

Models of national government language-in-education policy for indigenous minority language groups

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Abstract

The language policies of national governments construct the ways in which languages and their relative value are perceived at the official level. Official language-in-education policies in favour of minority indigenous languages are a relatively new dimension of the language planning work of national governments. Where such policies exist, they typically replace an older, colonialist tradition of language planning which either neglected or actively opposed the use of these languages. This paper will examine some cases of language-in-education planning which show a range of approaches to the use of indigenous languages in educational contexts. Typical approaches to language-in-education planning for indigenous minority languages include: language study as subject, vernacular literacy programs, and officialisation of the minority languages. While language planning has usually considered such approaches in terms of structures, practices and outcomes, little focus has been given to the ways in which such planning attempts construct languages at the symbolic level. This paper will examine the ways in which language planning work operates on a symbolic level to reflect and reproduce relationships between indigenous minorities and dominant language groups in which established power and economic relationships and perceptions of relative cultural capital are entrenched rather than challenged.

1. Introduction

The provision of programs in indigenous languages is increasingly a part of contemporary language planning (for example, Cantoni 2007, May 1999, Reyhner Martin, Lockard & Gilbert 2000). However, in language planning research, the conceptualisation of indigenous minority languages has been problematic as it has tended to focus on situations in which there is an exogenous (often European) official language which has become the language of social, economic, political and symbolic power and subordinated indigenous languages. Such an approach focuses on relations between languages that are indigenous to a polity and those that are exogenous. However, within many polities there exist indigenous languages that are dominated within their polity by other indigenous languages: for example, Basque in Spain or French in France. This study aims to investigate both types of indigenous language

contexts and an “indigenous minority language”¹ will be understood as any language with a traditional association with a particular territory and of which the speakers are not a dominant language group within the national state. Such language groups have typically been subject to a process of political control by a dominating language group, which has resulted in the minority group having lower economic, political, demographic or social power within the wider society. In some cases an indigenous language that is a minority language in one polity may be a dominant and/or official language of another, for example, German is a minority language in France and Belgium, but a dominant and official language in Germany, Austria and Switzerland. Such languages benefit from the status, prestige and power of the official language polities and may be treated differently at the policy level from those languages that exist only as minority languages.

Contemporary approaches to indigenous language-in-education planning take place in a context in which much of the work constitutes redressive action following a period of government neglect or active opposition (see for example Bokamba 1991, Powell 2002, Salhi 2002, Sánchez & Dueñas 2002, Vilela 2002). There are several motivations for redressing past treatment ranging from attempts to address perceived wrongs of earlier times to pragmatic attempts to use local languages to achieve other national planning goals. Regardless of the motivation however, most language-in-education for indigenous minority languages represents government level action to change aspects of the language ecology in which indigenous languages exist. Ruiz (1995) has noted that the inclusion of such languages in language-in-education policies lies at the intersection between local community goals and national level policies and that national level policies may exist in tension with local needs and desires. For Ruiz, national level policies developed outside communities are problematic and he argues that local perspectives are a more legitimate basis for language planning for indigenous languages than those of the nation-state (Liddicoat & Baldauf in press). However, it remains true that most policy for indigenous minority languages is developed by government agencies rather than at community level and it is important to investigate how governments engage with indigenous languages in the education system.

In examining the ways in which nations deal with such minority indigenous languages, three main treatments may be identified:

- the offering of the indigenous language as a school subject
- the provision of vernacular literacy programs
- the integration of an indigenous minority language in education as an official language of the nation state.

Each of the approaches constructs the indigenous language in particular ways within the overall language ecology of the nation-state and these constructions affect the ways in which the minority language is perceived. While it is possible to identify these three approaches, this does not mean that they are mutually

¹ In this paper, the term “minority” will be used to refer to languages which are spoken by groups which are in subordinated power relationships within their nations. They are in contrast to dominant groups which have access to and control of power. The term “minority” therefore does not necessarily mean that the groups are numerically smaller than dominant groups.

exclusive. Within any polity, all three approaches may be used for different languages or for the same language in different regions.

This paper will examine examples of language-in-education policies in six polities that exemplify these various approaches to the inclusion of indigenous languages within education. The purpose of this paper is to analyse how language-in-education policies construct indigenous minority languages and the issues that this raises for language planning rather than seeking to capture the full range of language planning approaches adopted within the polity.

