

AFRICAN LANGUAGES, ENGLISH, AND EDUCATIONAL POLICY IN NAMIBIA

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This paper takes issue with the assumptions underlying the English-only language policy stipulated in Article 3 (1) of *The Constitution of the Republic of Namibia* (1990), which provides for the education of Namibians, who belong to multilingual ethnolinguistic and socio-economic groups. Since this provision results from an interaction between the central government's espoused values and its perceptions of political and economic needs, the policy decision was arguably based on a reactive rather than a proactive approach to those needs. The emergence of English as the sole official language in Namibia was, therefore, not planned. Socio-political events shaped the needs of the country, and the language most capable of fulfilling those needs was therefore chosen. At no time was there a plan or planners to formulate language policy or implement change. This paper argues that (1) the policy is formulated vaguely, (2) it is a contradiction in terms with respect to cultural pluralism, on the one hand, and assimilation, on the other; and (3) there is an apparent neglect of the learners' first languages. The conclusion is reached that the choice of English as the main language of schooling in Namibia is not a result of planning within a more general plan of national development. A realistic approach might be to establish a body of planners, among them linguists and interested parties, that would study language needs in the country and seek to meet those needs, recognizing the status and development of ethnic languages for use in different domains, especially the formal system of education. Provision for language in education should be specified systematically through an overt language plan.

0. Introduction

From the beginning of German colonization in 1884 until the present time, there has never been an attempt by either the German or South African government to construct a national educational system based on equal opportunity for all Namibians regardless of racial or ethnic group. Moreover, South Africa not only maintained the separation that was present during the earlier occupation but intensified it, adding to it a tribal division. In the case of education, this division is seen clearly in the differing structures of separate commissions of inquiry, separate laws, the different types of schools and methods of financing, the differing de-

degrees of compulsory education, differing standards and terms of service and pay for teachers that existed before independence; and differing provisions for the training of those teachers. Discrimination in education was not only the means by which knowledge was controlled by the apartheid regime, but also one of the ways by which a cheap labor workforce was maintained.

After independence in 1990, the present government of the South West African People's Organization (SWAPO), declared in its constitution for the country that the 'official language for Namibia shall be English' (Article 3: *Constitution, The Republic of Namibia*). Two criteria, unity and national development, seem to have influenced the choice of the English-only policy. The criterion of unity has not only influenced the formulation and propagation of the policy, but also the lack of any provision in the policy for vernacular languages for educational purposes, while the criterion of national development restricts the role of indigenous languages in education and emphasizes the importance of European languages.

Three assumptions seem to have been made by SWAPO regarding the role of indigenous languages in education from the viewpoint of national unity. First, it is assumed that in a multilingual context the choice of one of the indigenous languages as the national language is politically a highly divisive undertaking, since it will be interpreted by other language groups as a rejection of their languages. The second assumption concerns the colonial languages of wider communication. It is assumed that these languages, being foreign, are neutral, whereas the indigenous languages are associated with ethnicity, different social identities, and local loyalties. It is feared that the use of indigenous languages in education will encourage another form of apartheid and thus contribute to political instability. It is therefore suggested that the use of English in Namibia should be encouraged to promote national unity. However, some scholars (e.g., Bokamba and Tlou 1977) point out that in the case of Africa, the continued reliance on English as a unifying upper-class language may not provide a permanent solution, since it is socially restrictive and does not meet the need for national consolidation and popular participation. They also point out that the Europeanization of the media of instruction in African countries for the sake of national unity merely evades the central issue of national unity and the development of a comprehensive language education policy to fulfill complementary communicative roles of African languages.

The assumption on which the criterion of unity seems to have been based not only favors the colonial languages of wider communication in one way or the other, but also ignores the multilingual reality of linguistically heterogeneous developing nations by imposing a one-language policy for national unity. The second criterion, national development, is based on favoring the languages of wider communication, such as English and French. These are considered languages of science and technology, of commerce and industry, of upward mobility and social prestige, and of diplomacy and international communication. The advantages, namely, accelerated economic growth and technological achievements, among others, it is argued, can be realized by the promotion of education through the European languages as the media of instruction. The emphasis on these lan-

guages implies that the use of indigenous languages as media of instruction would lower the standard of education, impede growth of science and technology, and retard the rate of national development. This is based on the further assumption that indigenous languages are not adequately developed. The implications of these assumptions will be examined below.

