

Book Reviews

Ukuhlelwa Kolimi

Nobuhle Ndimande-Hlongwa.

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Reviewed by Mtholeni N. Ngcobo

Department of Linguistics

UNISA

Ndimande-Hlongwa's recent book is a must read for everyone interested in language planning and policy. Translated as *IsiZulu Language Planning, Ukuhlelwa Kolimi* is a major achievement in a field that is full of books on this topic. These, however, are written in English and other Indo-European languages and not a South African language. The author has challenged the hegemonic status quo as she grappled with the painful process of trying to find suitable Zulu terms to describe the phenomena that have been the exclusive preserve of English. Yet, the author has shown that she is a master in communication – someone with experience in teaching isiZulu, who has the ability to put the ideas across in a so-called underdeveloped language. The reading is, therefore, pleasant and instructive, both in terms of content and form.

The book is an in-depth 181 page scholarly study, organised in 13 chapters, plus acknowledgements (*Amazwi Okubonga*), a preface (*Isandulelo*) and a list of abbreviations (*Izifinyezo*). Ndimande-Hlongwa's book covers the crucial aspects of language planning comprehensively. It also provides case studies to represent and distil, proximal and immediate circumstances in language planning (Boudreau 2005). By drawing examples from various situations in the world, the theory and practice are put in

perspective. In particular she demonstrates how the South African language policy, in many diverse ways, impacts on nation-building. Issues related to language are discussed systematically, taking into consideration their relations to other domains of social life. The 10 page bibliography testifies to the wide range of scholarship consulted.

Ndimande-Hlongwa is well-known for her involvement in various language planning committees in higher education. In the preface, she explains how she was influenced by Nonhlanhla Mkhulisi in 1999, who strongly promoted the idea that the teaching of language should focus on new areas of language learning that are still underdeveloped including training the learners in various skills such as interpreting, translation, language planning and language technology rather than ending up focusing on morphology, phonetics and phonology only (p. v). Ndimande-Hlongwa argues that we need to reflect on the relevant work that has been accomplished as far as promoting multilingualism in South Africa is concerned. We must focus on what has been done by government, provinces, different departments and the universities. The book is therefore written for learners who study language planning and for the interested individuals who deal with language issues or with language planning in their respective institutions. It can be of great help to those who are planning language policies.

In the first chapter Ndimande-Hlongwa emphasises the importance of language planning and gives definitions of the key concepts in the field. She revisits the concept of 'language' (*ulimi*) and refers to publications on language (Radebe & Mchunu 1986) that indicate that language can be explained as utterance of audible sounds, which contain thoughts and the way the human mind works. Additional concepts, such as 'linguistics' and 'language planning', amongst others, are also defined in this chapter. She goes into detail in explaining the concept of language planning (p. 3). She defines language planning as the authorised efforts by government over a period of time to change the way languages are used in society in order to solve communication problems (cf. Weinstein 1980). Language planning also deals with the selection and development of the official languages. She argues that it is important to realise that language planning refers in essence to the efforts to change the way the language is used in a community. She elaborates on different types of language planning including status planning, corpus planning and acquisition planning. What is noticeable in this process

of defining the concepts is that Ndimande-Hlongwa uses a combination of various methods in creating the relevant terms. For example, she uses the method of direct translation for ‘multilingualism’ – *ubuliminingi*. Sometimes she reverts to using adoptives for words such as ‘jargon’ – *ijagoni*.

Chapter 2 is an historical overview of language planning in South Africa. The chapter begins by presenting the outcomes of negotiations between the African National Congress (ANC) and other stakeholders in Harare in 1990. While the ANC and the National Party (NP) could not agree on the issue of languages, the National Language Project (NLP) proposed a multilingual language policy. The idea of multilingualism came as a solution and the emphasis on equitable use also helped Afrikaans to be chosen as one of the official languages alongside English and the indigenous languages (Heugh 2003). Ndimande-Hlongwa sketches the sociolinguistic environment of South Africa and shows how the South African indigenous languages originate from their well-known language families. It is in this chapter where she defines the concept of ‘official language’. She presents the fact that the South African language policy has eleven official languages and among these are the two Indo-European languages (English and Afrikaans). She also presents early language policies in the history of South Africa and how they had an impact on the Bantu Education Act of 1953. She shows how the latter was a blessing in disguise as it led to the standardisation of the nine indigenous languages which are now part of the eleven official languages. She then focuses on the development of the Zulu language and of Afrikaans.

In Chapter 3, Ndimande-Hlongwa discusses language policy at different levels in South Africa. She begins with language policy at a national level and then presents the legislative framework upon which the South African language policy is built. She explains in detail the goals of the former Department of Arts, Culture Science and Technology (now Department of Arts and Culture) as far as the development of languages is concerned. She then provides detailed reviews of the language policies of the eThekweni Municipality and the University of KwaZulu-Natal respectively. These policies represent language planning at a local level, which must be aligned with the national language policy framework of the country.