2. Indigenous language as school subject

One approach to the planning of education provision of an indigenous minority language is to provide the language as a school subject. This approach is designed to give recognition to the language within the valued context of education, however, in many cases the provision of the language may be quite limited in scope, with only a small time allocation being given to indigenous language classes.

2.1 France

In France the loi Deixonne of 1951 was the first attempt to provide a place for the indigenous minority languages of France in the education sector. The loi Deixonne originally applied only to Basque, Breton, Catalan and Occitan, but was modified to include Corsican (1974), Tahitian (1981) and four Melanesian languages of New Caledonia (1992).² Article 3 of the law authorised one hour per week of instruction in the language:

... chaque semaine, une heure d'activités dirigées à l'enseignement de notions élémentaires de lecture et d'écriture du parler local et à l'étude de morceaux choisis de la littérature correspondante. [... each week, one hour of activities directed at the teaching of basic notions of reading and writing of the local variety and the study of selected extracts of the corresponding literature.]

The provisions of the loi Deixonne were tied to territories: that is the teaching of the language could only be undertaken in those regions where the language was traditionally spoken, meaning that those who had migrated out of that area had no access to the language. The provision of language classes was also made dependent firstly on the willingness of teachers to offer the classes — permission to teach was granted only to those teachers who made an application to teach the language — and secondly on the willingness of students to study the language — the classes were optional for students (Gardin 1975). In 1981, the provision of minority languages was widened to include certification for the *baccalauréate*; although restrictions were still in force as to where languages could be offered.

² Minority languages such as German were already included in the French curriculum as a foreign language subject, and received a greater time allocation as a foreign language that they would have as a regional language.

2.2 Australia

In Australia, indigenous languages in education have been treated through curriculum documents rather than policy statements. The national level provision of indigenous minority language subjects is framed under the *Australian Indigenous Language Framework* (AILF) (SSABSA 1996), although other provisions do exist at state and territory level. The AILF provided for indigenous Australian languages to be taught in accredited programs at senior secondary level. The framework was organised into two components: a target language(s) component within which students learnt to use or learnt about a specific language or cluster of languages belonging to a region and an Australian languages component within which students learnt about the range of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages and their role within society. The Australian languages component is common to all indigenous language programs; however, the target language component varies according to the sociolinguistic profile of the language being studied. All program types envisage some learning of a particular language, but also involve additional learning about other languages spoken in Australia.

The particular structure of the AILF was designed to provide a single common framework for all indigenous languages regardless of the sociolinguistic position of the language (Amery 2002). This means that a full spectrum of languages, from those actively transmitted to those which had undergone extensive or total shift to English could be included. This range of target languages led to the inclusion of the Australian languages component and the study of regional languages that are equally applicable across sociolinguistic contexts. These components also allow more readily for external assessment across a range of languages in that they presuppose that assessment will be in English and not require specific language expertise. The inclusion of these components does however mean that the proportion of the curriculum actually devoted to language learning is less than 50 percent.

2.3 Issues relating to languages as school subjects

One issue facing the language as subject approach is determining the target population for these subjects: that is, are they intended for indigenous learners or for a wider school population. The loi Deixonne does not refer to the identity of learners. However it does contain an implicit assumption that the provision is designed for learners who have a minority language background in that it focuses on the development of literacy in the language rather than on new learning of the language and confines the scope of learning to the traditional territories in which the language are spoken. The AILF is specifically focused beyond indigenous people themselves with the curriculum being designed explicitly for all learners. The identification of a target audience is a complex issue for school subjects, as educational rationales would suggest that no student should be excluded *a priori* from the educational opportunities provided by a government educational system. At the same time, the specific needs, motivations and learning goals of a group of background speakers may be considerably different from those of non-indigenous learners.

Defining the audience for a language subject is not simply a question of identifying potential learners but also has an influence on the pedagogies and programs involved. If a minority language subject is designed for background speakers, it is likely to require pedagogies relating to L1 learning, with a particular focus on developing school-based practices in the language, as is presupposed by the loi Deixonne, rather than L2 learning (Gardin 1975). If the target audience is all learners, it presupposes new learning of the language, which in turn requires L2 pedagogies and programs. This is the focus adopted by the AILF, which, although directed at senior secondary school, is designed to accommodate learners with no prior knowledge of the language (Amery 2002). The choice of an L1 program would seem to restrict the language to background speakers, while the choice of an L2 program would not meet the needs of L1 learners and may even marginalise them as participants in the language subject by not drawing on or developing their existing knowledge and treating them as non-speakers of their own language. There is evidence that in at least some schools L1 speakers of indigenous languages do not take the AILF course in their senior secondary study (Carmel Ryan, p.c.). One factor in this is the significant proportion of the assessment that is conducted in English rather than the indigenous language, which could penalise higher proficiency in the indigenous language and lower proficiency in English.

