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Table of Contents

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Language Acquisition and Power: A Theoretical Framework

Tariq Rahman

Introduction

Language acquisition refers to both learning and teaching a language. It might be argued that both learning and teaching are two sides of the same coin; that a teacher teaches a language while a learner learns it. However, that is not how the terms are used here. When one talks of learning one's focus is on demand. People are willing to learn a language; they demand it. The process of teaching is a response to this demand. The focus on teaching, on the other hand, looks at the supply side. In an open-market situation public demand will create and condition supply. In other situations, however, such an equation will not hold. One may force the teaching of a language by decree and offer no choice. In such cases one would be justified in concentrating only on teaching and not on learning because it would no longer be possible not to appear to learn a language which is being forcibly taught though, of course, it would be possible to resist it in various ways. In general, however, the situation of the Muslims of northern India and Pakistan falls somewhere in between these two ends though inclined more to the open-market pattern in some essential respects. First, no language was ever imposed and then forced upon them by dictatorial fiat. Second no kind of teaching, let alone language-teaching, was made compulsory for the whole of the population of South Asia at any period of history. And, lastly, public demand for the languages which were taught from time to time – Arabic, Persian, Urdu and English – was never absent. Indeed, it was often considerable and increased teaching was often a response to this demand. It is because of these factors, especially because of demand from the civil society, that I have proposed to look at language acquisition, which includes both learning and teaching i.e both demand and supply, in this paper. One purpose of the paper is to explore a theoretical model for both learning and teaching situations. In a sense, of course, language-learning and language-teaching are two sides of the same coin and one cannot look at one without looking at the other. And when one has looked at both sides one discovers that the value of the coin, what is buys in the market, is power – that it is power which enters into the equation whether people demand to learn a language or whether some powerful entity, such as the state, makes policies to teach it.

Power

Power is a notoriously difficult concept to use. In my book *Language and Politics in Pakistan* I argued that if it is exercised it would 'increase the tangible or intangible means of gratification of its possessor' (Rahman 1996: 8). This is not a definitive definition. Indeed, introducing the work of some of the most eminent scholars of the present era on power, Steven Lukes writes:

> *It turns out that there are various answers, all deeply familiar, which respond to our interests in both the outcomes and the location of power. Perhaps this explains why, in our ordinary unreflective judgments and comparisons of power, we normally know what we mean and have little difficulty in understanding one another, yet every attempt at a single answer to the question has failed and seems likely to fail (Lukes 1986: 17).*

So, I will neither attempt a single answer nor insist on any particular definition. One would still have to point out a few crude indicators of the 'outcomes' and 'location of power'. For ordinary people the outcomes would perhaps be the possession of the means for living a good life. However differently 'the good life' is defined in different historical periods and cultures, it cannot but have some basic requirements: food, housing, clothing, freedom from fear and the respect of ones' fellow human beings. This last, subsumed under 'recognition' by Francis Fukuyama (1992: 146), may not appear to be as essential a requirement as the satisfaction of bodily wants but we are talking about the 'good' life and not merely subsistence. For life to have value, more than merely bodily wants must be satisfied and the desire for 'recognition' – leading as it does to war and heroism and all kinds of irrational deeds – is the foremost among them. An even better life would entail the possession of leisure and the capability of having one's desires gratified. These desires could be innocent, such as the possession of books, pictures and the esteem of many people; they could be excessive, such as the desire for possessing more than anybody possesses: and they could be monstrous, such as the possession of sex slaves, indulging in sadistic practices and forcing everybody to defer and submit to one. Whatever the desires may be, an indication of being powerful would be the capacity to gratify them. It would merely be a credible capability which need not always be used. But, because it is a capability, a quality analogous to potential energy in physics, it cannot exist without a system to support it. At the crudest level this system is physical strength. One can force a few things out of weaker people by physical force alone. But such power is not lasting and it needs only one other person to join the victim to be defeated. What is crucial is that people should allow a person, or persons, to possess power voluntarily; to recognize that it is legitimate 'authority' – authority as defined by Hannah Arendt (1969: 45)—and not merely brute force. And what gives legitimacy to power in human societies, even simple ones, let alone complex modern ones, are ideas.

