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Language Planning and Policy in Europe, Vol. 3
The Baltic States, Ireland and Italy

Edited by
Robert B. Kaplan and Richard B. Baldauf Jr.
Contents

Series Overview .................................................. 1
Language Policy and Planning in The Baltic States, Ireland and Italy: Some Common Issues
Robert B. Kaplan and Richard B. Baldauf Jr. .......... 6
Language Politics and Practice in the Baltic States
Gabrielle Hogan-Brun, Uldis Ozolins, Meilutė Ramonienė and Mart Rannut 31
The Language Situation in Ireland
Muiris Ó’Laoire .......................................................... 193
The Language Situation in Ireland: An Update
Muiris Ó’Laoire .......................................................... 256
The Language Situation in Italy
Arturo Tosi .............................................................. 262
Biographical Notes on Contributors ......................... 351
Series Overview

Since 1998, when the first polity studies on language policy and planning – addressing the language situation in a particular polity – were published in the Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development, 27 polity studies (and one issue on Chinese character modernization) have been published in that journal and (between 1990 and 2007) in Current Issues in Language Planning. These studies have all addressed, to a greater or lesser extent, 22 common questions or issues (Appendix A), thus giving them some degree of consistency. However, we are keenly aware that these studies have been published in the order in which they were completed. While such an arrangement is reasonable for journal publication, the result does not serve the needs of area specialists nor are the various monographs easily accessible to the wider public. As the number of available polity studies has grown, we have planned (where necessary) to update and republish these studies in coherent areal volumes.

The first such volume was concerned with Africa, both because a significant number of studies has become available and because Africa constitutes an area that is significantly under-represented in the language planning literature. Yet it is marked by extremely interesting language policy and planning issues, therefore in the first areal volume, we reprinted four polity studies – Botswana, Malawi, Mozambique and South Africa – as:


We hope that the first areal volume has served the needs of specialists more effectively. It is our intent to continue to publish other areal volumes as sufficient studies are completed. We will continue to do so in the hope that such volumes will be of interest to areal scholars and others involved in some way in language policies and language planning in geographically coherent regions. We have already been able to produce five areal volumes in addition to Africa 1 and the six areal volumes presently in print cover 20 polities:


This volume – Europe 3 – is another such volume:
The areas in which we are planning to produce additional volumes, and some of the polities that may be included are:

- **Europe**, including Cyprus and Luxembourg.
- **Asia**, including Bangladesh, Chinese characters, Hong Kong, Japan, Nepal, Singapore, Sri Lanka, and Taiwan.
- **Africa**, including Cameroon and Zimbabwe.

In the meantime, we will continue to bring out *Current Issues in Language Planning*, and add to the list of polities available for inclusion in areal volumes. At this point, we cannot predict the intervals over which such volumes will appear, since they will be defined by the ability of contributors to complete work on already contracted polity studies.

### Assumptions Relating to Polity Studies

We have made a number of assumptions about the nature of language policy and planning that have influenced the nature of the studies presented. First, we do not believe that there is, yet, a broader and more coherent paradigm to address the complex questions of language policy/planning development. On the other hand, we do believe that the collection of a large body of more or less comparable data and the careful analysis of that data will give rise to a more coherent paradigm. Therefore, in soliciting the polity studies, we have asked each of the contributors to address some two-dozen questions (to the extent that such questions were pertinent to each particular polity); the questions were offered as suggestions of topics that might be covered (see Appendix A). Some contributors have followed the questions rather closely, others have been more independent in approaching the task. It should be obvious that, in framing those questions, we were moving from a perhaps inchoate notion of an underlying theory. The reality that our notion was inchoate becomes clear in each of the polity studies.

Second, we have sought to find authors who had an intimate involvement with the language planning and policy decisions made in the polity they were writing about, i.e. we were looking for insider knowledge and perspectives about the polities. However, as insiders are part of the process, they may find it difficult to take the part of the ‘other’ – to be critical of that process. But it is not necessary or even appropriate that they should be – this can be left to others. As Pennycook (1998: 126) argues:

> One of the lessons we need to draw from this account of colonial language policy [i.e. Hong Kong] is that, in order to make sense of language policies we need to understand both their location historically and their location contextually. What I mean by this is that we can not assume that the promotion of local languages instead of a dominant language, or the promotion of a dominant language at the expense of a local language, are
in themselves good or bad. Too often we view these things through the lenses of liberalism, pluralism or anti-imperialism, without understanding the actual location of such policies.

