

UNDOING AND REDOING LANGUAGE PLANNING AND TRANSLATION POLICY

Alex Krouglov

Language Planning as well as Language and Translation Policy are the terms which are often mixed or used interchangeably in the literature especially when various approaches to language specific issues are analysed and discussed, or the language situation in a particular country or a group of countries is assessed from either political or social perspective. These key terms represent different and at the same time specific aspects of the language change process which take place at various levels and spheres of our life. This process is not something new which appeared recently due to globalisation and significant expansion of cooperation between countries, growing contacts between public and private organisations and individuals across the globe. This is the process which is as old as the first languages which incorporated issues related to the usage of languages and linguistic items and forms in various situations. Since the time of the Roman Empire in Europe and the spread of the philosophy of Confucius in China we have seen many examples when the use of languages and the languages themselves have gone through a number changes due to political, economic and cultural reasons in line, for example with the intentions and policies of governing elites or new political forces.

The unprecedented global internationalisation after the World War II led to the emergence of a new discipline Language Planning. A relatively recent globalisation process since the invention of the Internet and the creation of the worldwide web resulted in the accelerated growth of the world economy, financial institutions, trade, cultural exchanges and significant increase of language contacts across the globe. This process gave rise to new developments in the discipline and better understanding how a change of a political or economic system makes an impact on language planning and language and translation policy. Language has always played a key role in any socio-political change as “a tool for the acquisition and maintenance of power” (Cooper 1989: 155).

What is the difference between the two terms: Language Planning and Language or Translation Policy? Robert B. Kaplan and Richard B. Baldauf defined Language Planning as “a body of ideas, laws and regulations (language policy), change rules, beliefs, and practices intended to achieve a planned change (or to stop change from happening) in the language use in one or more communities” (1997: 3). As we may see from the definition, language planning either aims to change the status or use of

a language or languages (status planning) or to introduce changes in the actual corpus or shape of a language (corpus planning) which was devised by Kloss (1969). A good example can be language status planning and undoing previous status planning in many countries of the former Soviet Union after 1991 where national languages received the status of an official or national language. At the same time, the German language can serve as an example of corpus planning and undoing previous corpus after the unification of the German Democratic Republic and the Federal Republic of Germany in 1990. According to Michael Clyne who researched the reconvergence of the German language which in reality meant that the East took over “virtually everything (including language) as it had been in the West” (1997: 136). Clyne and his colleagues further define the important language planning terminology as a result of the profound study of momentous changes in Central and Eastern Europe as well as other countries of the world during the last decade of the 20th century. He considers the process of ‘undoing language planning’ as the process of “relaxing the way in which language had previously been planned to express identity and mark group boundaries, disseminate attitudes, and impose a new consciousness on the population”, while at the same time he defines redoing corpus planning as the introduction of “new changes to the form of the language to achieve these ends” (1997: 1).

In every instance of language change, translators and Interpreters have played a significant role in language status and corpus planning, and in their turn they had to follow specific policies and regulations. It is surprising that even though there has been a direct link between language planning, language policy and translation/interpretation there has been “almost total non-existence of translation as a topic” in publications on Language Planning, as if the topic “is hardly ever present” (Toury 1997: 3). Translation policy, which usually covers both Translation and Interpretation, is part and parcel of language planning and is often referred “to those factors that govern the choice of text-types, or even of individual texts, to be imported through translation into a particular culture/language at a particular point in time” (Toury 1995: 58). It also refers to the choice of certain linguistic items, such as lexical means, grammar, style, etc. as well as the introduction of innovations or restoration of archaic forms in the target text. It is therefore, Translation Policy can be defined as a set of “actions or efforts to influence the choice of texts for translation and to regulate” or modify linguistic norms applicable to the target text (Krouglov 1997: 36). For instance, the way foreign words were imported into many Central and East European Languages at the end of the 21st century, which created a lexical explosion in many languages of the region and had an impact on other linguistic areas such as style.

Modifications in the use of language, the use of specific linguistic items, as well as the choice of texts for translation are introduced in order to attain non-linguistic ends. As an illustration of this, consider first the specific non-linguistic objectives which were central in the language policies adopted in Central and Eastern Europe from

the end of '80s. The main goal was to achieve political control and national integration. The old Communist elite tried to maintain power by proclaiming nationalist objectives as being most important, thereby trying to pacify people with new programmes aimed at the development of national languages. National elites had already been in existence in the new emerging countries in Central and Eastern Europe. They enjoyed significant support and readily embarked on the road of undoing previous corpus planning of the past.