All ideas for the organization of societies – tribal mores; kingship; priesthood; democracy; socialism; fascism – are based upon some agreement, some support, some acquiescence among a number of people even if, as it sometimes happens, an unusual individual can create enough terror to be obeyed by others even after this consensus is destroyed or seriously eroded. For the most part, though, one can agree with Barry Barnes when he claims that:

> *Social power is the added capacity for action that accrues to individuals through their constituting a distribution of knowledge and thereby a society (Barnes 1988: 57).*

Indeed, as Foucault observes, 'knowledge and power are integrated with one another' (Foucault 1975: 52). Foucault explains this further by describing how discourses transform individual consciousness. He tells us why we obey power:

> *What makes power hold good, what makes it accepted, is simply the fact that it doesn't only weigh on us as a force that says no, but that it transverses and produces things, it induces pleasure, forms knowledge, produces discourse. It needs to be considered as a productive network which runs through the whole social body, much more than as a negative instance whose function is repression (Foucault n.d: 119)*

Indeed, as we move to the modern state, power becomes more and more detached from individuals (such as the sovereign) and 'becomes a machinery that no one owns' (Foucault 1977: 156).

Language and Power

And, the less any one person or group (an oligarchy) is associated with this machinery the more does language give one access to it. That is where the demand for learning the language of the visible machinery of power comes in. This visible machinery is associated for the most part with the state in Pakistan – government, bureaucracies, military, judiciary, education, research, media – but in other countries private domains of power, such as corporations, are very powerful (Saul 1995). The language of the domains of power is an empowering device. Those who know it, control it, manipulate it, have an obvious advantage over those who do not. This language has certain characteristics: it is a standardized variety of a language; it is a print language; it is highly valued; it is not spoken by the common people; it is an elitist possession. It was standardized not because it was structurally or intrinsically any better than the non-standardized, region-bound varieties of the languages we stigmatize as dialects, but because powerful people spoke it and spent money on teaching it, printing dictionaries and books in it, and using it in the domains of power. That is really why it is valued; not because there is really something superior about it but because those who use it are more powerful, richer, better educated and are perceived as being superior. In other words we all agree in supporting the power of the system of distribution of power simply by accepting the standardized variety of a language as the 'correct' or 'elegant' language.

Utilitarian Language Learning

Generally, people demand a language because it is of utilitarian significance for them. It enables them to acquire elitist positions and hence empowers them. The variety people learn is always a standardized, printed variety of a language used in the domains of power.

In most countries this standardized variety is an elitist possession. In the English-speaking world the pronunciation, idiom, vocabulary and even the grammar of the common peoples' varieties – the regional or working class varieties – is different. Moreover, as Bernstein pointed out in a series of articles, working class children use the 'restricted code' while middle class ones use the 'elaborated code' which is what the schools use. The former is dependent on the context and leaves out connecting and explanatory words. The latter is detached from the context and uses glosess, fillers and logical connectives. These are matters of verbal strategy, of style rather than language but their effect is that of restricting the entry of working class children into the world of education and extended power. Besides, the school, which teaches the latter code, tries to bring about a linguistic change which devalues the speakers' way of life. According to Bernstein:

> *Such language change may involve for the speaker the experiences of isolation, bewilderment and defencelessness, whilst the structure of the "teaching" situation may well be felt as persecutory (Bernstein 1964).*

In Arab countries, indeed, there is a diglossic situation which Ferguson pointed out in his now classic article on diglossia (1959). Demotic Arabic is used in the family and all informal domains of interaction. Classical Arabic, which is nobody's mother tongue, is taught in schools. Those who cannot, or do not, go to school are automatically shut out of the formal, modern, domains of power. For the Muslims of South Asia, the language of the domains of power was generally a foreign language. Under the Mughals it was Persian and under the British it was English. Lower domains of power – such as the lower courts, schools, private businesses, vernacular media, mosques, tombs of *sufi* saints – did function in the vernacular languages but there was a hierarchy in which the vernaculars came right at the bottom. Indeed, for most

