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Richard Trewby, Sandra Fitchat, eds. *Language and Development in Southern Africa: Making the Right Choices*. Windhoek, Namibia, Gamsberg: Macmillan Press, 2001. 245 pp. No price listed (cloth), ISBN 978-99916-0-286-8.

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Language and Development in Southern Africa derives from the proceedings of a conference of the same name held in Okahandja, Namibia in April 2000. The aims of the conference were three-fold: “to review the role of languages in development (in Southern Africa), review the language policies in multilingual education systems, and help national planners formulate effective language policies for education” (p. 1).

In essence, this book highlights the dominance of former colonial languages (e.g., English, Portuguese, and Afrikaans), especially in education, as well as the influence of this dominance on indigenous languages. The book ends with a list of recommendations for improving the status of African languages so that the speakers of these languages can participate in the socio-economic development of their respective polities. Besides the recommendations the volume consists of eighteen papers preceded by an introduction by the editors and an opening address by the Namibian Minister of Basic Education, Honorable John Mutorwa.

The first paper, “Key Issues in Language Policy for Southern Africa,” is a keynote address by Neville Alexander. In his paper Alexander deplores the socio-economic dominance of former colonial languages over indigenous African languages, whose speakers he aptly says “[have] been reduced to the position of a social minority in their own country...” (p. 9). Alexander argues for the need to change the perception that “only that knowledge which is packaged in the languages of the colonial conquerors is worthwhile knowledge; ... structural interventions are needed that ... demonstrate the economic power and status-conferring potential of the African languages” (p. 10). He concludes that “unless it can be shown that cog-

nitive academic proficiency in [African] languages leads to economic and social benefits, there is little chance that much movement will be forthcoming” (p. 16) for African languages.

The book’s remaining papers are divided into three thematic sections: language policy, marginalized languages, and literacy and language teaching. The first section on language policy comprises seven papers dealing largely with language-in-education policies in various African countries. The first three papers in this section focus on language policies in Namibia. They include “Some Prevalent Assumptions in Language Policy, with Contextualization from Namibia” by Brian Harlech-Jones; “Language Policy Implementation in Namibia: Realities, Challenges and Politics” by Patti Swarts; and “Language Policy in Namibia: The Situation at the Grass Roots Non-Governmental Approaches” by Karsten Legere. Harlech-Jones outlines some of the “prevalent assumptions in language policy,” such as “the local languages are so poorly developed that they cannot be used as mediums of instruction”; “the best practice is transitional bilingualism followed by complete immersion”; and “maximum exposure ensures the highest degree of competence in the high-status language, i.e. English.” Harlech-Jones argues that these assumptions should be interrogated if Namibian society is to contribute fresh and original thinking about language policy. Following a similar line, Patti Swarts examines Namibia’s 1993 language-policy goals to determine whether they have been achieved. She argues that policy has not been effectively implemented, especially with regard to the issue of mother-tongue instruction, and concludes with a list of recommendations aimed at improving policy. Karsten Legere also laments the poor socio-economic status of

Namibian indigenous languages vis--vis the country's official language, English. He argues that "as long as the official policy in Namibia does not foresee any substantial use of national languages in formal domains, their role in society is threatened" (p. 53), especially as there is the perception that the country's "national [i.e. indigenous] languages are good for nothing" (p. 53).

The next paper, by Saida Yahya-Othman, is titled "What Language, and for Whose Education". Although its focus is on the language situation in Tanzania, the paper echoes most of the points concerning the language situation in Namibia. In particular, Yahya-Othman highlights the lower status of indigenous Tanzanian languages such as Kiswahili vis--vis English, also demonstrating that "English has been the medium of instruction in Tanzania since before independence, and yet the English proficiency of Tanzanians is steadily deteriorating" (p. 75). In a similar paper Gregory Kamwendo reviews key issues of language in education in Malawi. Like Halech-Jones, Kamwendo highlights the hegemony of English and some of the misconceptions about mother-tongue education. He advocates civic education or mass sensitization if the country's new language policy is to achieve its goals to promote Malawian indigenous languages such as Chichewa, the national language, as well as to promote multilingualism as a resource.

Armando Ngunga's paper deals with language policy for education and the media in Mozambique (it is one of the two papers in the book that has an abstract). Ngunga argues against the monopoly of Portuguese, a language spoken by only 24.4 percent of Mozambique's population, over domains such as education and the media. He calls for the introduction of Mozambican languages into the school system and the "massification" of their use in the media to counter the negative attitudes that many Mozambicans have towards their own languages, which they perceive as inferior vis--vis Portuguese (p. 106). The last paper in the first section is written by Vinesh Hookoomsing and concerns the language situation in Mauritius. Primarily, the author provides a linguistic profile of Mauritius, where French, English, Creole, and a variety of Indian languages and Chinese co-exist in tenuous peace and harmony. Hookoomsing describes how the country has managed to reconcile this linguistic and cultural diversity with economic development and modernization (p. 119).

