachers in the project country (in this case Uzbekistan). It is also valuable for international consultants who need to understand the local terminology and concepts and for local experts who need to understand Western terminology.

6 Before a project begins or early in the life of the project, establish a collection of key articles translated into the appropriate languages so that people can read around new concepts. Some people feel more confident if they can read about new ideas before discussions. It is generally preferable not to use primary sources because these are often rather complicated. Secondary literature is shorter and often more simply expressed.

7 Plan to involve *all levels* of stakeholder in the discussion and dialogue process - including, for example, parents and pupils - so that a new, common awareness and understanding is built up. This will require a good and constructive communication strategy within a project which takes account of all the levels of stakeholder.



## Contributors



**Stephen A. Bahry** has an MA in linguistics from the University of Toronto, Canada, and has worked as an English teacher, teacher trainer and curriculum developer in Canada, China and Tajikistan. He is currently a doctoral student in the Comparative, International & Development Education programme at the University of Toronto.

**Carol Benson** PhD has worked for 20 years in mother tongue-based bilingual education in multilingual countries, where she still spends a great deal of time doing research and consulting. She is currently based at the University of Stockholm, Sweden, where she teaches courses in first and second language acquisition and pedagogy.

**John Clegg** is a freelance education consultant based in London, UK. He specialises in education through the medium of English as a second language in primary and secondary schools. He works in content and language integrated learning in Europe, English-medium education in Africa and multicultural education in the UK.

**Hywel Coleman** is Director of HCIE Ltd, the international education consultancy, and also Honorary Senior Research Fellow, School of Education, University of Leeds, UK. He specialises in education surveys and evaluations; he has coordinated baseline studies in Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and elsewhere. He has a particular interest in education in Indonesia.

**Kath Copley** works as a communications specialist with non-governmental and government institutions in a range of sectors: agriculture, health, governance and leadership, development management, strategic planning. Her professional interests include participatory development approaches and relationships between language, power and poverty. She is based in NSW, Australia, and works worldwide.

**Mark Dickens** is currently a PhD student in the Faculty of Oriental Studies, University of Cambridge, UK. As head of the English Language Programme at Istiqbol Development Centre, Kokand, Uzbekistan, 1997-2003, he edited the *Teachers' Companion* newsletter and helped establish a branch of the Uzbekistan Teachers of English Association (UzTEA).

**Mahanbet Dzhusupov** holds the Candidate of Pedagogical Science and Doctor of Philological Science qualifications. He is Professor of Russian and Turkic Languages and Head of the Russian Language Department in the Uzbek State University of World Languages, Tashkent, Uzbekistan. His research areas include Russian, Turkic languages and language teaching methodology.

**Chris Duff** is the Kokand Regional Director for Central Asian Free Exchange and is responsible for managing small projects in health, education and rural development. He has lived in Uzbekistan's Ferghana Valley for twelve years.

**Jamilya Gulyamova** graduated from Tashkent State University. She was formerly Assistant Professor and Head of the Translation Department, Uzbek State University of World Languages, Tashkent. For four years she was President of the Uzbek Teachers of English Association. She now works for the British Council Uzbekistan as Learner Services Manager.



**Graham Haylor** works for the Asia-Pacific STREAM Initiative, working toward poverty alleviation and linking fishfarmers and fishers with international and local non-governmental, inter-governmental and international organisations, and government agencies. He is responsible for strategy and support to livelihoods approaches, institutional development, policy development and communications. He lives in Bangkok, Thailand.

**Abbas Iriskulov** is an Associate Professor of Linguistics. He currently works as Director of the Uzbekistan Language Learning Centre and he delivers lectures in linguistics at the Uzbekistan State World Languages University in Tashkent. He is also President of the Uzbekistan Teachers of English Association.

**Psyche Kennett** has spent fifteen years working on English language in-service teacher education and curriculum development projects and the training of trainers across the curriculum. She has worked with donors, ministries, policy makers, teacher trainers, teachers, curriculum developers, textbook and test writers in Sri Lanka, Thailand, Cambodia, Vietnam and Qatar.

**Svetlana Khan** has worked on international projects in Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan. She holds an MEd in Teacher Training for English Language Teaching from Exeter University, UK, and works as a teacher and trainer. She is co-author of a series of textbooks for Uzbekistan schools.

**Diana Lubelska** is the Director of Cambridge International Education, Cambridge, UK. She has worked as international consultant on curriculum and textbook development projects in Armenia, India, Russia, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, and as a trainer in many parts of the world.

**Ragsana Mammadova** is Senior Teacher of Azerbaijan University of Languages, President of Azerbaijan English Teachers' Association (AzETA), and a Hornby Alumna. She holds MEd TESOL (University of Leeds). She cooperates closely with British Council offices in London and Baku and has presented the work of AzETA in several international events.

**Amol Padwad** is Head, English Department, J.M.Patel College, Bhandara, India. He holds Masters degrees in English, Russian and TESOL, besides M.Phil. and PGDTE. He is Vice President of the English Language Teachers' Association of India and moderates the British Council's ELTeCS-India e-list. Interests include teacher development, corpus linguistics and translation.

**William P. Rivers** is at the Center for Advanced Study of Language, University of Maryland, USA. His PhD in Russian is from Bryn Mawr College. His research focuses on the economics of language policy in the former Soviet Union and the US and on metacognition in adult second and third language acquisition.

**William Savage** works around the world with international and local non-governmental, inter-governmental and international organisations, and government agencies. He is a facilitator in areas from capacity-building and communications to resource mobilisation and strategic planning, with experience in fields including agriculture, child rights, education and language. He lives in Bangkok, Thailand.

**Gayrat Shoumarov** is Rector of Uzbekistan State World Languages University in Tashkent, Professor of Psychology, Chairman of the Uzbekistan Psychological Society and Coordinator of Social Sciences in the Ministry of Higher and Secondary Specialised Education of the Republic of Uzbekistan.

**Marta Šigutová** works as a teacher trainer at the Faculty of Education, University of Ostrava, Czech Republic. In 1997 she finished her MA studies at the University of Reading, UK. She is interested in issues of testing, assessment and teaching English to heterogeneous classes.

**Juldyz Smagulova** lectures at the Kazakhstan Institute of Management, Economics & Strategic Research in Almaty. She received her Candidate of Sciences Degree from Kazakh National University. Research interests cover language policy, planning, identity, loss and revitalization. Her publications include *Language Situation & Language Planning in Kazakhstan*, co-authored with E. Suleimenova (2005).

**Andrew Thomas** is Deputy Director of the British Council in Uzbekistan. He has a Diploma in Teaching English as a Foreign language and MA in Linguistics from Manchester University, and PhD in Linguistics from Lancaster University, UK. He has extensive experience of developing English Teacher Education programmes in Asia and Africa.

**Tan Bee Tin** currently works in the Department of Applied Language Studies and Linguistics at the University of Auckland, New Zealand. Previously she lectured on postgraduate English language teacher education programmes at Assumption University, Bangkok. Her main research interests and publications are in materials development and academic discourse.

**Paul Woods** is the British Council's Change Programme Manager for Central and South Asia. He was Director of the Peacekeeping English Project, 2001-2005, and Country Director Mozambique, 1996-2001. He has taught English and trained teachers in Nigeria, Brunei, Tanzania, Sierra Leone, the Philippines and Brazil and worked as a consultant.