While the countries of Central and Eastern Europe were involved in raising the profile of their national languages and the formation of new identities by opening up a new world through the translation of literature which was not available in the Communist time, at the same time the countries of the European Union were in the process of developing further the principles of multiculturalism, equal use of all languages, access to learning foreign languages and translation services by all citizens of Europe.

Translation policy in the UK

The situation in the UK stands out from the rest of Europe. There has been considerable uncertainty about the language planning which had a direct impact on translation and interpretation in the actual professional environment and training. The situation with Translation and Interpreting in the UK could be incomplete without a brief outline of the major players on the market: the Chartered Institute of Linguists has been an assessment and awarding organisation offering Diploma in Translation and Diploma in Public Service Interpreting, while the Institute of Translators and Interpreters has been the only independent professional association of practising translators and interpreters in the United Kingdom. These and many other organisations have had an impact on the formulation of translation policy in the country.

Another organisation which is involved in shaping the translation policy in the country is the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO). This government agency upholds information rights in the public interest, promoting openness by public bodies and data privacy for individuals. It is an independent public body, which enforces the Data Protection and Freedom of Information Acts. It deals with numerous organisations, advise the public, promote good practice, investigate complaints, shape policy, commission research and enforce the law where necessary. The ICO also published their Translations Policy (2008) which covers publications and correspondence from the Information Commissioner's Office as well language interpretation for visually impaired, deaf and hearing-impaired people. The ICO also identifies six principle ethnic minority languages in the UK in which they will endeavour to translate a leaflet or other materials. The six languages are:

1. Punjabi
2. Gujarati

3. Urdu
4. Arabic
5. Classical Chinese
6. Bengali

The decision making process of the policy is very strict with regards to the choice of languages and does not allow translations into any other languages (2008: 4). It is based on UK Census of 2001 which identified Indian ethnic group as the largest in the UK - 1.1 million people or 1.8% of the population. The new Census of 2011 will hopefully introduce further changes in the selection of languages. According to Eurostat of the European Commission, 4,326,006 foreigners lived in the UK in 2010, which is the third country in the European Union according to the number of foreigners living permanently in the country after Germany and Spain. This clearly identifies the need for translation and interpreting services and procedures, especially in the domain of public services.

National Health Service (NHS) in the UK and General Medical Council guidance on Good Medical Practice states that, whenever practical, arrangements should be made to meet patients' language and communication needs (see HPA website). Health Protection Agency (HPA) is a new free online guide in the UK targeting resources for primary health care for migrants. It also helps to orient new arrivals to the UK national health system, in case they find it confusing. It even provides a section on "cultural competence and understanding."

Almost all NHS Foundation Trusts in the UK have developed their translation policies which reflect local requirements and the needs of the multilingual community. These policies are relevant to all staff working in NHS Trusts, but in particular to any member of staff working in the delivery of care services. They should ensure equality of access for service users and their carers who do not use spoken English as their first preferred language. The policies clearly state roles and responsibilities of all parties involved including the role of an interpreter. These policies also limit the use of NHS Trust staff in interpreting roles if they are not registered with an accredited provider as well as the use of carers, relatives and friends especially when individuals are under 16 years. Translation policies of NHS Trusts quite often identify the mode of interpreting, for example telephone interpreting, but also confidentiality, impartiality, issues related to conflicts of interest as well as interpreter support and feedback. Some policies are more comprehensive and some others cover only administrative issues. In almost cases the services are outsourced to translation agencies as this simplifies the work of administrators.

If the relatively recent development of policies and clear procedures can be viewed as a positive step, the outsourcing does not always work very effectively and depend on many factors. It is usually the low rates of payment for interpreting assignments which makes it difficult to attract good quality interpreters in the Health system. My research shows that approaches do vary and depend on the location of the NHS

Trust and the willingness of key players to be involved in a constructive dialogue with associations like ITI which represent interpreters and translators in the country.