1. Language policy before and after independence

The legacy of the colonial language policy is so all-pervading that in most sub-Saharan African countries it affected, and in some cases paralyzed, subsequent policy decisions. Any examination of language policy therefore has to begin with the policy of the colonial administration. Namibia became independent in 1990. With a population of approximately 1.6 million inhabitants (Fourie 1997), it has over 18 indigenous languages and three foreign languages, namely German, Afrikaans, and English. Putz 1995 reports that there are seven main identifiable local language groups, namely Oshiwambo, Nama/Damara, Otjiherero, Kavango, the Caprivian languages (e.g., Lozi), Khoisan and Setswana, which comprise 87.8% of Namibia's speakers, and three groups speaking 'imposed languages' namely German, Afrikaans, and English comprising 11.2%. Of the total population, only 0.8% speak English as a mother tongue, whereas more than 50% of the population speak Owambo (Putz 1995).

There are three phases of language policy development evident from the period of colonial rule to independence. First, the arrival of the missionary groups and the role they played in the codification of the mother tongues. This phase included steps taken by the German colonial rulers (1884-1915) to support missionary efforts to use Namibian ethnic languages for basic education in a situation characterized by lack of teaching materials and qualified teachers. The second phase covers the period of the Union of South Africa's mandate from the League of Nations that lasted from 1915 to independence in 1990. During this period, apartheid policies of racial and ethnic discrimination led to the Bantu Education Act of 1953, which emphasized the development of indigenous languages as school subjects and media of instruction up to the primary school level. English and Afrikaans became official languages with greater emphasis on Afrikaans, while English, Afrikaans, and German were declared national languages. The indigenous languages were relegated to the status of tribal/ethnic languages with no socio-economic power of mobility. Upon independence, English was declared the official language and the main language of educational instruction from the fourth year of primary school up through the university level. Indigenous languages are to be used as media of instruction up to the third year of education and as subjects of study throughout the education system. These are the policies that are responsible for either encouraging or hindering the development of Namibian ethnic languages, education, culture, and modernization. Although the sentiment behind the choice of English to play the role of official and main language in education is understandable, it cannot, however, be condoned. The reasons for this have been discussed at length in (Bagmbose 1991; Bokamba & Tlou

1977; Bokamba 1981, 1984, 1995; Phillipson 1991; Phillipson & Skutnabb-Kangas 1995).

1.1 Vagueness of policy

The situation discussed in the foregoing section shows how complicated and unique the problem of language in education in Namibia is in comparison to other African countries. It is a heavily politicized issue as a result of factors such as apartheid, social inequality, and the war that was waged against the continued colonial occupation of the territory at the time the Constitution was drafted. Socio-political problems must have contributed to the failure of the present government to plan for language use in education. The emergence of English as the sole official language in the background of Namibia's linguistic heterogeneity and historical past was clearly not planned. Socio-political events shaped the needs of the country and the language best able to fulfill that need was therefore chosen.

Consequently, an examination of the policy guideline as stated in the Constitution shows that while the commitment to multilingualism is welcomed by the Namibian government, which is the body defining the language problems of this country, the policy does not make clear how it hopes to cultivate multilingualism in a balanced way. There is no demonstration of what specific language problems of the linguistic repertoires were perceived, hence the apparent failure to define and to characterize those problems. Therefore, no clear strategies and solutions are suggested to solve the problems. In essence this means that in Namibia, language-education policy and planning are not based on sound decisions, and it then follows that there cannot be suitable implementation strategies to effect the present decisions, and multilingualism is threatened with extinction and indigenous languages will survive only marginally or disappear altogether. Therefore, the situation created by the Namibian language-education policy contradicts the very philosophy of language planning. In order to exist and survive, multilingualism, a natural feature of linguistically heterogeneous societies, depends on the recognition of language diversity and its function in multilingual societies such as Namibia.

However, we should point out here that the Namibian government is in step with many sub-Saharan African countries in following a colonial model of language in education in which the continued reliance on a European language, in this case English, is perceived as a unifying factor in nation-building, since that language is perceived as neutral. Other arguments for retaining colonial languages involve modernization, efficiency, and expediency, where it is argued that European languages are the most developed and cost-efficient, and therefore the best qualified as media of instruction. Bokamba & Tlou 1977 observe that the continued use of English in Ghana, Nigeria, Uganda, and the use of French in Congo (former Zaire), to name just a few countries, has been justified for the same reasons. Nevertheless, although there is some validity to some of the claims, there are those (Bagmbose 1991; Bokamba & Tlou 1977; Bokamba 1981, 1984, 1995) who think it is unwarranted to conclude that English, or any other European language, must therefore serve as the medium of instruction. According to Bokamba

& Tlou 1977 such policies not only constitute a major obstacle to the development of education in Africa, they actually militate against the establishment of mass education and permanent literacy (Bokamba 1981).