Muslims of north India and Pakistan, their mother tongue (if it was other the Urdu) came last. At present, in Pakistan, English occupies the top position. Next comes Urdu and right below them all the mother tongue (Rahman 1996: 228-248). And not only in Pakistan but in all ex-colonial countries, the local languages are devalued vis-à-vis the language of the former masters. In Nigeria (Oladejo 1993); India (Agnihotri and Khanna 1997) and Tanzania (Makacha 1993) English continues to be the language in which the elite is educated and through which one climbs into position of power, affluence and cultural significance. In all these countries the major focus of language-teaching is the acquisition and retention of power. Westernized elites know that they will acquire positions in the higher bureaucracy, commissions in the officer corps of the armed forces and increasingly in NGOs, international organizations like the World Bank and the United Nations if they have command over English. Thus they spend enormous amounts on teaching good English to their children.

Resistance Language Teaching

One reaction to the high valuation of a language could be resistance to it. I have dealt with the resistance to Urdu and English in *Language and Politics in Pakistan* earlier. But language movements, which that book mostly deals with, are expressions of dissatisfaction with the centre. Language is a symbol of identity which gives a focal point for group mobilization to a group which, both for rational and extra-rational reasons, wants a greater share in power and goods and services than it is given. The role of language in language movements, or ethnic assertions, is symbolic or iconic – that is, language is not just a means of communication but stands for a way of life or a symbol of identity. Sometimes, activists of language movements teach their languages not because of their utilitarian value but because of their symbolic value. The process can be called Resistance of Ethnic Language-Teaching because there is little demand for learning the language because it will not buy tangible and intangible goods in the market. Some demand might be there but it comes from the desire to confront the 'other'. In short, while this phenomenon too connects with power – empowering ones' group by reinforcing the symbolic value of language – it does not fall under utilitarian language learning. In language-learning the role is different. Here individuals, or groups, want to take their share in power by accepting the basic premises upon which the power networks of the system are based. Language movements confront the system to change its realities using language as a symbol of unity. Language learning acquiesces in the system, at least temporarily, using language as a tool or device to enter the system and use it for one'' advantage. And so powerful is this motivation that during the anti-British movement for Indian independence the Indian elite kept up its demand for more and better English-teaching; Baloch, Brahvi and Pashtun parents did not support the efforts of Baloch and Pashtun language activists to teach their children their mother tongues as enthusiastically as they supported other aspects of their ethnic identity (Rahman 1996: 168 & 150) and , despite the widespread realization and resentment in the Pakistani middle class against English as an elitist preserve, everybody who can afford to have their children educated in English-medium schools, does so. In short, like the market, language learning works more on acceptance of the status quo than on challenging it. Language-learning is not revolutionary. Resistance language teaching is:

During the Irish struggle against English domination Irish Gaelic had this kind of significance and people did try to learn it though it was not of value as far as jobs and getting on in the world were concerned (Hindley 1990: 37-39). Resistance LT, serves a political purpose – that of consolidating, and hence empowering, a dominated group. The site of the struggle includes the cultural. Language, clothes, lifestyle, religion – indeed all markers of difference – are used to emphasize differences not similarities. A consciousness of difference gives strength to the claim of separate identity, separate nationality and, therefore, more regional autonomy or even a separate country for a sub-national group. Some of the