In the field of Legal Translation and Interpreting there is a *National Agreement on arrangements for the use of interpreters, translators and language service professional in investigations and proceedings within the criminal justice* (2007) which provides guidance on arranging suitably qualified interpreters and language service professionals. It refers to the European Convention on Human Rights and emphasises that interpreters should be registered with the National Register for Public Service Interpreters (NRPSI) which ensures that all interpreters on the lists have satisfied the entry criteria in terms of qualifications and experience. All interpreters on NRPSI register are subject to a Code of Professional Conduct and NRPSI may investigate any alleged breaches of the Code. However, in the present circumstances of austerity measures and budget cuts the process may be reversed. The Ministry of Justice's budget was cut which may lead to the abolishment of Nations Agreement and eventual outsourcing translation and interpreting services. These actions "will place the most vulnerable members of society, non-English speakers from ethnic minorities, at a risk of becoming victims of a miscarriage of justice" (Windle 2010). The proposed undoing of translation policy of the past contradicts the EU Directive on the rights of foreign nationals to interpretation (2010) and may result in mistrials, unacceptable delays which eventually will cost UK taxpayers even more. It is also worth mentioning that it is easy to abolish something, but it will require a lot of resources to build either something new or restore the system which worked effectively before.

Languages, Translation and Interpreting in Education in the UK

The decision of the government to make languages non-compulsory at GCSE level in 2004 had a negative impact on language training at secondary and higher education and eventually led to shifts in training translators and interpreters at postgraduate level in the Higher Education (HE). The government's argument "that the decline in young people studying languages was not to be reversed by making languages compulsory, but by starting the study of languages earlier" (Worton 2009: 11) had some logic, although in view of language planning this was a language policy act which undid previous intentions of reviving foreign languages in the country.

The single policy act of 2004 which was implemented without a proper evaluation of the consequences had implications in various language planning contexts for many years to come and further actions of the government could not undo previously made decision: the position of languages has been diminishing gradually across the country despite of various government targets for schools which were generally ignored, support and the introduction of various programmes like Routes into Languages which make the right signals but do not have the same value or strength

as the government act which changed the national curriculum. This is an example of a language policy change in school education which has altered the prestige of language learning or foreign languages in the country. It has had a detrimental impact on further and higher education, employment and eventually other activities and contacts with the outside world. A recent Confederation of British Industry (CBI) report *Poor standards of English and maths among school leavers could hinder growth - CBI/EDI* (May 2011) highlighted that “weaknesses in foreign language skills have been exacerbated since the requirement to take a language at GCSE level was ended in 2004, 76% of employers are not satisfied with the level of these skills among young people. Languages are particularly important in sectors such as manufacturing and banking, finance and insurance, reflecting the globalisation of these organisations” (CBI, 2011). The report also looks at languages in demand and lists them according to their importance to employers: French (61%), German (52%), Spanish (40%), Polish (29%) and Mandarin (23%).

Since 2004 the country saw the closure of foreign languages departments across many universities. The underlying ideology has been resources or rather the lack of them – HE has been going through a significant change in funding which has affected all sides of higher education. In 2007, even the Foreign & Commonwealth Office closed its well known language school which served the Foreign Office and the entire British government in training diplomats, civil servants, interpreters and translators. This was another powerful signal for universities to act since the government did not offer any other incentives to keep foreign languages and language related subjects as it did, for example with Biomedicine, Science and Engineering.

In this challenging environment Translation and Interpreting degrees have gone through the period of uncertainty: some universities made a decision to close their Translation and Interpreting degrees, for example Bradford, and some other universities opened new degrees, for example University of Surrey. There has been an obvious demand for vocational degrees with links to professions but the main cohort of students on those courses either come from overseas or represent immigrant population of the UK. Students in Translation and Interpreting belong to numerous home cultures and reflect the cultural multi ethnicity of the population. London is a good example where over 40% of pupils in schools do not consider English as their mother tongue. It is therefore, the number of English native speakers on those courses has been relatively small due to shortcomings in foreign language training in secondary and higher education. Many native English speakers on Translation and Interpreting courses came to study back to the UK after a long period of time spent overseas. The universities also attract small numbers of English native speakers from other English speaking countries. In total they normally represent a third of the cohort on courses in Translation and Interpreting at postgraduate level.

Since 2007 the government has funded the Routes into Languages programme. The main aim of the programme has been to support the field of foreign languages as well as related areas, such as Translation and Interpretation. The programme's key achievement has been its success in establishing partnerships and collaboration within the higher education sector and between higher education institutions (HEIs) and schools across the country. The government also supported two national networks: the National Network for Interpreting (NNI) and the National Network for Translation (NNT). They were set to promote the study of foreign languages, translation and interpreting. The two networks have addressed "the key issues identified by the Routes, such as the shortage of translators and interpreters who have English as their first language, the concentration in HE provision on Western European languages, and the relatively low national profile of careers in translation and interpreting" (Salama-Car 2011:18).

