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Educational Linguistics Approach as part of LP for Teaching -Learning Tamil in the Malaysian Multilingual context

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ABSTRACT

Tamil, a South Dravidian language is taught as a mother tongue in the Malaysian school education – primary and secondary levels. As it is taught in the Malaysian multilingual context, it has to be planned more effectively by choosing appropriate methods of language teaching blended with modern Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL) based on the innovative methods and techniques adopted for achieving required language proficiency – skill oriented and communicative competence based.

Keywords: Educational Linguistic

Introduction

Can language be planned? This question was raised by Joan Rubin and B.H. Jernudd (1972) and positively approached and explained in detail in their book on the same title published by UH, Hawaii (USA). How was it approached? And what exactly language planning? is Let us discuss:

Language has two sides (like two sides of a coin) namely, language structure (LS) and Language use (LU) which form a strong base for a well formalized and more adequate sociolinguistic description of a language. This strong base has to be strengthened and reinforced, depending upon the needs of the society and nation concerned. So, like any other planning activity undertaken in a nation, language planning also has to be deliberately attempted in order to achieve the goals such as education., mass communication (media), science and technology judiciary, culture and so on., So, language planning is a deliberate effort to formalize – develop-modernize the function and structure of a language on the one side and strengthen and improve the acquisition of languages or language varieties within a speech community on the other. It is often associated with government planning, but is also used by a variety of non-government organizations, groups or individual.

The goals of language planning differ depending on the nation or organization, but generally include making planning decision and possibly changes for the benefit of communication. Planning or improving effective communication can also lead to other social changes such as language shift or assimilation, thereby providing another motivation to plan the structure, function and acquisition of languages and use of languages as medium of instruction.

Language engineering involves the creation of natural language processing system whose cost and outputs are measurable and predictable as well as establishment of language regulators, such as formal or informal agencies, committees, societies or academies as language regulators to design or develop new structures to meet contemporary needs. It is a distinct field contrasted to natural language processing and computational linguistics. A recent trend of language engineering is the use of Semantic Web technologies for the

creation, archival, processing, and retrieval of machine processable language data for different purposes.

Language is a typically human phenomenon. In moving from the ‘natural being’ of animal existence to the ‘cultural being’ of human existence, language plays the decisive role. Language gives a sense of identity to an individual as well as social group and, in the process, creates multiple identities. The maintenance, merger, clash and change in identities based on and reflected in the language change has prompted linguists, philosophers, psychologists, sociologists, anthropologists and political scientists to study language in its multifarious dimensions. Since economic and societal planning have to, of necessity, take into account the context of planning, there is no wonder that worldwide attention has been drawn towards language planning now.

Language is an asset and primary instrument of human communication. However, language can become a problem and a barrier to communication, sometimes symbolically so, under condition of multiplicity of ethnic groups, languages, dialects, styles, registers and scripts. These conditions may lead to one or more of the following situations which necessitate language planning:

- i. Mutually unintelligible languages, dialects or scripts competing for supremacy of dominance.
- ii. Mutually intelligible languages, dialects or scripts.
 - a. Threatening mutual identity,
 - b. With mutually unfavorable attitudes.
- iii. Existence of diglossia, triglossia or multiglossia.
- iv. Existence of languages with dominant/minority relationship with a national frontier.
- v. Social variables correlating with language use and creating communication zones.
- vi. Official action in recognizing official languages, distributing patronages for development of languages which may even have the remote implication of displacing of distributing in reality or symbolically, the existing domains of language use.
- vii. Language used by politicized elite to retain their elitist privileges by restricting language use in education, administration and mass media.
- viii. Creation of creoles, pidgins (lang. hybridization)

Need for LP

There is an urgent need for serious attention to language planning in a multilingual country like India. The following examples are illustrative of situations which demand the attention of educationists and planners to the crucial importance of language in society.

1. Language Teaching – Learning process
2. Educational Linguistics: Educational Technology

Language Planning Goals

1. Eleven Language Planning Goals have been recognized (Nahor, 2003):
2. Language Purification – Prescriptions of usage in order to preserve the “linguistic purity” of language, protect language from foreign influences, and guard against language deviation from within
3. Language Revival – the attempt to turn a language with few or no surviving native speakers back into a normal means of communication.
4. Language Reform – deliberate change in specific aspects of language, like orthography, spelling or grammar, in order to facilitate use.

