Community-BASED LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT: The role of Community ACTION in Achieving Sustainable Development

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Overview

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Introduction

- Community-based language development identifies local speech communities as the initiators, designers, and implementers of their own language development efforts.

- Communities can only fulfill that role if they have adequate *awareness* and *perspectives* on the status of their language and identity, as well as on the options and possibilities for language development including the costs of pursuing those options.

- The Sustainable Use Model provides a coherent model for understanding the dynamics of language and identity maintenance.
Sustainable Use Model

• an effort to provide a comprehensive and coherent framework that will assist local communities in planning their own language development

• community-based language development should be the result of local analysis and decision-making

• “local communities must concern themselves with the preservation and transmission of knowledge that is, for them, crucial to their way of life” (Lewis & Simons, in press: 2)
Sustainable Use Model

The SUM begins with the notion of knowledge management rather than with language management. It involves a process of identifying those bodies of life-crucial knowledge which need to be transmitted from one generation to the next in order to maintain the heritage of the community. From there leads to consideration of how that knowledge can best be passed on, in which language(s) and by which modalities (oral, written, digital, all of the above).
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EGIDS 4 Sustainable Literacy
EGIDS 6a Sustainable Orality
EGIDS 9 Sustainable Identity
EGIDS 10 Sustainable History
FAMED Conditions

- Functions
- Acquisition
- Motivation
- Environment
- Differentiation
The SUM Process

- Identify the speech community
- Identify life-crucial bodies of knowledge
- Identify current status using EGIDS
- Identify the desired Sustainable Level of Use
- Analyze the situation in more detail (FAMED)
- Identify priority development activities
Building Capacity

• **LANGUAGE CAPACITY**: The capacity of the languages within the linguistic repertoire of each community to meet that community’s needs.

• **COMMUNITY CAPACITY**: The capacity of a community to achieve their language development goals.

• **INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY**: The capacity of external and internal agencies to assist the community in developing their community and language capacities.
Language Capacity

- The language is developed enough that it can be used to transmit appropriately and sustainably all of the bodies of knowledge that a community considers to be “life crucial” (Functions).

- The community can sustainably acquire the knowledge and skills it needs to use the language for those Functions (Acquisition).

- Appropriate “modalities”--oral, written, digital, or some combination--are developed to serve the Functions assigned.
Community Capacity

- Knowledge and tools to identify life crucial bodies of knowledge
- Knowledge and tools to evaluate current level of language use
- Knowledge and tools to identify desired sustainable level of use
- Knowledge and tools to address FAMED conditions (Motivation, Environment, and Differentiation in particular)
- Local infrastructure to carry out the process
- Capacity to discover and recruit resources to support the process
Institutional Capacity

- the ability of those institutions and agencies (including local community agencies) to provide the needed assistance within their area of expertise, e.g.
  - corps of adequately trained personnel
  - sufficient resources (human, financial, material) to meet commitments and needs
  - technologies that are appropriate to the tasks and the contexts
Language development is multidisciplinary:

- **Applied linguists** focus on language capacity. (Functions, Differentiation, Modalities),

- **Development specialists** focus on community organization, participation, and capacity building. (Acquisition, Motivation, Environment)

- **Strategic planning specialists** focus on institutional capacity. (Resourcing, Sustainability)

- All three perspectives need to be considered.
Conclusions

• MTB-MLE can be thought of as a language development process by which more and more Functions are associated with a language, increasing the capacity of the language.

• MTB-MLE development also builds the capacity of the community by creating a more elaborate educational infrastructure (teachers, materials, curricula, etc.)

• MTB-MLE should build the capacity of stakeholders and partner agencies as they develop their own human and material resources to support the implementation of MTB-MLE

• Though designed to focus on non-dominant language maintenance and development, the same analysis can be applied to dominant L2s in a speech community.
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THANK YOU

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