It is difficult to assess the full impact of these programmes at the moment especially when HEIs go through a massive change programme in preparation for 2012 academic year. Universities currently review undergraduate and postgraduate courses they offer with a view of sustainability in a new funding environment and significant increase in student fees across the entire sector. In this process of review there have already been a few casualties and further language, translation and interpreting courses have been either deleted or brought under the umbrella of cultural studies or other subjects.

London Metropolitan University asked The Parthenon Group¹ to prepare a report about the market dynamics and implications for the course portfolio. The report looks at the market environment in the higher education in London and makes recommendations for future developments. The report analyses employability of graduates and factors considered by employers when recruiting them – please see Figure 1 below. According to their research conducted in London employers place little value on the foreign language capability of graduates or the reputation of institutions during their recruitment process. Instead, employers care about the individual being useful on day one and look at specific employability skills.

¹ The Parthenon Group provides strategic advice to CEOs and business leaders worldwide - <http://www.parthenon.com>

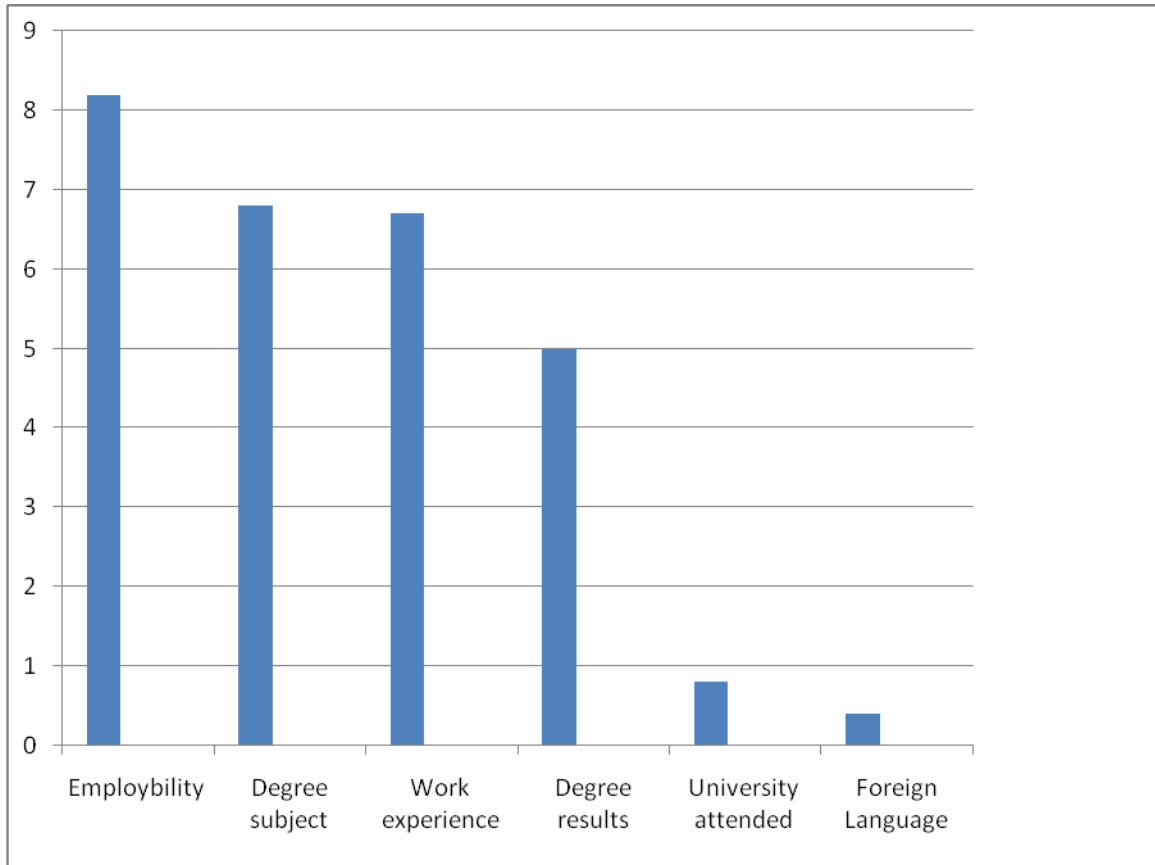


Figure 1. Most important factors considered by employers when recruiting graduates, 2011: employability skills - 82%, degree subject – 68%, relevant work experience – 67%, degree results – 50%, university attended – 8%, foreign language capability – 4%.

