
**LANGUAGE POLICY
AND NATION-BUILDING
IN POST-APARTHEID SOUTH AFRICA**

Language Policy

VOLUME 10

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The last half century has witnessed an explosive shift in language diversity not unlike the Biblical story of the Tower of Babel, but involving now a rapid spread of global languages and an associated threat to small languages. The diffusion of global languages, the stampede towards English, the counter-pressures in the form of ethnic efforts to reverse or slow process, the continued determination of nation-states to assert national identity through language, and, in an opposite direction, the greater tolerance shown to multilingualism and the increasing concern for language rights, all these are working to make the study of the nature and possibilities of language policy and planning a field of swift growth.

The series will publish empirical studies of general language policy or of language education policy, or monographs dealing with the theory and general nature of the field. We welcome detailed accounts of language policy-making – who is involved, what is done, how it develops, why it is attempted. We will publish research dealing with the development of policy under different conditions and the effect of implementation. We will be interested in accounts of policy development by governments and governmental agencies, by large international companies, foundations, and organizations, as well as the efforts of groups attempting to resist or modify governmental policies. We will also consider empirical studies that are relevant to policy of a general nature, e.g. the local effects of the developing European policy of starting language teaching earlier, the numbers of hours of instruction needed to achieve competence, selection and training of language teachers, the language effects of the Internet. Other possible topics include the legal basis for language policy, the role of social identity in policy development, the influence of political ideology on language policy, the role of economic factors, policy as a reflection of social change.

The series is intended for scholars in the field of language policy and others interested in the topic, including sociolinguists, educational and applied linguists, language planners, language educators, sociologists, political scientists, and comparative educationalists.

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by

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Contents

1 Introduction	1
1.1 Language Policy Theory and Normativity	2
1.2 Methodology	5
1.3 Outline of the Study	6
2 Key Concepts in the Study of Ethnic and National Identities	11
2.1 Introduction: The Problem of Definition	11
2.2 The Ethnic/Civic Dichotomy	12
2.2.1 ‘Ethnic’ Nations	13
2.2.2 ‘Civic’ Nations	17
2.3 Modernity and the Idea of the Nation as Common Culture	19
2.4 The Routes to Nationhood: Politicisation of Ethnicity Versus Ethnicisation of Polity	23
2.5 The Relationship Between Language and Ethnic and National Identities	29
2.5.1 Language and Ethnic Identity	30
2.5.2 Language and National Identity	33
2.6 Conclusion	36
3 Language Policy, Language Planning and National Identity: Theoretical Perspectives	39
3.1 Introduction	39
3.2 What is Language Policy and Planning?	39
3.3 Language Planning as Identity Planning	43
3.4 Language Policy and National Identity	47
3.4.1 Types of Language-In-National Identity Policy	47
3.4.2 The Pure Monolingual/Monoethnic State	48
3.4.3 The Monolingual State-Nation with Small and/or Highly Marginalised Minorities	49
3.4.4 The Dyadic or Triadic Multinational State	52
3.4.5 The Post-colonial Polyethnic State	55
3.5 Nation-Building and Contemporary Trends in Language Policy Theory .	58
3.6 Language Policy and Linguistic Diversity	59

3.6.1	Measuring Linguistic Diversity	60
3.6.2	Arguments for Maintaining Linguistic Diversity	62
3.7	The Pluralist Dilemma: Reconciling Nation-Building and Linguistic Diversity?	73
4	Language Policy and Identity Planning in South Africa: A Historical Overview	77
4.1	Introduction	77
4.2	Language Policy in the Initial Period of Dutch Colonisation	78
4.3	British Colonial Language Policy in South Africa	80
4.4	Language Policy During Apartheid	85
4.5	Post-Apartheid Language Policy	91
4.5.1	The Language Policy-Practice Gap	94
4.5.2	Language Policy and South African National Identity	98
4.5.3	'Elite Closure' as a Barrier to Inclusive Nation-Building	101
5	Language Policy, Identity Conflict and Nation-Building: The Case of Afrikaans	109
5.1	Introduction	109
5.2	Characterising the Debate Surrounding Afrikaans	110
5.3	The Problematisation of Afrikaans	114
5.3.1	Afrikaans as a Barrier? The Anglicisation of the Historically Afrikaans-Medium Universities	117
5.3.2	The Place Name Issue as a Source of Identity Conflict	125
5.4	ANC Ideology and the Decline of Afrikaans in Other Areas of National Importance	129
5.4.1	The Postal Service	129
5.4.2	Airline Industry	130
5.4.3	Sport	130
5.4.4	Media and Advertising	132
5.4.5	Police Force	133
5.4.6	The Judicial System	134
5.5	Conclusion: Afrikaans – A Language for Nation-Building?	135
6	Towards an Alternative, Inclusive Approach to Language Policy and National Integration for Post-Apartheid South Africa	139
6.1	Introduction	139
6.2	Democracy, Marginalisation and Political Legitimacy in Post-apartheid South Africa	141
6.3	Authoritarianism, Liberalism and Language Policy in Post-Apartheid South Africa	143
6.4	Symbolic vs. Instrumental Attachments to the National System	147
6.5	Language Activism: A Route to Linguistic Democratisation?	149
6.6	Language Planning as a Tool of Societal Development?	156

- 6.7 Harmonisation of the Nguni and Sotho Language Clusters: A Viable
Alternative Approach to Nation-Building? 157
- 6.8 Individual Multilingualism and Nation-Building 164
- 6.9 Limitations and Potential Criticisms of this Approach to Language
Policy and National Integration 167

- 7 Conclusion 171**
 - 7.1 General Summary of Findings 171
 - 7.2 Some Suggestions for Further Research 174

- References 179**

- Name Index 195**

- Subject Index 197**

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Abstract

While not essential, the link between language and national identity is nevertheless often a highly important and salient one, a fact illustrated by the centrality of linguistic concerns in many nationalist discourses throughout the world. As a result of this linkage, it is understandable that those seeking to create or manipulate national identities have habitually attempted to do so through the formulation and implementation of language policy and planning measures. This book develops a broad theoretical framework for the study of national identity and language policy. Of particular interest is the manner in which these two phenomena frequently interact and the societal consequences of that interaction.

South Africa represents a fascinating historical and contemporary context in which to investigate the effect of language policy and planning on the formation of social identities. From the earliest stages of European colonisation to the present day, successive governing regimes have attempted to manipulate the various ethnic and national identities of the South African population to suit their own ideological agendas. In the post-apartheid era, much has been made of the government's official policy commitment to promote 'nation-building' through the institutionalisation of genuinely multilingual practices in public life. In reality, though, public life in present-day South Africa is notable for its increasingly monolingual-English character. This contradiction between official policy and actual linguistic practices is symptomatic of the hegemony of an implicit 'English-only' ideology that permeates most governmental and public organisations. This has led to a situation of highly salient language-based identity conflict between many Afrikaans speakers resentful of the decreasing presence of Afrikaans in public life and those loyal to the *de facto* monolingual model of nationhood promoted by the ANC. But perhaps the most pernicious consequence of this increasing dominance of English has been its entrenchment of elitist governing practices that ensure the continued socio-economic marginalisation of African language speakers who constitute the large majority of South African citizens. If language planners are to convincingly address this problem, it is clear that a radically alternative model of language policy and national integration needs to be promoted and adopted.