5. Language standardization – the attempt to garner prestige for a regional language or dialect, transformation into one that is accepted as the major language, or standard language, of a region
6. Language Spread – the attempt to increase the number of speakers of one language at the expense of another
7. Lexical Modernization – word creation or adaptation
8. Terminology Unification and standardization – development of unified terminologies, primarily in technical domains
9. Stylistic Simplification - simplification of language usage in lexicon, grammar, and style. This includes modifying the use of language in social and formal contexts.
10. Interlingual Communication – facilitation of linguistic communication between members of distinct speech communities
11. Language Maintenance – preservation of the use of a group's native language as a first or second

Types of Language Planning

Language planning has been divided into three types:

Status planning. Status planning is the allocation or reallocation of a language or variety to functional domains within a society, thus affecting the status or standing of a language

Language status. Language status is a concept distinct from, though intertwined with, language prestige and language function. Strictly speaking, language status is the position or standing of a language vis-à-vis other languages. A language garners status according to the fulfillment of four attributes, described in the same year, 1968, by two different authors, Heinz Kloss and William Stewart. Both Kloss and Stewart's respective framework differ slightly, where they emphasize four common attributes:

1. Language origin – whether a given is indigenous or imported to the speech community
2. Degree of standardization – the extent of development of a formal set of norms that define 'correct' usage
3. Judicial status: sole, joint, regional, promoted
4. Vitality

Robert Cooper, in reviewing Stewart's list, makes several additions. First, he creates three sub-types of official functions: statutory, working, and symbolic. A statutory language is a language that a government has declared official by law. A working language is a language that a government uses as a medium for daily activities, and a symbolic language is a language that is merely a symbol of the state. Cooper also adds functional domains to Stewart's list: mass media and work.

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2 Corpus planning

Corpus planning refers to the prescriptive intervention in the forms of a language, whereby planning decisions are made to engineer changes in the structure of the language. Corpus planning activities often arise as the result of beliefs about the adequacy of the form

of a language to serve the desired functions. Unlike status planning, which is primarily undertaken by administrators and politicians, corpus planning generally involves planners with greater linguistic expertise. There are three traditionally recognized types of corpus planning: graphization, standardization, and modernization.

2.1. Graphization

Graphization refers to development, selection and modification of scripts and orthographic conventions for a language.

2.2. Standardization process

2.3. Process of modernization

2.4. Simplification and Elaboration (wherever needed)

2.5. Acquisition planning

(LTLM)

Corpus planning is more a data oriented activity-processing, analyzing, synthesizing, describing, contrasting, comparing, indexing, translating, parsing etc.

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Applied Sociolinguistics

Sociolinguistic Theories (Language structure)

- related to sociolinguistic description of language / speech variety.....
- related to sociolinguistic variation in structure – social stratification of language – variationist models
- study of casual vs. careful speech styles in use.