Within Namibia, discussion about language planning is only a recently acknowledged phenomenon. Putz 1995 reports that almost ten years before the advent of Namibian independence on March 21, 1990, the decision to implement English as the sole official language in the country had already been decreed in the document of the South Western Africa People's Organization (SWAPO) *Toward a language policy for Namibia. English as the official language: Perspectives and strategies* (UNIN 1981). Even though linguistic and functional arguments were outlined in the document as the main criteria for choosing English as the official language in Namibia, Putz states that it also has become obvious that the principal reasons for doing ideological and political. Here again, Namibia seems to be in step with the ideologies of other African countries. The political ideologies are often couched in the three arguments referred to earlier, efficiency and expediency, national integration, and modernization or national development (cf. Bokamba & Tlou 1977). Typically, governments avoid definitive statements in policy formulation. Bamgboşe (1991:113) notes:

If the policy is couched in sufficiently general terms, it may go down well, since it will be a 'catch-all' formula that may be interpreted in a flexible manner. Apart from the policy being vague, implementation is not likely to be a burden to anyone since it may not happen.

An example of a vague policy is Namibia's decision to adopt English as its sole official language and the main language of instruction in primary education without a prior inquiry as to its feasibility, given the country's historical background.

1.2 Language status

According to Haacke, the views and sentiments of the government regarding the role of ethnic languages as attested in the policies are not echoed by the broad population. He states (1994:245):

This can be ascribed to the fact that the language policy in its essence was developed by party leaders who in exile were exposed to trends in post-colonial Africa and international debates on education. Understandably, Namibians generally assess their mother tongue in economic terms. Hence these are held in low esteem as they are not conducive to upward social mobility

From the foregoing discussion it can be seen that, among other things, the choice of English as sole official language, follows a colonial trend. Within Namibia there has never been planning, but merely reaction to events. Even today, there are no obvious language planners in the country and really no plans, only education policies. Thus Namibia has what Kaplan 1990 describes as a language-in-education policy, as opposed to a language plan. The decision to make English the main language has been made, and it is now up to the government, through the Ministry of Education, to implement it.

Concerning mother-tongue (MT) education for the school beginner, Fourie 1997 observes that its cognitive value cannot be obvious for most parents. It therefore ought to be a crucial aspect of the implementation phase that the government launch a campaign to make parents aware of the issue. Other issues of cultural transmission, African identity, and self perception ought to be raised as being necessary for in a proper language plan. On the whole, language policy within Namibia must conform to the spirit of the language provision in the Constitution, which calls for multilingualism.

From what Haacke 1994 reports to be the attitudes of the people towards their own languages, there are problems of implementation in the horizon. The need to articulate the place of ethnic languages is now apparent: as a response to what might be considered encroachment by the English language into domains that were historically exclusively MT domains, and to attempts by industry to determine employee profiles and requirements. Language planning in Namibia mirrors the observation that Das Gupta & Ferguson (1977:4) have made about planning in other countries:

'Language planning is a latecomer to the family of national development planning. Although deliberate attempts to change or preserve languages and their use may be as old as economic policy making efforts in human societies, ... it is only recently that these activities in the language area have been recognized as an aspect national planning which can be investigated with the same conceptual tools that are appropriate for general development planning.'

1.3 Contradiction in policy: Assimilationist or pluralist?

Before approaching the question of policy options, it is necessary to diverge for a moment in order to consider the contradiction in terms contained in the vague language policy. The contradiction between the identity function of language, its ability to express and evoke solidarity, and its power function are at the root of all ambivalent attitudes towards co-existing languages which have filled so many pages of sociolinguistic literature. For example, to understand the language behavior and attitudes of the Tunisian elite, as described by Stevens 1983, one need only ask the question: which of the three co-existing linguistic varieties fulfills the power function in the post-colonial context? Certainly not the Tunisian dialect of Arabic, nor Classical Arabic, even though the latter is considered to be a prestige language. French alone is associated with modernity, authority, and power. Through language policy (Stevens mentions that though education is bilingual, French takes up 70% of the curriculum by the end of the secondary school and more at the university), entry into the ranks of the elite is tightly controlled. Why does the Tunisian elite and that of other African countries consider their own MT to be inferior? Because it does not provide them with access to power, and since the main goal of an elite is to remain in power and to give their children the same chances, such an attitude is not very surprising. Thus there seems to be a belief that this inferiority is inherent and cannot be redressed (Bokamba & Tlou 1977).