While some authors do take a critical stance, or one based on a theoretical approach to the data, many of the studies are primarily descriptive, bringing together and revealing, we hope, the nature of the language development experience in the particular polity. We believe this is a valuable contribution to the theoretical/paradigmatic development of the field. As interesting and challenging as it may be to provide a priori descriptions of the nature of the field based on specific paradigms (e.g. language management, language rights, linguistic imperialism) or to provide more general frameworks (e.g. Hornberger, 2006; Spolsky, 2004) – nor have we been completely immune from the latter ourselves (e.g. Kaplan & Baldauf, 2003: Chapter 12) – we believe that our current state of knowledge about language planning and policy is still partial and that the development of a sufficient database is an important prerequisite for adequate paradigm development.

Furthermore, we recognize that the paradigm, on the basis of which language policy and planning is conventionally undertaken, may be inadequate to the task. Much more is involved in developing successful language policy than is commonly recognized or acknowledged. Language policy development is a highly political activity (see especially the article on the Baltic States in this volume). Given its political nature, traditional linguistic research is necessary but not in itself sufficient, and the publication of scholarly studies in academic journals is really only the first step in the process. Indeed, scholarly research itself may need to be expanded, to consider not only the language at issue but also the social landscape in which that language exists – the ecology of language and its social system. A critical step in policy development involves making research evidence understandable to the lay public; research scholars are not generally the ideal messengers in this context (Kaplan & Baldauf, 2007). We hope this series also may contribute to that end.

An Invitation to Contribute

We welcome additional polity contributions. Our views on a number of the issues can be found in Kaplan and Baldauf (1997); sample polity monographs have appeared in the extant issues of Current Issues in Language Planning and in the volumes in this series. Interested authors should contact the editors, present a proposal for a monograph, and provide a sample list of references. It is also useful to provide a brief biographical note, indicating the extent of any personal involvement in language planning activities in the polity proposed for study as well as any relevant research/publication in LPP. All contributions should, of course, be original, unpublished works. We expect to work closely with contributors during the preparation of monographs. All monographs will, of course, be reviewed for quality, completeness, accuracy, and style. Experience suggests that co-authored contributions may be very successful, but we want to stress that we are seeking a unified monograph on the
polity, not an edited compilation of various authors’ efforts. Questions may be addressed to either of us.

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Note

References

APPENDIX A

Part I: The Language Profile of . . .

1. Name and briefly describe the national/official language(s) (*de jure* or *de facto*).
2. Name and describe the major minority language(s).
3. *Name and describe the lesser minority language(s) (include ‘dialects’, pidgins, creoles and other important aspects of language variation).* The definition of minority language/dialect/pidgin will need to be discussed in terms of the sociolinguistic context.
4. *Name and describe the major religious language(s)*. In some polities religious languages and/or missionary policies have had a major impact on the language situation and provide *de facto* language planning. In some contexts religion has been a vehicle for introducing exogenous languages while in other cases it has served to promote indigenous languages.
5. Name and describe the major language(s) of literacy, assuming that it is/they are not one of those described above.
6. Provide a table indicating the number of speakers of each of the above languages, what percentage of the population they constitute and whether those speakers are largely urban or rural.
7. Where appropriate, provide a map(s) showing the distribution of speakers, key cities and other features referenced in the text.
Part II: Language Spread

(8) Specify which languages are taught through the educational system, to whom they are taught, when they are taught and for how long they are taught.

(9) Discuss the objectives of language education and the methods of assessment to determine whether the objectives are met.

(10) To the extent possible, trace the historical development of the policies/practices identified in items 8 and 9 (may be integrated with 8/9).

(11) Name and discuss the major media language(s) and the distribution of media by socio-economic class, ethnic group, urban/rural distinction (including the historical context where possible). For minority language, note the extent that any literature is (has been) available in the language.

(12) How has immigration affected language distribution and what measures are in place to cater for learning the national language(s) and/or to support the use of immigrant languages.

Part III: Language Policy and Planning

(13) Describe any language planning legislation, policy or implementation that is currently in place.

(14) Describe any literacy planning legislation, policy or implementation that is currently in place.

(15) To the extent possible, trace the historical development of the policies/practices identified in items 13 and 14 (may be integrated with these items).

(16) Describe and discuss any language planning agencies/organisations operating in the polity (both formal and informal).