The issue of the target population interacts with issues of the take-up of indigenous languages as subjects. Although subjects may be available to both indigenous and non-indigenous students, actual take-up of the subject may be restricted to indigenous learners, at least where studying the language is optional. The patterns of take up of the language reflect the nation-internal prestige structures attached to indigenous languages and the non-participation by any group of learners reflects a lack of valuing of the learning being offered. The provision of an education program does not *per se* do anything to address the issues of relative prestige or status of language varieties and language as subject policies do not seem to engage with these issues, beyond admitting the language to a prestigious domain (Fishman 1991). Issues of prestige may be associated with school-external contexts of language use (Ager 2005, 2006, Baldauf 2004): where a language makes available domains of use that bring access to economic cultural or social capital, they give access to symbolic power, which in turn provide a rationale for developing capacity in the language (Bourdieu 1982). Where such domains are not open to a language, the development of capacity in the language does not give access to symbolic power or to forms of capital that can be exploited for such power. While language acquisition may satisfy personal desires, this does not affect the overall ecology within which the language is used, and the separation of language competence from symbolic power may even undermine existing rationales for language learning by rupturing connections between school and real world applications.

Finally, language as subject often raises questions around the involvement of indigenous communities in educational decision-making. While it may be possible for local communities to influence the implementation of macro-level policies, they are less likely to be able to shape those policies and the educational programs they involve. Key aspects of the decision-making process such as curriculum design, pedagogy, assessment process and criteria, and the selection of materials and resources are typically undertaken by government agencies and subject to external values of education and educational outcomes. For example, the AILF is

subordinated to the rationale, goals and processes of the external examination system attached to senior secondary schooling in Australia and the baccalaureate examination in France is similarly centrally controlled and co-ordinated.

Collectively these features of language as subject approaches mean that indigenous perspectives on languages may be subordinated to dominant group issues around education and are particularly subject to the pressure of discourses around dominant official languages. Within national language ecologies, such languages remain marginalised and the speakers of the language are isolated from decision-making processes relevant to the learning of the language.

3. Vernacular literacy programs

Vernacular literacy programs aim for a greater integration of indigenous minority languages in the education system. In a vernacular literacy program, the indigenous language is introduced into schooling as a medium of instruction with the aim of developing literacy skills in the minority language (Hornberger 2002, Tabouret-Keller, Page, Gardner-Chloros & Varros 1997). Such programs are typically designed to develop literacy skills in learners' L1 as a step towards developing literacy in a dominant group language at a later stage of education. While such programs begin with the L1 as the dominant language of the classroom, they typically include learning of the dominant language as an additional language.

3.1 Colombia

The primary approach to the education of indigenous ethnolinguistic groups in Colombia is known as *etnoeducación* (ethnoeducation), which is officially defined as education for groups or communities who possess a culture, a language, traditions and a code of laws of their own (Article 55 of Law 115/1994). Language-in-education planning for ethnoeducation began with recognition of the special educational needs of indigenous people in the mid-1970s, but the development of ethnoeducation was given a stronger legal basis in the constitutional reform process leading up to the 1991 National Constitution. In the 1991 Constitution, Colombia officially recognised its diverse cultures and undertook to recognise and protect cultural diversity. Article 10 of the Constitution recognises that education in indigenous areas is to be bilingual in the indigenous language and Spanish (for a more complete discussion see Liddicoat & Curnow 2007). The major legislative text dealing with ethnoeducation, the "General Law of Education" integrates the provisions of the Constitution with regard to the education of ethnic minorities in a special section consisting of several Articles. The law introduces a national ethnoeducation program, with a vernacular language component, for ethnolinguistic minority groups and provides some definition of the nature of bilingual education in indigenous contexts in the general provisions for primary schooling in Article 21:

- c) *El desarrollo de las habilidades comunicativas básicas para leer, comprender, escribir, escuchar, hablar y expresarse correctamente en lengua castellana y también en la lengua materna, en el caso de los grupos étnicos con tradición lingüística propia, así como el fomento de la afición por la lectura;* [The development of basic

communicative abilities for reading, understanding, writing, listening, speaking and expressing oneself correctly in Spanish and also in their mother tongue, in the case of ethnic groups with their own linguistic tradition, and also fostering a liking for reading;]

Article 21, therefore, allocates a place for indigenous languages in primary school, for those groups that have access to an indigenous language: that is, the law seems to exclude those groups that, as the result of considerable language loss following Spanish colonisation, have not maintained their languages.