In the whole history of language planning, not just in the third world, many a language policy that is assimilationist on the surface in fact serves to exclude sections of the community, to place them in a situation of permanent exploitation. It is very likely that the debate about language loyalty and identity will erupt in Namibia as increasing numbers of school children fail to graduate with proficiency in English. Fishman 1971 has noted how nationalism and a need for identity in the face of introduced languages in a community leads to protectionism and promotion of the authenticity of the local language.

On the basis of the preceding discussion concerning the ambiguous language functions in the Namibian policy, it becomes clear that linguistic identification with a sub-national collectivity is essentially the result of socio-economic and political pressures. However, when a society is split into two diametrically opposed classes, the rulers and the ruled, maintenance of linguistic differences becomes a signal that social cleavages exist. The more emphasis is placed on the power function of language, in the sense that the acquisition of a prestige variety is the prerequisite for economic success and political participation, the greater the gap between the two classes and the two linguistic varieties. Publications by Bagmoşe 1991, Bokamba & Tlou 1977, Bokamba 1981, 1984, 1995, Tollefson 1991, and Phillipson 1992 have examined some of the broader issues relating to language, language planning, language dominance, and society. Whatever else they achieve, these publications draw attention to some of the less obvious and generally unintentioned roles of individuals involved in language planning. Given the reservations about language planning and English in sub-Saharan Africa, it would seem pertinent to address some of the more important issues these publications raise that have a bearing on this study, seeking as it does to analyze language planning in Namibia, and indirectly at least, the role of English.

The authorities named above suggest very strongly that the continued expansion of the English language might be to the disadvantage of those countries that are promoting its use. They question the link between development (= modernization) and English language teaching. Tollefson 1991 maintains that modernization and the English language have become inextricably linked, arguing that most developing countries equate one with the other. There is much truth in this concept as far as Namibia is concerned. English, as we have seen so far, is the sole official language. It is therefore the language of business, commerce, science, technology, and international relations, and these are precisely the reasons its use is promoted in the country. However, Tollefson (1991:82) argues that 'the central idea of modernization is that "underdeveloped" societies must break free of "traditional" structures that limit economic development and prosperity'. He goes on to argue that modernization is sometimes seen as being identical to 'Westernization' and that 'underdevelopment' can best be overcome by adopting institutions and patterns of behavior found in industrial societies. Tollefson's hypothesis suggests that in achieving development, a country must lose its identity. He cites countries such as China and Iran as examples. While it is not possible to verify this claim on the basis of more empirical studies, it seems that Namibia is headed in that direction in replacing ethnic-language curricula with an English

one. It is actively promoting English in its schools and seeking ways in which English might gain dominance instead of complementing the indigenous languages. Tollefson's contention therefore that 'monolingualism', preferably English, is seen as a practical advantage for modern social organization, while multilingualism is seen as a 'characteristic' of 'unmodernized', 'traditional' societies is true of Namibia, as borne out by Haacke's 1994 observations about language attitudes in Namibia.

Defenders of the position of English in the world (e.g., Jones, 1997) do not necessarily agree with such claims as Tollefson's and others. They argue that while inequality between nations and within nations is self-evident, to criticize the role of English in this equality suggests that language is at the root of the problem. English, they say, has certainly empowered some groups and individuals within countries and placed them in positions where they have been able to exploit their neighbors, however, they say, such inequality and the misuse of power would exist with or without English. However, this is still no argument to defend the continued colonial policies in most African countries characterized by 'pervasive multilingualism'. Bokamba (1995:19) states that:

the biggest and the most important threat arising from the elevation of a particular language or group of languages as national/official languages over others is the perceived de-empowerment that such a language or languages accord to the speakers, especially L1 speakers. The selection of an official language for administration and education allocates two crucial speech domains to that language, thereby makes accessible employment and political opportunity to those citizens who command the language concerned. Specifically by serving as the language of instruction the official language(s) determine(s) a student's chances for academic success and upward mobility. Similarly, by functioning as the language of administration the official language(s) determine(s) language policy in the public as well as the private sector, including the judicial system, political programs, church-related services, and mass media. As such, it becomes a benefit for its speakers, but an obstacle to various opportunities for non-speakers.