better known cases of resistance LT are the teaching of Welsh in Wales to prevent it from dying out (Khlief 1976; 1986); the teaching of Catalan in Catalonia, Spain, where Franco's policy of suppressing that language had created tremendous popular resentment (Mar-Molinero 1989; Grant & Docherty 1992); the teaching of Dutch to the Flemish population in Belgium (Swing 1981); the teaching of French in Quebec after 1982 (Martel 1996; Fortier 1994) and the teaching of Hebrew in Israel (King 1997: 31). Success depends on many factors including initial motivation and resources. In the case of Welsh both are not enough to reverse the trend but, since the English are dominant, the resistance is just enough to keep the movement going. In Ireland, when the English left, resistance became a thing of the past and pragmatism took over. People, therefore, learn English to succeed in life not Irish though lip service is paid to the latter. In Catalonia the brutal Franco years having produced a high degree of antagonism, and local jobs being available in Catalan, make the pro-Catalan language policy sustainable. In the case of Belgium the Flemish minority has turned into an active pressure group and uses language as an identity symbol. In Canada the intensity of French resistance, based on cultural pride, and the possibility of getting on in French makes LT policies successful. In Israel the success is greater than all other countries because a dead language, which was nobody's mother tongue, has come alive. But it is the only language which unites Jews from all over the world (Rabin 1973: 69) and, as King points out, the holocaust had created such a strong emotional resistance to other languages (as icons) (King 1997: 31) that Israel resuscitated Hebrew through the most successful experiment in resistance LT ever. This experiment was conducted largely in the schools. Indeed, 'what led to the use of Hebrew at home was its prior promotion as the language of instruction at school' (Cooper 1989: 13).

Language Teaching for a Positive Image (Political LT) : In general, of course, states teach the languages in which the ruling or dominant elites are most comfortable in (this aspect of the issue will be dealt within detail later). However, some modern, liberal states also invest resources on teaching the languages of minorities. For instance, the United States teaches Hawaiian in schools after a century of neglecting it. However, Hawaiian neither leads to good job nor to prestige. Precisely because there are neither economic benefits for learning Hawaiian nor much active resistance to English-speaking Americans from the mainland the LT programme to save Hawaiian from extinction is not a success (Kawamoto 1993). Similarly, the forces of utilitarianism contribute to the failure of Quechua LT. It has been dominated for four centuries by Spanish in Bolivia, Ecuador and Peru. Recently schools have begun to teach it in order to keep it alive. However, urbanization (bringing more people in the domain of utilitarian motivation) continues to foster Hispanization so that there is little hope of a reversal of roles between Spanish and Quechua (Gleich 1994). Indeed, it was rejected after three years of experimental teaching in Peruvian schools in the nineteen seventies precisely because Quechua speakers did not want to spend time and effort to learn it (Hornberger 1989).

But why do modern states spend time and resources on teaching languages which are dying anyway. One answer is that there are liberal humanists who do not want languages, which are repositories of distinct human cultures, to disappear for ever. But such people, however vocal, can only be very few. When the decision-makers allocate resources for the teaching of these language they respond to the demands of such people, and members of the language community in question, out of political considerations. In democratic countries the decision-makers consolidate and expand their power base, their vote bank, and get a good reputation for their liberal and fair policies. Thus France, which had actively suppressed all languages, except standardized Parisian French in the past, now gives some measure of protection of Basque, Breton, Catalan and Corsican languages (Laroussi & Marcellesi 1993). In Newzealand, after the marginalization of the aboriginal language, Maori, the Ministry of Education declared some support for it in 1982 (Paulston & McLaughlin 1994: 60-61). In Canada, despite some opposition, the languages of immigrants – 'heritage languages' – are supported in some schools (ibid 63) and in Europe too some

minor languages are being revitalized (ibid 66). But these efforts are symbolic moves in the power game. Their success depends not only on state effort and resources but also, and much more so, on the motivation for language learning which the speakers of the language manifest.

This motivation, as mentioned before, depends on the speaker's resistance to the dominant language and, even more so, on whether there are chances of any change in the way it will be used in the domains of power both nationally and internationally. Even people who resist the domination of a language, or its speakers, might nevertheless continue to learn it because they feel that it will continue to empower them individually as long as good jobs are available through it and people treat it as a symbol of social prestige. The classical case of this kind which comes to the mind is that of South African black population under the Apartheid system. They resisted being taught their own mother tongues because they were ghettoizing i.e they would keep them in the ghetto for ever. The black leaders assumed that social prestige, good jobs, goods and services – all that power brings – would only come through English. They knew that depriving them of English meant depriving them of access to power. Hence, they, who opposed white domination, also opposed mother tongue education (Reagan 1987; Janks 1990).