3.2 *Papua New Guinea*

Vernacular literacy programs have been developed in Papua New Guinea (PNG) since the late 1980s with a focus on developing vernacular literacy in the early years of learning. The provision of vernacular literacy — using either a local vernacular or a lingua franca such as Tok Pisin — in elementary school programs has become a core element in PNG education policy (PNG Department of Education, 2003). In these programs, children are now educated in their first languages for the first three years of schooling and are gradually introduced to English from the second half of the third year with the amount of English increasing until English is the only language of instruction from Grade 6 (Lindström 2007). The principle aim of the vernacular literacy program is that children be taught in their first language until they have basic literacy and numeracy. The focus of the program is pragmatic in that it is believed that vernacular literacy is the best way to develop literacy in the official language rather than focusing on language maintenance and cultural identity.

The vernacular education program is ultimately determined by Department of Education, which retains responsibility for policy, curriculum guidelines, finance and teacher education and the provincial governments, which are responsible for implementation including planning, training and administration for the specific language programs. However, the choice of the people to be trained as teachers and the language to be used in the school is devolved to local communities (Klaus 2003).

3.3 *Issues relating to vernacular literacy programs*

One key issue confronting vernacular literacy programs is the way in which the purposes and value of vernacular literacy are constructed (Liddicoat 2007). That is, does vernacular literacy have a genuine value within the education system or is it seen rather as a tool for developing a valued literacy in an official language. In both Colombia and PNG, vernacular literacy is subordinated to official language literacy, with PNG having a more explicit policy of transition from L1 to L2 literacy than Colombia. It would appear that in school literacy education, transitional literacy is more typically the case with only adult literacy programs being likely to have only a vernacular literacy focus (Liddicoat 2007). If vernacular literacy is understood only as a means to an end, literacy in a local language is allocated no intrinsic value for itself — it is official language literacy that counts with vernacular literacy being only a necessary step towards realising this goal. This means that the development

of vernacular literacy is separated from the practice of literacy and the resources for the literate person exists primarily only in official languages, or in some cases, widely used *linguae francae*. The development of vernacular literacy therefore has no identifiable place in the local language ecology — it is not usable if there are not post-educational contexts of use developed for it (Crowley 2007, Mühlhäusler 1996).

In cases where literacy materials are developed in vernacular languages, these are frequently developed to meet the goals of national governments through the dissemination of information, rather than addressing the needs of the literate people themselves. Whether vernacular literacy is a tool for official language literacy development or as a vehicle for achieving government objectives, the development of vernacular literacy programs does not in itself address issues of comparative prestige between local and official languages and the official language alone is the language that permits access to power within the nation-state.

Vernacular literacy implies by its very rationale that the languages included in such programs are unproblematically the first languages of learners and are designed to develop literacy in a language already acquired and used by learners. Such an assumption is not necessarily valid in many communities in which indigenous minority languages are spoken and used. This creates a potential problem in contexts of language shift in which the language identified as the “indigenous mother tongue” of the learners may not be their first language (Liddicoat & Curnow 2007, Lindström 2007). This is very much the case in the majority of languages falling within the ambit of Colombia’s ethnoeducation policy, where indigenous children are likely to speak a regional form of Spanish rather than their traditional language. Where this is the case, the ideal of developing literacy capabilities in the first language of the learner may not be the reality of the vernacular literacy program and the nature and purpose of vernacular literacy programs as understood by government may be in potential conflict with the understandings and objectives of local communities.