This indeed has been the primary issue in the linguistic conflict in places like India in the 1950s and 1960s, and in Belgium and Canada in the last two decades. Therefore, what Bokamba is pointing out here is that language empowerment resulting from the anticipation and implementation of a language policy applies to any language, indigenous or non-indigenous. For this reason, Bokamba 1995 concludes that the solution does not lie in opting for a European language of wider communication (ELWC), because in the case of Africa, these have produced a distinct elite that receives most of the benefits, while the non-speakers of these languages have been and continue to be marginalized. Therefore the 'solution to language empowerment through a policy of exclusion is to adopt a calculated multilingual policy that allocates different functions to the selected languages and thereby allows a wider access to the resources and opportunities to the interested and capable citizens' (Bokamba 1995:20). Bokamba goes on to

say that this type of plan has been successfully implemented by India in its three-language formula, where Hindi is a national and official language; English is a co-official language, and 16 languages from the different regions are state languages. It can be seen therefore, that a multilingual policy such as this one, although not without problems, is designed to offer more opportunities for more people than a monolingual one.

1.4 Towards a Namibian language plan

In Namibia there ought to be growing awareness that language has to be taken into account in any national development plan. The dictates of trade, industry, commerce, and education recognize the role of English, but it is doubtful that those of culture, religion, and national unity will require a similar role of English. A problem arising from the development of language as a factor in national planning concerns the nature of language planning itself. Important questions about the role of languages in society and the impact they are likely to have need to be addressed. The question as to who should be asking the questions and organizing the planning is open to debate. Kaplan (1990:4) observes that language planning is

an attempt by some organized body (most commonly, some level of government) to introduce systematic language change for some more or less clearly articulated purpose (commonly stated in altruistic terms but often not based on altruistic intents.

Kaplan's definition suggests self-interest as an important factor in language planning: planning by the elite for the elite. Cooper (1989:45), having considered twelve different definitions from earlier works, concludes that language planning 'refers to deliberate efforts to influence the behavior of others with respect to the acquisition, structure, or functional allocation of other language codes'

In the context of Namibia, Cooper's linguistic rather than Kaplan's politically influenced definition seems more plausible, but does not explain why language has to be planned. Kaplan's suggestion that planning is done by government to propagate its objectives seems to be particularly relevant to Namibia. However, it is the duty of any government to strive to make language plans meet the goals articulated in their constitutions. This can only be achieved through systematic planning of language. As currently understood, according to Christian 1988, language planning is characterized by an explicit and systematic effort to resolve perceived language problems and achieve related goals through institutionally organized intervention in the use and usage of languages. Also, language planning is future-oriented. It involves the consideration of the structure and function of the linguistic repertoires of a speech community or a nation and its socio-cultural and political setting, and envisages deliberate changes in the linguistic repertoires, keeping in view the future image of the society at large. Characterization of the present Namibian socio-linguistic situation, projection of the future image of society, and the scope of change will determine the nature, structure, and function of the the linguistic repertoires in the future. Therefore crucial in this process is who defines language problems; what language problems of the

the linguistic repertoires are perceived and projected; why certain language problems are characterized; what strategies and solutions are suggested to solve the problems, and so on. Several such questions need to be properly understood within a systematic framework of a sound theory of language planning. The consideration of goals, values, ideologies, and criteria provides such a framework and forms the basis for the existence and growth of multilingualism.

