

Ager, Dennis, 2001. *Motivation in language planning and language policy*. Clevedon, UK: Multilingual Matters, pp vi+210. ISSN 1-85359-529-2 (hbk), 1-85359-528-4 (pbk).

Rezensiert von Gerhard Leitner, Freie Universität Berlin

Language planning, policy and implementation is a growth area and Australia is increasingly a part of it. Ager is no exception to that though Australia only covers a few pages. The book is of particular interest with its focus on the motivation behind policy and planning instead of on details on codification and the mechanisms of policy formulation. Ager proposes an ambitious theory that integrates socio-political, socio-psychological and linguistic aspects. The Introduction provides a lucid starting point that is further developed in chapters 7 to 10. A series of cases and general themes are discussed in detail in chapters 1 to 6. The overall structure shows the book's interest in theoretical issues in planning and policy. Chapter 6 deals with Australia but some of the theory is essential to an understanding of what he says about it.

The Introduction clarifies some theoretical concepts and proposes the skeleton of a theory. Thus, he distinguishes between language *planning* and *policy*, with the former being reserved for "the unofficial influence exercised by individuals and communities" (p 6) and for actions of "organized communities, united by religious, ethnic or political ties" (p 5) in relation to the ways members use their language(s), the practices in education or the codifying efforts by academies and other bodies. The term 'policy' is reserved for the *official* influence of governments. But for policy to become effective there must be planning and Ager fails to convince the reviewer of the need to make that distinction. In line with common practice, he identifies the planning of the *status*, the *corpus* (or expressions) and the acquisition of a language. *Motivation*, i.e. the reasoning that incites individuals, groups or nations to involve themselves in policy and planning, is a composite concept that consists of *goals*, *attitudes* and *motives*. Of the latter, there are identity (itself), ideology, image, insecurity, inequality, integration and instrumentality, which are connected by an *identity sequence* (p 135ff). On that he says that *organisms* are constructing (i) an identity and (ii) an image of it that is (iii) evaluated against the reality around it. The outcomes of stage (iii) determine which steps occur subsequently. There can be (iv) the promotion of a (positive) image, (v) an awareness of insecurity that needs be redressed, (vi) an inequality of resource allocation that must be rectified, (vii) a need to defend one's identity, etc. The status of the identity sequence remains unclear. Is it a temporal one? Is it a socio-psychological one? Is it mere positions on a scale that one can move (linearly?) up and down? It would seem that this would make most sense in light of the conflicting positions that can be taken by actors in planning and policy. Ager deals with three types of agents, *viz.* individuals, groups and nations, but they are seen in isolation and he is not concerned with how the transition from individual to group and on to nation works. Incidentally, it might be of interest to look at the Teun van Dijk's recent cognitive work on the transmission of ideology from a media to individuals and groups ("Opinions and ideologies in the press", in: Allan Bell, Peter Garrett, eds, *Media Discourse*. Oxford: Blackwell. 21-63). That would help bridge the argumentative gap in Ager's theory. I have omitted from this account his comments on goals/ends and attitudes—the other ingredients of motivation, though the reader can expect highly interesting analyses. It is the motives that provide the headlines to the case studies in chapters 1 to 6.

These six chapters illustrate the role of motives in various nations or in relation to certain general themes that have been addressed in planning: "The politics of identity have marked the last quarter of the twentieth century with a degree of violence and horror which is unprecedented" (2001:13). He points to former Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union, but discusses the role of identity in France, Algeria, Catalonia, India and Wales. Under the heading of ideology he looks at language and education policies in the UK, which is very useful analysis in view of the fact that Australian (and New Zealand) policies follow closely the British pattern. Germany, Japan and the European Union are subsumed under the motive of image, while insecurity—a motive close to fears and aspirations of ethnic communities—is illustrated with the Gypsies in Central Europe and the French opposition to English. Inequality divides into three levels of severity, *viz.* inequality, inequity and injustice, and is used to highlight the discrimination suffered by women, the powerless minorities in the European

Union and by ethnic groups. Gender reform, the European Charter for Regional and Minority Languages and Australia's language policies, thus, form the core of this chapter. Integration and instrumental motives are exemplified with immigrants in the USA, *lingua francas* in Africa, esp. the use of English, and a typology of individuals acquiring a new language.

Australia is dealt with from the angle of *policy* and as an instance of the motive of inequality. Its policies were, as he puts it, an attempt to rectify injustice. Explicit government policies took shape in the 1980s only, but he re-iterates briefly the periods of implicit policies from the beginning of the colony in 1788, which, as I said above, bear a close resemblance with Britain. Like Clyne, he believes that there was a practical recognition or toleration of linguistic pluralism up to World War I. But he makes the important points that practical action amounted to ignoring all languages other than English (p. 96) and that there was a shift at around World War I when those languages were explicitly banned and when policy created linguistic injustice. Ager fails to integrate that shift into his theory; though the motive that springs to mind is insecurity (cf. chapter 4). Australia, then, went through a period of soul-searching. With Britain being under the threat of a war, Australia had to stay loyal despite the fact that statehood would have required an emphasis on nation-building. A change in policy occurred in the 1980s as a part of a trend towards the acceptance of ethnic, linguistic and cultural pluralism. "Australia", he says, "was now becoming conscious of its own identity and of its differences from Britain." (p. 97); it was now less difficult to pronounce one's background. There was a climate of intellectual conflict with opposition coming from many quarters. But a strong lobby united language professionals, migrant and indigenous groups who were able to push government towards an explicit and coherent language policy. A first document by Lo Bianco (1987) put the emphasis on community needs and aspirations, social equity and linguistic rights, while the government's revision in 1991 emphasized national benefits and the catering for national needs. The motive of rectifying injustice was gradually replaced by the one of '(positive) image'—as I would see it. Ager himself says this on the predominant motives:

"They are (at least) three: concern to accept immigrant communities by giving greater recognition to their diversity...; concern to unite society by ensuring access to power, but through the use of one 'unifying' language, English; and an economic motivation aimed at ensuring that Australia's situation as part of Asia and the Pacific rim was recognised... Whether the correction of inequality and injustice was foremost in the minds of politicians is somewhat doubtful..." (p. 101)

The motive of (rectifying) injustice, which was argued for by the lobby groups, was defeated by that of ideology, *viz.* the projection of a positive image into the geo-political region, I would suggest. Ager notes that a distinction should be made between non-English migrant and Aboriginal languages. The prime motive regarding non-English migrant languages was to clarify certain rights (such as the provision of language services), while Aboriginal languages continued to be promoted to rectify an injustice. What is interesting in his account is the fact that diverse motives, held by overlapping sets of communities, brought about a unique result, *viz.* an explicit policy in an Anglophone country. It also emerges that it is doubtful whether one can or should deal with the motivation of individuals, communities and states in the same way. Individuals, it would seem, strive for a greater degree of coherence in their individual and social identity, while the state is a domain of conflictings. He also implies that it is not easy to distinguish policy from planning and between motives, goals and attitudes.

Critical comments apart, Ager's book is a worthwhile study of language policy. It develops an approach that is able to relate language policy with planning at the level of social interaction. Even if it is not specifically about Australia, Australianists can benefit from the contextualization of Australia in a general theory and the comparisons that are possible with those countries that have implicit and the few that have implicit policies.