The analysis of employability skills and the overall student enrolments in all London universities has been considered in identifying the areas of strategic development for HEIs. As you may see in Figure 2 Languages, Literature and other language related subjects attract only six thousand students and therefore, do not represent an area of a particular interest to HE leaders in the current economic environment. This may lead to further restructuring exercises in the future and especially as a result of enrolments in 2012, which look crucial for the entire sector.

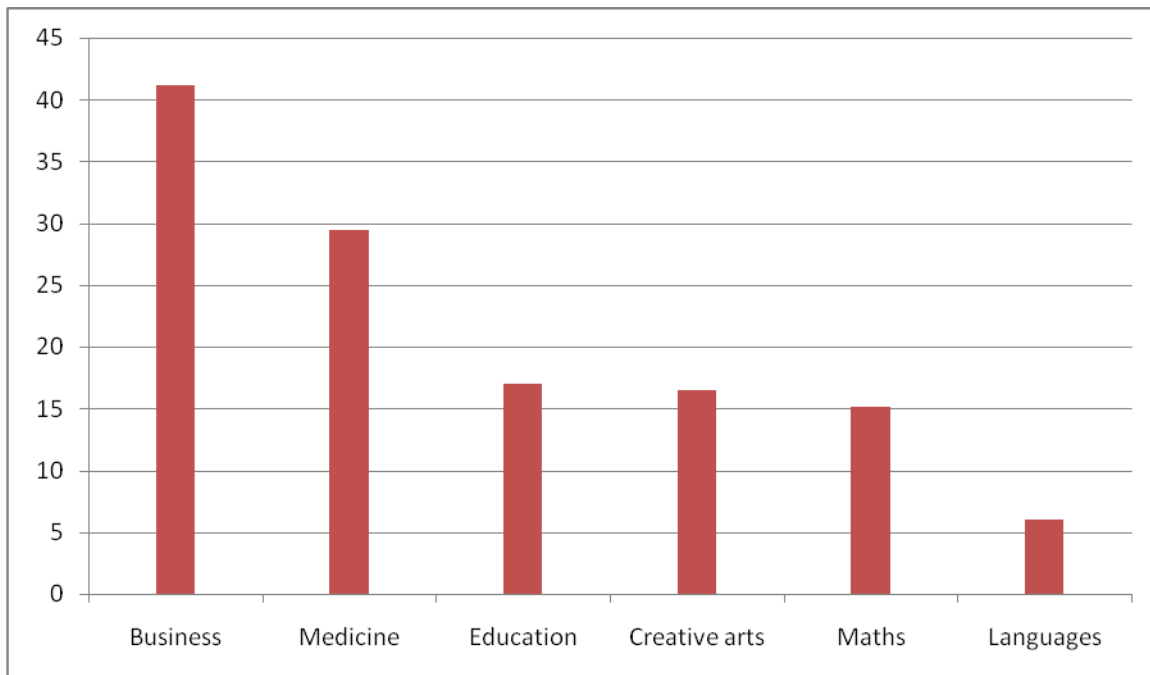


Figure 2. Market enrolments in London universities in 2009/2010.

Having analysed the data The Parthenon report suggests that universities should offer courses in which they have a strong market position and driving reputation. Although the number of business schools is high in London their market share of student population has been growing representing a good opportunity for future developments. The reviewers suggested that Business and Administrative Studies together with Social Studies have been obvious leaders at London Metropolitan University, however they were closely followed by Law, Mass Communication and subjects related to languages, such as Translation and Interpreting. The position of Translation and Interpreting subjects was reinforced by the increased enrolment as well as various external factors, for example:

- links with employers and professional organisations such as SCIC, Translation DG, UN as well as the Chartered Institute of Linguists, Institute of Translation and Interpreting;
 - new dual award agreements with some universities in Russia and China, as well as the possibility of developing franchises and other projects in some other countries.
- All these factors allowed us to increase the number of degree courses we will run in 2012 in Translation and Interpreting from 2 to 4:

BA Translation;

MA Translation;

MA Interpreting;

MA Conference Interpreting;

MA Public Service Interpreting.

The course portfolio of degree and non-degree professional courses allows us to engage more effectively with the professional community, employers and other players on the market and ensure sustainability of our programmes.

The language situation in the UK has been complex, and recent policy changes in the field of languages and translation do not provide adequate motivational structures for the development of foreign language and translation/interpreting training. On the contrary, we witness gradual decline in the number of students in foreign language training which has an adverse impact on shaping programmes in the Higher Education and language related professions due to political, social and economic reasons. The case of translation and interpreting in the UK has never been more compelling, but it should be reviewed and analysed differently in the context of the 21st century and new global agenda.

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