Elite Closure and Language

This particular aspect of linguistic apartheid – locking people out of power by not teaching them the language used in its domains – is an extreme form of 'elite closure' defined as the limiting of the 'access of non elite groups to political position and socioeconomic advancement' (Myers-Scotton 1993: 149). Aristocratic regimes practiced elite closure openly. One had to be a gentleman to buy a commission in the British army till the nineteenth century. Similarly, one had to be white for political office in the United States till even after the Civil War. Modern, democratic regimes are committed to equality, non-discrimination between citizens, justice and fairplay – at least in theory. Thus they cannot close the ranks of the elite in the name of blue blood, sex, race or language. There is only one ground for discrimination which is valid even in a liberal democracy. This is cognitive ability which manifests itself in the form of skills. Linguistic skills – the ability to speak, write and read the language of the domains of power – are absolutely necessary for most jobs, even menial ones, in a modern democratic state. Hence elite closure is not so much closure as 'restriction' and it works through the education system.

A state may not teach all its citizens. In that case the illiterate are locked out of the power apparatus though they remain part of it in some capacity or the other. Another state may teach one language to its common citizens but use another one in the upper echelons of the domains of power. In this case those who are taught the elitist language will have much easier access to power and others will demand it and hanker for it. A third case may be the teaching of the language of the domains of power indifferently for ordinary people while the rich have access to high quality instruction. This is true for schools in the inner cities in the United States where English is taught so poorly that school graduates seldom possess the skills to rise high in the society after leaving school while children in good school districts (i.e richer localities) and expensive private schools are equipped with much better skills.

In the cases we have been considering so far, we have mostly concentrated on language learning. The only cases of language teaching policies which came into discussion were about the teaching of languages for non-utilitarian reasons such as resistance or ethnic LT. The purpose was to show that sometimes some people do learn languages for other than utilitarian reasons. The other case was that of elite restriction : the refusal to teach a language, or not teaching it adequately or in the same degree and manner, to restrict

the number of entrants into elitist positions. In such cases language learning is the major strategy for those are disempowered to empower themselves.

The Nature of Demand of a Language

In short, although states may not appear to impose languages. Indeed, they may appear to ration them and give them only as a rare privilege, it is their policy which creates the demand for them. The mere fact of using them in the domains of power creates the demand. It is, therefore, merely an illusion that people demand a language because of its intrinsic worth; because they are fond of it; because they want to be enlightened; because they cherish the literature in it; because they want to become part of the community which speaks it. Only a few people desire, or even get the chance, to integrate themselves in another community. Only a few intellectuals really relish foreign literature and even fewer seek enlightenment for its own sake. They learn the powerful language for instrumental, rational reasons because it is the only key to power which personal effort can give them. However, they also learn this language because of emotional, extra rational reasons. In such cases it is not because of ethnic resistance or consciousness of identity for which some people learn even their ghettoizing mother tongues. This time the emotion involved is the desire for 'recognition'; for being like the powerful; for the snobbish value of the powerful language. This is understandable in view of Paulo Freire's view of cultural imperialism. It does not presuppose only an outside power as invader. The 'invasion' is real enough but the invader is not only the outsider but also his insider ally. The values internalized by this ally lead to what Freire calls 'the cultural inauthenticity of those who are invaded'. The process is best described in his own words:

> *For cultural invasion to succeed, it is essential that those invaded become convinced of their intrinsic inferiority. Since everything has its opposite, if those who are invaded consider themselves inferior, they must necessarily recognize the superiority of the invaders. The more the invasion is accentuated and those invaded are alienated from the spirit of their own culture and from themselves, the more the latter want to be like the invaders : to walk like them, dress like them, talk like them (Freire 1989: 151).*

The powerful language, then, gives prestige and a positive self image and not just jobs. It is the key to the world of power – it provides gratifications both tangible and intangible; both goods and services and ego-boosting. The demand for a powerful language, then, has both rational (*instrumental)* and extra rational (*emotional*) aspects. However, for the most part, the demand is really a product of the policy of the state which made that language the currency of the market of power in the first place. So, although language teaching is not necessarily imposed in the open market model, the conditions which create value in the market are imposed. In the final analysis they are meant to be in the interest of those who create and control the market. In short, the decision as to which language will be used in the domains of power – status planning as it is called (Cooper 1989: 99-121) – is very much a political decision. It is a decision which consolidates and expands the power of the ruling elites or, at least, one which is meant to do that.