The second section of the book focuses on the theme "Marginalized Languages." It comprises four papers including a keynote address by Herman Batibo. In "The

Empowerment of Minority Languages for Education and Development," Batibo overviews the language policies of a number of African countries, noting that the policies have promoted the hegemony of former colonial languages at the expense of indigenous languages. Consequently, "many minority-language speakers are abandoning their languages and cultures, and proficiency in these languages [is] diminish[ing] from generation to generation" (pp. 124-125). The next paper, by Laurentius Davids, deals with the empowerment of Namibian languages in education. Like other contributors, Davids deplores the negative attitudes that speakers of Namibian languages such as Nama have towards their own languages, as illustrated in the following statement: "Only Dutch, nothing but Dutch! I despise myself and wish to hide in the bushes when I hear myself speak my Hottentot language" (p. 137). For these attitudes to change, Davids recommends that the African languages of Namibia be assigned official functions in the higher domains of language use, such as government and administration, business, and education.

Continuing the theme of language-in-education policy, Outlule Basimolodi discusses the impact of English and Setswana on minority languages in Botswana. He observes that minority-language speakers prefer their children to be proficient in Setswana, the only indigenous language used in education, for no children can hope to succeed at school unless they have a reasonable degree of proficiency in the language. Ironically, it is noted that Setswana speakers themselves strive instead for proficiency in English to advance their socio-economic status (p. 146). In the last paper of this section Daniel Mkude discusses the relationship between minority languages and Kiswahili in Tanzania. His key point is that the younger generations of Tanzanians have embraced Kiswahili, the language of interethnic communication, and do not feel the sense of loss of ethnic languages that their parents and elders do. Accordingly, Mkude maintains that the loss of other local minority languages in Tanzania is outweighed by the gains that derive from Kiswahili, the country's lingua franca and symbol of national unity.

The last section of the book focuses on literacy and language teaching. It consists of six papers including a keynote address in which Justin Ellis reflects on literacy and language from an international perspective. His recommendation for literacy programs whether in Namibia or elsewhere is that they should integrate literacy into all appropriate development projects, especially those relating to health and the environment (p.

174). Sabo Indabawa examines issues of relevance to language and adult literacy education programs in Africa, with a focus on Namibia and Nigeria, and raises questions and issues relating to language and adult literacy policies and practice in the continent. In a related paper, Carole Block deals with young children's literacy learning in South Africa. After a brief historical overview of South Africa's language policy, Block outlines some of the positive initiatives in teaching literacy in the country. She concludes by pointing out that "what is lacking [in efforts to promote literacy in the country] is the political will to channel sufficient resources to fulfil the requirements of small children and the adults—mainly women—who take responsibility for them." (p. 199).

Paula Gains describes a "Breakthrough to Literacy" program, originally developed in Britain in 1979. The program is said to build on oral language skills that children bring with them to the classroom. By focusing on such skills, the Breakthrough program promotes learner's cultural and linguistic pride, and recognizes the learner's identity and ability to express valid thoughts and opinions. In "Can English-Medium Education Work?" John Clegg critiques English-medium education in Anglophone Africa. Clegg argues convincingly that such a system has the potential to limit the economic performance of countries that have adopted it, especially as it is not tailored to the context in which it is used (p. 212). He recommends that in order to improve English-medium education in Africa two basic issues must be borne in mind, namely the key role of subject teachers on the one hand, and the recognition of English-medium pedagogy as a specialist skill that subject teachers need to learn on the other. David Marsh

contributes the last paper in this volume, in essence describing various aspects of "Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL)," a teaching approach that many European countries have adopted in teaching through second and foreign languages. It is hoped that the European experiences with CLIL might have lessons for language teaching in Southern Africa.

In summary, *Language and Development in Southern Africa* is a worthy contribution to the perennial debate about the role of African languages in education, a debate that has been going on for the past forty years. >From an editorial point of view, however, this book leaves much to be desired. For instance, only two of the eighteen papers that make up this volume have an abstract. All the papers are presented in their conference format. Accordingly, one comes across structures such as the following: "as anyone with a deep interest in young children and who listens carefully to them will tell you" (p. 193); "I personally prefer less loaded terms such as ... I think that people should insist on providing their own definitions and analyses of their situations (p. 25); and "77 percent of the interviewees consulted expressed serious concern" (p. 148). Other than these lacunae, the content of *Language and Development in Southern Africa* is accessible and can be read by anyone who has an interest in language-in-education policies in Africa. Students of linguistics in particular will find here a wealth of information about why the language-in-education policies of most African countries have failed, and recommendations to remedy this situation. Whether these recommendations will be heeded remains to be seen, especially since language issues are not seen as being as important as economic issues in the Southern African region.

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