The use of local languages as ways of achieving broad government objectives means that much decision-making is aggregated to the national level, especially in terms of curriculum design and assessment criteria and procedures. In the case of PNG, for example, the decision-making devolved to local communities is quite limited with only choices of language and personnel being within the direct control of local communities. This means that such programs may address local community language objectives only in limited ways and locally made decisions may conflict with higher-level objectives. For example, the PNG policy allocates decision-making as to the language to be used to the local community (Klaus 2003) and Lindström (2007) has shown that local communities may select the language with the goal of reversing language shift rather than developing L1 literacy. Lindström argues that in the case of the Kuot community, the first language of the children is in fact Tok Pisin and the vernacular language program is required to do double duty by providing second language education in Kuot through a curriculum framework designed for L1 literacy. Liddicoat & Curnow (2007) report a similar situation for Awa Pit in Colombia.

These cases show a conflict between local and national values and objectives which get played out at different levels of decision-making. The curricula for vernacular programs are geared towards educational objectives which are established externally and which have to be implemented within a context of local needs and demands. In the macro-level planning, indigenous perspectives on the role of vernacular education may be subordinated to those of dominant groups, with the result that vernacular programs may need to meet conflicting agendas simultaneously when the national level program is implemented in local contexts. Moreover, where literacy in a vernacular is subordinated to literacy in the dominant language, and where no legitimate contexts of literate practice are established for the vernacular language, vernacular literacy programs may develop language capabilities with no applications in either the local or national language ecologies and in so doing devalue the acquisition of these capabilities as an educational objective (Crowley 2007, Liddicoat 2007, Mühlhäusler 1996). Consequently, indigenous minority languages remain marginalised within the power structures of their society.

4. Officialisation of a minority language

Officialisation of a language involves the allocation of some official functions to the indigenous minority language either nationally or regionally (van Els 2005). While officialisation is strictly speaking a form of status planning, it has important correlates for language-in-education planning activities. When a language is allocated official functions, it is necessary to ensure pathways through education for developing capacity in that language to ensure an available pool of expertise which can be drawn upon for implementation of the policy.

4.1 *New Zealand*

Māori was declared an official language of New Zealand in the Māori Language Act of 1987. In particular this act applied to the use of Māori in certain legal proceedings, although the declaration of the language as official is also seen as having an impact on the provision of certain government services. While no New Zealand document actually declares English official, the Māori Language Act clearly presupposes that Māori is not the normal language for official use, nor is it equal in status, as the Act specifically states that it does not imply that any person can insist on being addressed or answered in Māori. In this, Māori has a lesser status than English as it is clear any person can expect English to be used in such contexts.

The recognition of Māori as an official language does not specifically give the language a role in education, however, there are some provisions in education which interact with the officialisation of Māori. Over a period of years Māori language immersion schools (Te Kurapapa Māori, *wharekura* and *whare wānanga*) have been increasingly integrated into the mainstream of New Zealand education and are considered a key element of Māori education (Ministry of Education 2007, Ministry of Māori Development 2003). In addition, New Zealand schools provide curricula for Māori as a subject and also non-language multicultural education in

the form of the Taha Māori curriculum, with Pākehā³ students being more likely to take such subjects rather than being educated in Māori (Spolsky 2003).

4.2 Catalonia

The 1979 Statute of Autonomy for Catalonia established a bilingual language ecology in which Catalan as the regional official language and Spanish as the national official language shared equal status. The devolution of power to the Generalitat de Catalunya has meant that language planning in Catalonia has been placed in the hands of the Catalan community itself rather than remaining with the nationally dominant group. The language policy of Catalonia was systematised in 1998, with the passing of an overarching law on languages. This law includes education within its scope and frames Catalan as the normal language of schooling:

Els centres d'ensenyament de qualsevol grau han de fer del català el vehicle d'expressió normal in llus activitats docents i administratives. [Educational centres at all levels must make Catalan the normal vehicle in their teaching and administrative activities.]

At the same time, the law acknowledges the right of Spanish-speaking children to receive their early education in Spanish. In this way, the use of Spanish is constructed as an exception to the broader policy of use of Catalan. Regardless of the language of instruction, both languages must be used in education and all learners should become competent users of both languages. Catalan language policy is also centrally concerned with ensuring that Catalan is used in all valued contexts of use including public and private television, radio and publishing, as well as in administration.

4.3 Issues relating to official languages in education

A significant issue affecting the ways in which official indigenous languages are integrated into school education appears to be the comparative status allocated to the languages. Where a language is equal to other official languages in the nation, it would appear more likely for that language to have an equal role in education, while if the language is not equal to others then it may remain marginalised in education. In part this is a question of relative prestige, similar to the cases discussed above but in this case the prestige difference is actually enshrined within the legal framework in which official status is granted. Thus in New Zealand, Māori is a language with restricted official functions and remains marginal in the educational provision of most schools, while in Catalonia, Catalan is strongly represented in both contexts.