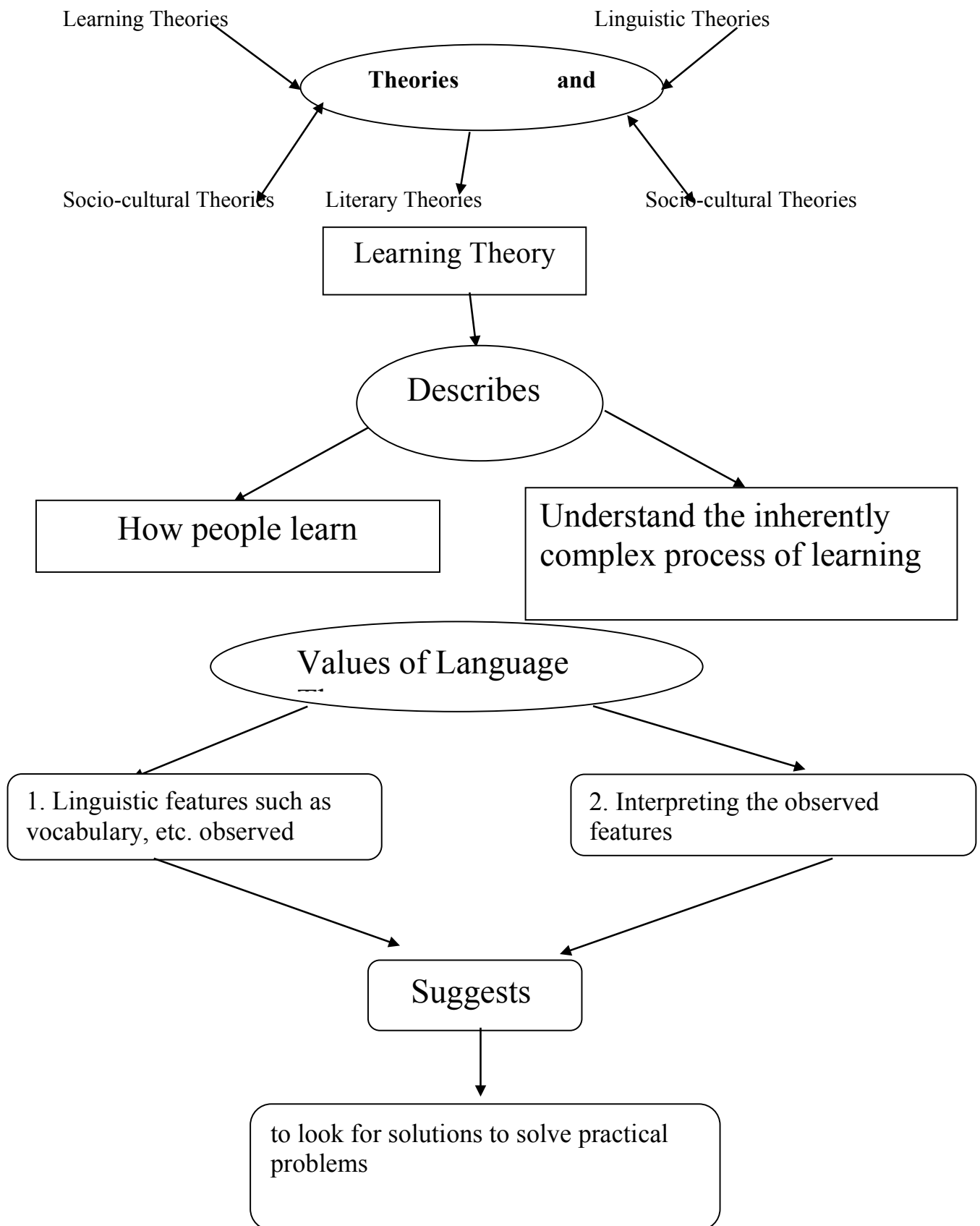
Sociolinguistic Theories (Language use)

- Language in society
- Language and culture
- Language and context
- Language and communication
- Language and nation

Sociolinguistic Theories: (Language Planning)

- Status Planning

- Corpus Planning
- Allocation (including choice) of languages / varieties for use in domains



LANGUAGE USE

1. From the point of view of **COMMUNICATION**
2. From the point of view of **CONTEXT / SITUATION**
3. From the point of view of **LANGUAGE / USAGES**
4. From the point of view of **VERBAL-SPEECH ACTS-CONVERSATIONAL - FUNCTIONAL**
5. From the point of view of **ATTITUDES**
6. Others
7. From the point of view of **COMMUNICATION**
 - Language as a communication system
 - Language as used in communication - interpersonal communication
 - Textual communication
 - Effective use of language in communication
 - Understanding and interpreting communication
 - Correlation of codes / inferences in human communication
8. From the point of view of **CONTEXT / SITUATION**
9. Study of utterance meaning in situations (lexical)
10. Study of meaning in relation to speech acts
11. Study of meaning in a context
12. Study of language use in social context
13. Study of conveyed (intended) meanings vs. basic meaning
14. Study of context of utterances
15. Context – utterance correlation
16. Study of language and context rel. for understanding
17. Study of linguistic features used in special meanings (particular situation)
18. . From the point of view of **LANGUAGE / USAGES**
 - Study of language use
 - Study of language usage
 - Study of language use (as distinct from study of language itself)
 - Study of language use (no connection with language structure)
 - Performance principle of language use
 - Inter- relation between Language structure and Language use
 - Study of principles of language use
19. From the point of view of **VERBAL-SPEECH ACTS-CONVER-FUNCTIONAL**
 - Rapprochement between Grammar and Rhetoric
 - Relates Grammar and Pragmatic Ref.
 - Study of Meaning w.r.t. Speech Act, Verbal Act, Conversation
 - From a Functional perspective
 - From the point of view of domains of use: speech acts etc.
20. From the point of view of **ATTITUDES**
 - Study w.r.t. Attitudes of producers
 - Reviewers
 - Situations
 - Contexts etc.
21. Others
22. Study w.r.t. Domains of
 - ‘Plans’ and ‘Goals’
 - ‘Functions’ and ‘Goals’

Need for Language Planning with reference to Tamil Teaching-Learning

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2. Educational Linguistics: Educational Technology
3. Use of Language and material production for different levels.

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