Chapter 4 presents various orientations of language planning, including language as a problem, language as a right and language as a resource. When language is viewed as a problem some languages are usually

treated as inferior to others. Ndimande-Hlongwa argues that in South Africa, this continues to happen despite the fact that we have a multilingual language policy. But language may be viewed as a right, and this is in line with the constitutional provisions (Ruiz 1984). However, Ndimande-Hlongwa argues that sometimes this right may be abused, for example, where a community demands rights that will not necessarily serve the purpose of language development. When the language is perceived as important, it can be used as a resource, for example in translation, information and communication. Besides these orientations, Ndimande-Hlongwa discusses four models of language planning. These include the assimilationist model, the integrationist model, the vernacularisation model and the pluralist model. South Africa has used almost all of these models at various stages of language policy development. It is interesting to note that the author has decided to present these models in English here before explaining them in Zulu. This is a feature that is followed in all related instances in the book. In that way it makes it easier for a learner to remember the defined and explained concepts.

Chapter 5 deals with scientific theories used in sociolinguistics. These include speech accommodation, cognitive uncertainty, affective reinforcement, intergroup distinctiveness, gain-loss and hegemony. These theories are well summarised and they provide a learner with general understanding of what these concepts entail. Besides these theories, Ndimande-Hlongwa presents in detail the Strategic Planning Framework as discussed by Webb (2002). This framework ensures the implementation of a language policy. It is also observable in this chapter that some concepts pose a serious problem when they are translated into Zulu. For example, the word “code” has been translated as “*ikhowudi*”. However, “code”, “register” and “language” may be treated as related concepts. As code, register and language are closely related concepts they should ideally be translated in such a way that this relationship is transparent.

Chapter 6 discusses the goals of language planning. The chapter begins with a list of eleven goals as presented by Nahir (1984) in Kaplan and Baldauf (1997). These include language purification, language revival, language reform, language standardisation, language spread, lexical modernisation, terminology unification, stylistic simplification, interlingual communication, language maintenance and auxiliary code standardisation. These goals are presented with their Zulu translation. Ndimande-Hlongwa

ends this chapter by explaining that this list of goals is crucial and she highlights the situation in South Africa where nine of the official languages still need terminology development and lexical modernisation.

Chapter 7 deals with the institutions created by the South African government to promote multilingualism. The chapter presents in detail the role of each institution and these include the South African Language Board (PanSALB), the Department of Arts, Culture and Tourism, National Language Services and Language Research and Development Centres. PanSALB is a statutory body established by Act of Parliament to oversee the promotion and development of multilingualism in South Africa.

Chapter 8 provides details on the types of language planning. These include status language planning, corpus language planning and acquisition planning as presented by Cooper (1989). These three types of language planning are very important. Status planning deals with the selection of the official languages. There are various criteria that are followed in this process. Ndimande-Hlongwa compares this with the South African situation and she argues that it will take a while for the South African indigenous languages to develop to the same level as the exogenous languages. Corpus planning focuses on the written form of a language whereas acquisition planning refers to how the language is planned for education and for acceptance by a wider community.

Chapter 9 provides the historical development of language planning on the African continent. Ndimande-Hlongwa uses countries such as Tanzania, Namibia, Malawi and Zimbabwe as ideal examples to highlight language planning problems on the continent. The discussions show that the journey in language planning has not been easy in Africa. Each country has decided on the model that is considered suitable for its own community but, in most cases, such a model is influenced by its political ideologies. Tanzania solved the problem of language planning by adopting Kiswahili. Other countries resorted to English as a national language. This has caused major problems in education.

Chapters 10 and 11 provide details of case studies. In Chapter 10 Ndimande-Hlongwa focuses on language planning in Algeria. While historically this country used French, Arabic emerged as a strongly preferred official language after the wars of liberation. This, however, disadvantaged other languages that are spoken by the indigenous people of Algeria. Chapter

11 provides language planning by the University of KwaZulu-Natal. This university's language policy puts strong emphasis on the use of the Zulu language as a medium of instruction. Although the policy looks good, the outcome of its successful implementation is yet to be seen.

In Chapter 12 Ndimande-Hlongwa addresses the question of the role of the indigenous languages in education in the African continent. This comes as a result of the underdevelopment that is prominent in most of the African languages (Wolff 2000). There is a great need to explain the role of the African languages in education. This means that we must avoid using exogenous languages such as English and French as languages of education. However, the indigenous languages must be developed and the emphasis should be placed on the fact that children's cognitive development can improve if they were taught in their home languages. In South Africa this is still a problem and there is still a debate surrounding the issue of mother-tongue education. Ndimande-Hlongwa advocates a need for continuing in-depth research as far as the medium of instruction is concerned in South Africa. She suggests that learners, teachers and school governing bodies must be sensitised to the importance of using their home languages in education.

The final Chapter 13 discusses the role of the United Nations in developing languages. This world organisation has announced certain calendar dates to be observed in order to raise awareness on matters related to language. Most languages are spoken by the minorities and as a result these languages are in danger of extinction. Ndimande-Hlongwa levels a strong criticism against black parents who choose to use English when they are speaking to their children. However, the efforts of the United Nations in creating other organisations such as the African Academy of Languages (ACALAN) are highly commended. Ndimande-Hlongwa also commends all other initiatives that are geared towards publishing in the African languages. The problems of languages planning in Africa continue at the present time. Governments find it difficult to implement language policies they have approved for their respective countries. There is, therefore, a need to pull all the stakeholders or role players together, including government, schools, and communities.

For anyone who wishes to understand the dynamics of language planning, this is a splendid book. Indeed it would be of great value for all who study language planning and policy.

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