The relative status attributed to co-official languages is the result of a number of factors influencing a polity's language ecology. It is particular influenced by the relative political power held by the speakers of the languages involved. In New Zealand, the Māori are politically less influential than the dominant Pākehā group and the decision-making process involved in determining the official status of Māori has largely been an action of the dominant group and undertaken as a concession to

³ *Pākehā* denotes non-Maori New Zealanders, especially those of British descent (see King 1985).

the indigenous group stemming from the provisions of the Treaty of Waitangi (Spolsky 2003). The concessional nature of the officialisation of Māori is most evident in the limitations placed on the language: the limited contexts in which the language is used and the removal of expectations that an interaction begun in Māori will continue in Māori. Such concessions are less likely to involve equal status with languages of the politically dominant group and do not alter the relative prestige or grant equal access to prestigious domains of use. In the case of Catalan, the devolution of power to an autonomous government has given the Catalan-speaking population self-determination within the framework of the national constitution and laws of Spain (Miguélez 2001). In language matters, this means that Catalonia is free to decide language laws, as long as those laws allow the dominant national language equality with the regional language. This has allowed Catalonia to propose individual bilingualism as a societal norm and to design educational provision to this end (Vila i Moreno 2000).

Each of these situations leads to different education policies and practices. In the case of an equal status between official languages the educational outcome is linked to universal bilingualism, while for a subordinate official language, bilingualism is seen as a feature of the minority group only. Catalan language education is carried out in a context in which the relative prestige of Catalan and Spanish has been altered through language planning activities, making Catalan an indispensable language for accessing symbolic power in Catalonia (Miguélez 2001). At the same time, the national context has ensured that competence in Spanish also has symbolic power. In New Zealand, however, Māori does not give access to symbolic power: this comes only through English. There are few if any advantages for English-speakers in learning Māori beyond individual investment in connecting with Māori identity. At the same time, Māori speakers must have competence in English in order to have access to economic and political power in New Zealand society. The value of Māori for Māori speakers is one of identity rather than access. This imbalance is testified by the emphasis in Maori language education as an educational program taken by Māori people, with very low enrolments of Pākehā children in Māori language programs (Spolsky 2003).

What the comparison between New Zealand and Catalonia shows is that the act of making a language official does not of itself address power issues or construct a language as “equal”. Rather the status of the minority language varies according to the political power exercised by the minority. Where the Catalan community has gained autonomy and as a result exercises power within its own territory, the Māori remain in the same power relationship with the dominant group. This suggests that it is most likely to be in cases where officialisation of a language is associated with political autonomy that indigenous languages can be reconstructed as equal and that officialisation without political autonomy does not necessarily lead to equality of provision, use or support.

5. Concluding comments

This brief survey of models of provision of indigenous minority languages has argued that such models may work to entrench the sociolinguistic context of the indigenous language with existing socio-political structures. They do this because

fundamentally they do not alter the relative prestige of languages within a linguistic ecology in a significant way, leaving only official, dominant languages with symbolic power. Indigenous language education does no more than introduce the language into the school system: it cannot *per se* create an ecological niche for the language within a nation-state. Education does not itself mean that languages will come to be used, or even usable, in valued contexts within a society, other than admitting the language to the school context itself. In fact, by developing language capabilities that have little or no opportunity for use outside the classroom, they may further undermine the perceived prestige and value of the language.

The problematic relationship between indigenous language programs and indigenous language use derives in part from the fact that the problems that indigenous languages programs are designed to address are not fundamentally problems of language but rather relate to the positioning of indigenous people within a society. Where language programs are established, decisions about the roles and objectives of such programs are made ultimately by the politically dominant group within the society. This may happen in consultation with indigenous communities, but such consultation does not contest the dominant group's agendas and ideologies around education, language and value systems. The language needs of indigenous communities exist with a structure created by past and present relationships between dominant groups and minority groups both in and out of education. Decision-making made within such structures reproduces existing power structures and cannot be changed without changing those structures. In particular, these relationships are manifested by a one way process of accommodation in which the indigenous group is expected and required to accommodate to the dominant group, by there is not concomitant expectation or requirement for the dominant group to consider indigenous group perspectives.

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