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Week 9 - Answers

Mesthrie, et al. (2009), Chapter 12

Kasper and Rose (2002), Chapter 1

1. Mesthrie et al. (2009), following Kloss (1967, 1969), identify two different types of language planning. What are they and of these two which one is more often used in South Korea? (Mes.)

Before mentioning those really important is to talk a little bit about language planning in general and to get a fix on what language planning is and how it affects us. Like language, language planning is all around us partially because language is such an important part of who we are but also because language is so powerful. Whether people realize it consciously or not language has the power to divide society and to make society more harmonious in many different ways. Because of its inherent power some people feel that it is important that language is controlled or planned. It is also true that language planning is necessary for the development of society or at least the modern complex society such as we find today all over the world. As language teachers we are obviously at the forefront of language planning—we are the people who implements the language plan on the ground, in the trenches with the students. At the same time we also have the power to alter these plans which are often initiated from above or even from the outside in cases of colonialism for example. For this reason it is imperative that we as teachers have a basic understanding of language planning issues as well as the effects of language planning.

In class we discussed two major types of language planning and these are shown below. In addition to these two we also discussed aspects of the implementation of the plan itself which involves dealing with the prestige of a particular language as well as a plan for its implication which we may call acquisition planning.

Corpus planning

Status Planning

 Prestige Planning

 Acquisition Planning

The two main types of language planning are corpus planning and status planning. The former is usually conducted by linguists either within some branch of the government or more often, in the special committee or organization formed by governmental or nongovernmental organizations. As the name would imply, corpus planning dealing with the different parts of language itself. For us, it may be simpler to call this form planning. Looking for local situation we mentioned in class that standardized Korean which is so familiar to us today at some point in the fairly recent asked needed to go through a corpus plan. After the end of World War II when Korea again became an independent nation there was no standard national language which could be taught in schools. One had to be created and of course this happens over time but also quite quickly. Some sort of corpus plan needed to be devised to determine which elements of the prestige Seoul dialect would be incorporated into what is now perceived as more or less the national language of South Korea. Certainly the sole dialectic itself has a range of different performance variables and corpus planning then identifies these different performance variables at all the different levels of language starting from sound and moving up to discourse and decide which ones will be accepted and then taught and which ones are going to be rejected and not taught or actually inhibited with in the schools. From this description here is easy to see that corpus planning

is already linked very tightly to acquisition planning because what we decide in the corpus planning comes to be what we're going to expect our learners to acquire and also on the other side of the coin what we do not want them to acquire within that context.

Status planning deals more with the acceptance of these new linguistic codes within the community. The basic idea of status planning revolves around the idea of acceptance all the good corpus planning in the world may not lead to any kind of acceptance of people do not value the codes that we have chosen. In 1945 Seoul may have been the natural choice for the South Korean government to choose not only for their capital but also for the prestige dialect which became the national language, but it may have just as well have been Cheju City. It may have taken some time for Cheju City to gain acceptance but with good status planning it may certainly have worked.

When looking at the role of English within South Korean society can see how after the end of the second world war and particularly the end of the Korean War, we can see how the status of English rose to a very high degree in English became a prestige language within South Korea, as it did in many parts of the world at the same time. In South Korea this prestige was reinforced by the use of English as a leveling tool with in society through examinations. This model fit into a much older pre-existing model which used Chinese and Chinese poetry for similar purposes but with the tremendous and sudden fall of the prestige of Chinese due to the Korean War English was brought in to fill this void. As Fred so aptly mentioned in class, English became than a huge goal for Korean learners and still is. In fact we argued in class at the prestige of English may still be rising in some ways.

2. Of the different processes of language planning elaborated on in Mesthrie et al. (2009), which ones do you think have been used in South Korea and with which languages? [Mes.]

In this nice chapter, Mesthrie et al. (2009) provides some very interesting examples of how language planning works in its different stages by using a range of different situations. Let's go through ourselves one by one.

Selection

Selection is the process by which a government or a group of line which planners will decide which languages or codes they are going to focus on. Unlike many different countries, South Korea decided upon getting independence to ignore the regional dialects entirely and just focus on developing a national language out of the prestigious Seoul dialect. That was a major part of the selection. Other selections made at the time were to ban Japanese and may Japanese and absolute zero part of the Korean linguist to plan and to push Chinese out of that plan as quickly as possible by shifting from some widely entrenched societal uses of Chinese to Korean uses. As mentioned above English was also brought in to replace Chinese for some of its societal uses. Plus, to sum up certain languages or dialects were selected for development and use while others were selected for eradication and most particularly Japanese and to a somewhat lesser extent Chinese. It is interesting to note how both these once expunged taboo languages have reemerged on the Korean sociolinguistics seen as being quite important and from this we can see just how much language planning is a political construct.