(17) Describe and discuss any regional/international influences affecting language planning and policy in the polity (include any external language promotion efforts).

(18) To the extent possible, trace the historical development of the policies/practices identified in items 16 and 17 (may be integrated with these items).

Part IV: Language Maintenance and Prospects

(19) Describe and discuss intergenerational transmission of the major language(s), and whether this is changing over time;

(20) Describe and discuss the probabilities of language death among any of the languages/language varieties in the polity, any language revival efforts as well as any emerging pidgins or creoles.

(21) Add anything you wish to clarify about the language situation and its probable direction of change over the next generation or two.

(22) Add pertinent references/bibliography and any necessary appendices (e.g. a general plan of the educational system to clarify the answers to questions 8, 9 and 14).
Language Policy and Planning in the Baltic States, Ireland and Italy: Some Common Issues

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Introduction

This volume brings together three language policy and planning polity studies related to five countries in Europe.1 (See the ‘Series Overview’ for a more general discussion of the nature of the series, Appendix A for the 22 questions each study set out to address, and Kaplan et al. 2000 for a discussion of the underlying concepts for the studies themselves.) In this paper, in addition to providing an introductory summary of the material covered in these studies, we want to draw out and discuss some of the more general issues raised by them.

Although the Baltic States, Ireland and Italy do not represent a geographic cluster, they do have in common a number of factors. All three of the polities:

- can be considered European; all are (or aspire to be) members of the European Union;
- have been concerned with spreading literacy as the reason for language policy development;
- have demonstrated the importance of bottom-up development as opposed to top-down planning;
- are experiencing an increasing influence from English as the result of their role in the European Union.
- are also experiencing pressure from the European Union and the various regulations it has espoused in the context of minority languages, in the context of linguistic rights, and in the context of the requirements imposed by membership.

In addition, all three polities are struggling to assert their national languages, but in differing ways. There is among these polities an interesting contrast – Ireland is struggling to resurrect an indigenous language (Irish) which has been overwhelmed by a major language of wider communication (English) (i.e. moving from essentially English monolingualism toward bilingualism in which Irish is a participant), while the Baltic states are struggling to minimise
the influence of a major language of wider communication (Russian) on the historical national languages of the several states (Estonian, Latvian, Lithuanian) (i.e. in effect, moving back to a monolingualism – based on the notion of one polity/one language, although bilingualism would certainly be welcome). On the other hand, multilingualism in Italy is rooted in the historical background of a country whose late unification maintained a situation of linguistic diversity that is unique within Europe. Several unofficial languages (still ambiguously called ‘dialects’) are widely spoken in everyday life and interpenetrate the national language giving it a strong regional flavor in different areas of the peninsula. These linguistic differences are evidence of the heritage of some ten centuries of political division and cultural diversity – a diversity which could not be erased by the official recognition of Tuscan as Italy’s national language in 1861. Since then, the interaction between different sectors of the national community has involved a process of language change that is more complex than that found in other European countries. Thus, Italy is struggling to create a national language composed of influences from many linguistic traditions all pulling in different directions, making the official national language a protean structure.

The Baltic States

These three small independent countries, re-emerging from the wreckage of the Soviet Union, have gained a prominence in language policy issues over the past two decades that belies their relatively modest place on the map of Europe. Concerned to undo the political, demographic and social legacies of half a century of Soviet occupation, language issues in these independent polities became one of the key features of separation from the Communist past, but also one of the key features of controversy and at times of conflict. The conflict has been almost entirely with Russia, whose policies have included a linguistic element in defense of significant numbers of ‘Russian speakers’ who immigrated into the Baltic States during the Soviet occupation. Important differences can also be seen between the Baltic States – particularly Estonia and Latvia – and European and other international bodies with their own views of language, language conflicts and interpretations of language rights.

On the one hand, language issues have threatened relations with geographic and political neighbours, and have also threatened the entry of Estonia and Latvia into the European Union. On the other, all three Baltic States have in varying ways been able significantly to modify previous language regimes, with internal relations being far more accommodating on the part of language minorities and the population generally than they have been marked by overt hostility. This apparent contradiction between external strife and internal accommodation may serve to alert scholars to the importance of identifying perceptions and assumptions clearly in the analysis of any language policy situation.