Ruling Elite and Language Teaching

But why do the ruling elites use their languages in the domains of power in the first place? Why do they want to increase the number of the users of their language – a policy which is called 'acquisition planning' by Cooper (1989: 157-163), and of which teaching is a major component? One obvious answer is that it is administratively more convenient for these elites. A second one is that it is psychologically

gratifying for them. After all, those who learn the languages will never speak – the one activity everybody indulges in most of the time – it as well as the native speakers. Only a very small fraction of the learner will write it like the best native speakers but most people, both while speaking and writing, will feel inadequate and insecure. This puts the learners in a position of permanent inferiority vis a vis the native speakers who remain exemplars, norm-setters and linguistic (hence cultural) ideals for ever. This eventuality might not have been cynically planned but it is a consequence of adopting `policies which privilege a language making it the language of power.

Another reason, again perhaps inadequately realised, is that languages are carriers of world view. Let us first consider the philosophical arguments for this view. Even ignoring the extreme claims associated with Sapir and Whorf though not borne out by their printed works that language creates and determines world view (Carroll 1956; Sapir 1921), it can hardly be denied that both are in a circular relationship – something which Neitzche among others pointed out long ago (Strong 1976 in Shapiro 1984: 84).

The point is that language not only reflects but also reinforces values. It does not give us a transparent code for expressing reality but allows us to give shape and coherence to innumerable sensations, masses of jumbled data, countless shapes of undifferentiated tangibles. It gives us the very taxonomies which allows us to perceive things. It gives us binary and other forms of oppositions. It reduces the complexity of the world making it expressible. But it does all this by privileging a human, ethnocentric and largely subjective point of view. Imagine what would have happened to our categories of solid, liquid and gaseous if we were smaller than electrons. For us, then, reality would be empty space with such large empty spaces between atoms, let alone large units. In that case any differentiation between relative densities would be meaningless. This means that the solid world of common sense is describable only from a subjective point of view. Calling it solid itself is possible only from the point of view of an observer bigger than the smallest particles in nature. Indeed, the very fact that our languages are translatable; that we can understand each other – contrary to the strong version of the theories of linguistic determinism attributed to Sapir and Whorf – is proof only of the fact that human beings are essentially similar not that 'reality' is as human beings agree it is. But in human languages the differences are intriguing. These differences are expressed through the vocabularies of good and evil, kinship, emotions and attitudes, norms of behaviour which every language possesses. This 'signitive power' of languages (De Kadt 1993: 160), dependent as it is on the linguistic construction of social reality, make them vehicles of world view. Hence, if one studies and uses a language one cannot help being influenced by the world view of which that language is a product and which it, in turn, reinforces and maintains. Thus, 'in a given society a dominant language may become "imperialistic" and prescribe "its" reality to speakers of other languages' (De Kadt 1993: 160). If there were no other competing 'realities' – and there always are, of course – the act of making other people forget their own language and speak the language of the dominant group would be the most extreme example of colonization. And, indeed, despite other 'realities' getting into the way, it is. That is why the American Africans, the Hawaiians and the people of the Caribbean are so inauthentic: they have no language, no genuinely indigenous culture, to fall back upon. The highest forms of their culture come from the English (or French) using countries. They may react to this domination but there is no grand tradition to fall back upon. They are, as it were, clones but somewhat defective ones.

Besides the vocabulary of a language; its politeness system (Brown & Gilman 1960), and the way it is used in real life situations; world view inheres in the literature found in that language. When one reads this literature one comes across this world view. This aspect of disseminating ones culture and values is not unknown to people who spread their languages by adopting policies for their teaching. Indeed, if one studies the reasons for teaching English and other languages by the colonial powers, one comes across

statements of officials who believed that if their language is taught to the native elite it (the native elite) would become like them and, hence, support their rule. In short, one of the aims of language teaching policies is to project power.