The setting of goals, their precise formulation, and the degree of consistency among them with regard to resources, social objectives, evaluation of alternatives, and instruments for achieving the goals constitute perhaps the most crucial and complex component of language planning. The discussion of goals themselves is incomplete without the consideration of various criteria that have been suggested or proposed in decision-making about issues related to language-status planning. This is not only because these criteria support different, conflicting goals, values, or ideologies, but also because they may be employed without any proper weighting toward achieving certain ends. For instance, Neustupny 1968 mentions four criteria: development, democratization, unity, and foreign relations. Skutnabb-Kangas & Phillipson 1986 offer a list of criteria consisting of: unity, accessibility, familiarity, feasibility, science and technology, pan-Africanism, wider communication, and United Nations, which have been suggested in the context of the choice of an official language for independent Namibia. They show how these criteria focus more on the international functions of the official language and less on the socio-cultural and educational factors as part of an overall multilingual policy. They point out that some criteria that would have been extremely relevant have been excluded from the list. These include: ease of learning, Namibian cultural authenticity, empowering the underprivileged, and self-reliance. They claim that the selective checklist of criteria is skewed in favor of English. Thus there is a gap between the ideal and reality.

In situations of language-status planning, the allocative decisions to use and develop certain languages have failed either because they were not realistically formulated in the first place, or because an adequate consensus could not be sustained in the process of their elaboration and implementation, or because the hidden constraints and socio-political consequences flowing from them were not fully grasped at the time the decisions were taken, hence the gap between the ideal and reality. This gap is not properly perceived because the relationship between policy and practice is characterized, as pointed out by Afolayan 1984, by the three-headed monster of underrating, overrating, and self-deception. Thus he finds a transparent skewness between the ideological position of indigenous languages of Nigeria and the status of the English language, and therefore requires a very clear, well-balanced policy on the English language as the nation's second language, such that the indigenous Nigerian languages would also play their most meaningful roles side by side. In short, the quality of language planning and consequently the future of multilingualism depend upon the nature and scope of decisions about the status and function of various languages in the domain of education. Language planning can play a constructive role in establishing meaningful interdependence between ethnic languages and English in Namibia on the ba-

sis of their educational, cultural, socio-political, and communicative roles rather than considering their functions in oppositional terms.

5. Conclusion and policy recommendation

A close look at the Namibian policy in education has revealed certain ambiguities, vagueness, and inconsistencies in its formulation, not unlike findings reported in the analysis of educational policies in most sub-Saharan African countries. First, a general vagueness is manifested in the policy. There are two different aspects to this vagueness: ambiguous agency regarding responsibility for actions, and lack of clear guidelines and explicit strategies. Second, the policy makes recommendations that misrepresent the current economic situation and are not coherent with available resources. For example there is still no provision for community language teaching, and the first languages of learners are neglected. Third, there is a contradiction in terms as to the nature of the policy. It is not clear if it is assimilationist or culturally pluralistic. However, the continuation of a colonial heritage, in which rulers maintain hegemonic relations with their subjects, is apparent from the policymaker's lack of inclusiveness. It may be what Haacke 1994 suggests, that perhaps the influence came from what was perceived as the trend in policy making, from watching other post-colonial African countries, and listening to international debates on education.

From the preceding discussion, we conclude that like many other African nations, Namibia faces the problem of choosing a national language as well as introducing several languages at the level of school education with an express view to preserve and promote multilingualism and multiculturalism, even at the level of formal education. As this paper has shown, prevalent in the discourse about African language policies is the idea that no policy should seek to eliminate the diversity of language repertoires within most African contexts. Bagmbose 1991, Bokamba 1981, Bokamba & Tlou 1977, Phillipson 1992, and Tollefson 1991, among many others, have emphasized the equal rights of all languages and suggest that all citizens have the right to political participation, education, and services in their own language. Furthermore, they insist that all members of a multilingual speech community have a right to the use of their language as a medium of instruction, as well as of the other official interactions mentioned above. The proposal offered by Bokamba & Tlou 1977 has a reality to it that is desirable for most African states. They propose that each sub-Saharan African state set up a language planning commission of linguists, educators, anthropologists, sociologists, economists, and political scientists to survey the relevant languages and make recommendations to the government concerning the selection of a single national language. On the basis of a statistical and attitudinal survey, the national language selected from the pool of the nation's *linguae francae* should be used as the medium of instruction. The remaining should be taught as compulsory subjects in the school system and used in certain other specified functions. In the case of Namibia, this includes Afrikaans, which enjoyed co-official status with English before independence, and German, which was used along with English and Afrikaans in the administration of Whites. The relevant international lan-

guage, English in the case of Namibia, should be introduced as a compulsory subject only from grade four onwards. Bokamba & Tlou (1977:47) maintain that if the initial work is carried out carefully, and the government cooperates, the kind of language policy that will emerge from such a plan 'will be comprehensive in that it will be based on the objective realities of the society concerned'.

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