Recent language issues in this region, however, have also represented a continuation of a much longer set of historical changes in language regimes; over the course of the 20th century alone, no fewer than six different major language regimes can be identified as having occurred, ranging:
from intense Russification followed by brief liberalisation during Tsarist times,
• to the re-assertion of national languages during the first period of independence,
• to the return of a different incarnation of Russification during the first period of Soviet occupation in 1940–1941,
• to the imposition of German during Nazi occupation in 1941–1944,
• to the return of Soviet Russification under the guise of ‘the socialist equality of languages’ from 1944 to the late 1980s/early 1990s, and
• to the subsequent reinstatement of the three Baltic languages as the sole national languages in their respective territories.

This shifting history of language regimes makes the Baltic States a remarkable laboratory of linguistic change, persistence and language fractures. Also these three countries are small enough to permit the tracing of changes in the linguistic environment with some chance of accurately delineating their complexity. The recent changes in language regimes that the Baltic States have deliberately brought about, the nature of those changes, the opposition they have engendered, and the linguistic, political and social consequences of these changes – both locally and internationally – are the concern of this monograph.

The period of Russian interaction was characterised from the beginning by deportations, repressions and the annihilation of the institutions and civic life of these polities. The full force of totalitarianism followed this repressive era during World War II and its immediate Stalinist aftermath. As the 50 years of occupation changed from overt repression to political, cultural and ideological control and the desire by the Soviet Union to deny national or cultural identity other than Russian, the threats changed to incessant demographic shifts and the steady limiting of the scope of national language use. A number of issues can be identified:

(1) The situation in the Baltic States represented the defense of national languages that had, in the context of Soviet language policy, lost significant sociolinguistic status and functions from the status they had enjoyed in the first period of independence between the World Wars. This was not a situation of the revival, or of the defence of small minority languages; rather, of language reversal. The situation raises the interesting question of how national languages can be threatened, and how they can regain their status.

(2) Languages are spoken by people; a significant part of the loss of status of the national languages in the Baltic States was due to the massive influx of immigrants from other republics of the Soviet Union, particularly into Estonia and Latvia. Few of those immigrants learned the local languages, thus raising the question of whether demographic changes justify language policies, including the relationship between language and citizenship. An additional issue involves the associated loss of linguistic privilege among previously dominant groups, causing the citizens of the Baltic States to mobilise against the loss of privilege. The issue is whether the loss of
privilege in language status – real or perceived – may act as a source of language conflict.

3) In contrast to a much more common issue for language policy where state institutions (i.e. their officials) cannot speak a particular minority language or do not provide education in minority languages, a full set of immigrant minority (Russian) language institutions appeared in which many state employees (or others providing public services) could not communicate in the national language while all significant state institutions and employees could communicate in the minority language (Russian).

4) The local language situation in the Baltics has also seen intense internationalisation, with a variety of governments (most prominently Russia) and a host of international organisations involved in an international battle over the status of languages, often cast in terms of language rights. At times the overwhelming interest of international organisations in the Baltic language situation and the stubborn adherence by the Baltic States to their intention to change their language regime significantly has the potential to bring about some profound refinements of understandings of human rights, national rights, and citizenship as well as discrimination and related areas. Moreover, such issues have at times become central to international processes of integration of states (into the EU) and debates on the legitimate roles of governments and the rights of minorities and majorities. These issues raise significant questions about the relation between local and national language imperatives and international organisations.

5) No less important has been the intellectual and academic response to the Baltic situation. The range of opinions on Baltic language policy has been arguably more extensive than that of any other language, with debate even more intense than that in Quebec (with which the Baltic States are sometimes compared). The Baltic situation has now engendered a significant literature with contributions deriving even from authors not otherwise concerned with language policy.

6) Beyond the macro issues of rights and legitimacy are the details of language initiatives and a range of pertinent technologies; i.e. issues concerning how small languages can be taught, how language assessment may be conducted, how language streams in schools can be maintained, altered or abolished and how streetscapes can be linguistically altered.

7) The altered status of national languages and the broader political questions entailed may mask a number of such sociolinguistically observable issues as language change, language use and language attitudes. The Baltic States demonstrate intriguing shifts in language attitudes among populations sometimes considered embedded in ethnic divisions. Despite repeated accusations of extreme nationalism among the Baltic populations, there is a marked degree of linguistic tolerance, and parallel with such tolerance (while some immigrant minority leaders with their international supporters admittedly claim discrimination) most minority populations have become more pragmatic and as a consequence more supportive of Baltic policies.

8) The Baltic States, during the brief period of independence between the wars, managed to cope liberally with minority populations. The long