The Projection of Power to Foreign Countries (Diplomatic LT)

Phillipson traces out the genesis of the teaching of English by the British Council and the U.S in *Linguistic Imperialism* (1992). Among other things Phillipson refers to the role of English in supporting foreign policy, preserving and strengthening British and American interests abroad and creating a market for Anglo-American goods, services and ideas (Phillipson 1992: 145-152). As far as the United States is concerned, it too invested in English Language Teaching (ELT) to dominate the world in the cultural and ideological spheres.

The French too had embarked on a similar operation, the idea being that 'where they speak French, they buy French' and, even more importantly, recognize France as an intellectual and cultural exemplar. Indeed, France was in that position upto the nineteenth century when the Russian aristocracy spoke French and not to understand common French terms was a sign of philistinism. Now that is the position of English. The elite in South Asia, ex-British colonies of Africa and elsewhere speaks English and not to understand at least some English is almost like being illiterate in the global context. Language-spread – through teaching, films, cartoons, books, radio, comics books, computers, the BBC and CNN – have all made English and Western culture a global phenomenon.

Language-spread policies (or Diplomatic LT as I call them) are part of the foreign policy of most countries which can afford them. Apart from the English-speaking countries and France, the cases of the spread of German (Ammon 1992); Japanese (Hirataka 1992); Portuguese (Da Silva & Gunnewiek 1992); Russian (Haarmann 1992); Quechua (Gleich 1994) and Hindi (Dua 1994) have been documented. The reasons for the policies are different. In the case of German and Russain, as in English and French, the real motivation is colonial. Germany's internatinal presence is related to the presence of German in the world. In addition to that, the German community abroad maintains its language through German-teaching institutions (Ammon 1992). The Soviet policy of spreading Russian through schooling has made it the language of educated intercourse throughout the former Soviet Union. However, it did not spread much outside the borders of the former USSR despite sporadic and sentimental interest of leftists in it (Haarman 1992). In the case of Portuguese, the policy is meant more for the preservation of the language among emigrants than for maintaining an ex-colonial cultural dominance. Even so, Brazil does try to preserve the 'Lusophone culture, together with some small economic interests, excep in the case of Angola (Da Silva & Gunnewiek 1992: 79) in Cape Verde, Guinea-Bissau, Sao Tome, Principe, Angola, Mozambique and, of course, Brazil.

The spread of Hindi is part of what those who disagree with it call internal colonialism and those who support it nationalism. Hindi became an identity symbol of the Hindu identity in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries (King. C 1994) and is considered a symbol of Indian nationalism by the state. However, like Urdu in Pakistan, Hindi faces challenges both by the other languages of the land as well as English – a formidable combination (Dua 1994).

But inherent in the view of both supporters and opponents is the desire to possess power. The nationalists, rightly or wrongly, feel that the centre should possess this power and if language is used to create unity, so much the better. The ethnic groups feel that this purported unity is at the expense of

keeping them weak and marginalized and hence they should resist it. Both use language as an evocative symbol in their game of power.

Conclusion

In all the cases we have considered the focus is power. In the market type situation people learn languages to gain power. In the monopoly situation they have no choice as languages are taught forcefully. However, even in the market type situation the decision as to which language (s) will give access to power (hence goods, services, prestige and influence) lies in the hands of powerful elites. As nobody has supreme power and all power is resisted and simultaneously acquiesced into, language policies are shifting and flexible. By learning languages, or by resisting them, we make political statements. We increase or decrease our own power in that network of which we are all part. The ultimate value we place upon languages, and what languages we learn, is an index of which social or occupational groups, what kind of individuals and what ideas (world views) will be powerful in our network of power. These insights are useful for making policies which will give access to the languages of the domains of power to more people. Such policies will be anti-elitist and pro-masses. That is precisely why they are resisted by the elites and also why social justice demands that they be made and implemented.

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