Codification

Once a language has been selected, then it's forms need to be codified in this is basically corpus planning. As mentioned above, the sole dialect needed to be codified for use with in the schools and teachers in rural districts needed to be trained in this old illex so they could use that code within schools as well. From this we can see it's not an immediate process but rather a lengthy developing process which never really ends as languages are always in a state of flux. Regarding English, as we discussed, certain choices were made as to which particular prestige dialect of English would be chosen and the choice was American English, but no real attention was played specifically to a codification process for

the type of English that South Koreans would be using.

Implementation

The implementation of these different processes often occur within the school system and this is certainly true in South Korea where things are very much centralized and the central government has a lot of power. As we discussed at least in one group extensively in the class, even though South Korea has a very high percentage of private educational institutes these educational institutes are still tightly controlled by the government and need to follow quite strict government regulations pertaining to varied aspects of the curriculum. In other countries very often the implementation of language planning may occur through a lot more private nongovernmental organizations and we can see that in South Korea this was probably truer in the early days of the country after the Korean War when things were still very difficult and the central government did not have a lot of power.

Elaboration

Elaboration addresses the ongoing process of language planning after the initial steps have been taken. Once in different societies do this in different ways. In some countries there are regularly scheduled developments while in others developments often occur on the basis of what is happening with in the society and an obvious need for change. For example if and when South Korea reunified with North Korea a language policy for the northern part of the Korean Peninsula will need to be developed and this in itself may also change the current policies with in the southern part of the peninsula.

3. What is the difference between an instrumental and sociolinguistic approach to language [language planning] and why is this important to us as language teachers? [Mes.]

As teachers of language we are also part and parcel of the language planning process in the society in which we work. In effect, we are on the front lines of this whole phenomenon and the approach not only our society but we in the classroom take to language and language planning has a large effect on our students. The instrumental approach to language and language planning sees language as nothing more than just a benign tool that people can use to achieve specific goals whether communicative or societal [such as using English as a societal measurement of one's value and worth/status]. On this view language really has no effect beyond itself. It is something akin to, as we said, or that one uses to achieve specific goals and that's it. This instrumental view effects both how language planners decide to use a given language within society but also the perceived acquisitional processes for that language. It should be clear that until at least recently English was viewed in a very instrumental way by Korean language planners as well as teachers and learners.

A sociolinguistic view of language and language learning in praises the idea that language is more than just tool but rather plays an important role in people's lives at an individual and societal level. The idea here is that learning English, for example, changes the way that you think and the way you are. When enough people also than can speak English or understand English then there are the inevitable societal changes as well. Teaching English in the school does not mean it English is then limited just to the school which is often what people in South Korea believe. Some people lament this while other people feel that this is the way things should be.

4. What is pragmatics and why is it important? [K&R]

We will try to give as simple a definition of pragmatics as possible and also try to differentiate pragmatics from discourse analysis. Basically pragmatics is the study of meaning created in context. This is a large area of study and many linguists avoid pragmatics because they think of it as a kind of undefined dumping ground for everything that doesn't fit into standard linguistic study. For us, we are going to try

to think about pragmatics as an active process of language. Pragmatics or knowledge of pragmatic effects in language is what allows a speaker to produce a piece of language that is appropriate to the context. This is important for the teaching of English particularly when speaking is a focus because contextual or situational appropriateness is often more important than creating grammatically acceptable utterances. The study of pragmatics incongruence with a discourse analysis approach should allow us to not only form a clear view of how acceptable utterances might actually be produced but hopefully will also allow us to teach our students how to do this in a somewhat effective way.

5. What are some of the questions that a study of pragmatics can help us answer as foreign language teachers? (K&R)

The book that we are using in this class (Kasper and Rose, 2002) is a little bit different than many of the other books on pragmatics in that it focuses on how pragmatic skills develop. This is exactly what we want because this is our main concern. Simply thinking of the questions posed on page 6 from the perspective of a language teacher brings us to the main question we want to come up with which is, *how do I help my students to be better users of the target language*. The simple answer is by familiarizing them with the processes of language use from a pragmatic perspective and discourse analysis will help us do that. All the other questions, and we can certainly think of more than those in the list in the book, refer to both developmental questions and teaching questions referring more specifically to how we actually need to go about doing this.

It should be clear to everyone at this point that a pragmatic approach to language is relatively hard to do in a foreign language situation and particularly one in which the target language is not only physically faraway but psychologically and linguistically also quite distant. This makes our attempts that much harder at the same time although more important because without us our students would have no way of knowing these things. In the rest of the class will be slowly trying to answer these questions by thinking concretely about how to create mechanisms where the students can make decisions on their own about how to piece together effective utterances.