

# **LANGUAGE POLICY, SYMBOLIC POWER AND THE DEMOCRATIC RESPONSIBILITY OF THE POST- APARTHEID UNIVERSITY**

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We meet at an ominous moment. At the dawn of the 21st century C. E., the world is once again facing the very real danger of a world war, a war, moreover, in which the likelihood of the deployment of nuclear arms by the belligerents cannot be excluded. Like most thinking people all over the world, we have all probably spent sleepless nights wondering why this has happened. Most of us have thought about the terrifying fate awaiting our children and our grandchildren. The dream of a world in which peace and prosperity would prevail, that vision springing directly from the hearts of every new generation appears to have receded even further into the mists of fantasy. As in all wars of aggression, the responsibility of those who declare them is enormous. Besides the carnage and the insane destruction of material structures and goods, the collateral brutalisation of all who are even remotely touched by the events sends humanity back to square one every time.

At a moment such as this, enlightened South Africans should ask themselves why we should even pretend to be in favour of such a "war", even if it is supposed to be waged against the revolutionary delusions of terrorism and against those states which knowingly harbour such desperadoes. All of us, I am sure, oppose all acts of terror directed against unsuspecting civilians, men, women and children. Ways of preventing acts of desperation such as those that were indelibly imprinted onto the memories of this generation by the incessant repetition of the televised "live" explosions and implosions, have to be found in the longer term policies of those states which have become the targets of such terrorist strategies. It is, after all, really the case that the decisive question in this event taken as a whole, is why people have been driven to such suicidal and homicidal tactics. That is the question which every adult person on the planet should be trying to find the answers to urgently, unless we are willing to allow humanity to slide into nuclear extinction by default. In the short term, however, we cannot support a war against peoples who are victims of circumstances and who, like so many other waves of refugees, are now forced to flee and to eat the bitter bread of exile. This is, to put it mildly, no solution at all. Indeed, the risk of what people have called the "third world war" turning into a war against the "third world" is not only a real possibility; for many people in the economic South of the world, this is exactly what is being planned in a scenario where life seems to be imitating sociology and Samuel Huntington's nightmarish predictions have become our reality.

Freedom at a moment when we are threatened by a spiral of crusade and counter jihad is indeed academic. Unless we situate our discussion within the context of how we in this particular corner of the globe can contribute towards the realisation of a world in which the desire for peace and equity shall have become the normal disposition of all but the incurably psychopathic, it would seem to be an exercise in self-indulgence to be speaking about a subject such as academic freedom. I hasten to say, therefore, that that is not what I intend to do. Although I cannot but spend a few minutes on that subject given the nature of the occasion and given the recent and possibly continuing acrimonious debates on the matter at

this university, I believe that occasions such as this are meant to provide a platform for addressing significant, preferably controversial and unpopular, issues of national and international concern. If, therefore, I appear to be swimming against the current, I do so in the hope that what I have to say might turn out to be in the best interests of the people of this country, especially of the urban and the rural poor.

### **Academic freedom in the era of globalisation**

So, let us begin with academic freedom. Recent articles by John Higgins (1999) and André du Toit (2000), both of the University of Cape Town and a forthcoming article by Roger Southall and Julian Cobbing have contextualised the discussion of this perennial question in both time and place. Du Toit, in particular, has put the cat among the pigeons by querying the relevance in the era of globalisation and the corporatisation of institutions of higher learning, of the classic liberal interpretation of the T.B. Davie formula deriving from the 1950s, i.e., the freedom of "the university" to decide whom to teach, what to teach, how to teach and who should teach. The gist of his argument is that the danger no longer comes from outside the walls of the university, in the guise of the racist apartheid state, for instance. Instead, the threat comes from inside the institutions themselves as the result of the so-called managerial revolution, which is a manifestation of the shift of power from the *collegium academicum* to the administrative officials, since the curricular and pedagogical, i.e., academic, freedom of the lecturing and research staff is thereby put at risk. He maintains that the manner in which Higgins and others have addressed the question is anachronistic in that the political terrain and the institutional dynamics in which universities operate in post-apartheid South Africa are light years removed from the apartheid university. At the very least, one-quarter of the composite formula, that which refers to "whom to teach" has been rendered irrelevant, since there is no longer any barrier to access to tertiary education, besides those that operate in any "normal" capitalist democracy.

Du Toit takes a calculatedly cautious view of the disguised enemy of academic freedom, the Trojan horse that has been introduced into the vice-chancellories and registries of the universities and somewhat earlier already into those of the technikons. His position is a cold-bloodedly realistic one. Universities, he argues, like most other parastatal institutions anywhere in the world today, cannot escape the logic of globalisation, which is driven by the needs and the interests of transnational corporations, the latest model of the engine that drives capital accumulation. Whether we like it or not, principals and registrars of universities will have to become more accountable to those who provide the funding for programmes and projects. These sources are increasingly corporate in nature, since transnational capital has displaced the nation state as the *raison d'être* of the university and of most other significant social and economic institutions. In the words of Masao Miyoshi (1998:263),

.... (Whatever) remained in support of the coherence of the nation- state during the cold war lost its rationale and efficacy at its demise in 1989. Global corporate operations now subordinate state functions, and in the name of competition, productivity, and freedom, public space is being markedly reduced. And the university that was at times capable of independent criticism of corporate and state policies is increasingly less concerned with maintaining such a neutral position. The function of the university is being transformed from state apologetics to industrial management - not a fundamental or abrupt change perhaps, but still an unmistakably radical reduction of its public and critical role.

This is the spirit in which du Toit approaches the subject. It is, indeed the spirit in which most academic staff at universities are approaching the matter. They have come to swallow the bitter pill of realisation that we live in the era of "the market university", "... where knowledge generated in higher education is increasingly used (and valued) for commercial purposes" (Cooper 1997:26, cited in du Toit 2000:112). However, du Toit has the courage to pose some of the questions that challenge the complacency of the academy. In particular, he exposes the fact that the era is gone during which university academics were permitted to cut themselves off from the real world, which their endeavours were supposed to serve in the final analysis, whether they were aware of it or not. To put the matter differently, if somewhat starkly: the corporatisation of the university has foregrounded the fact that the university has a social responsibility, i.e., it is accountable not only to the collegium but also to various constituencies beyond its walls. The moat that secured the university from outside interference has been filled up by capitalist development and the inmates have to soil their feet by venturing outside beyond their comfort zones in order to address issues of immediate and ongoing concern to the people out there. I doubt that there are many who would not agree that this is most welcome. However, the answer to the question of who the constituencies are and what power they have to influence what goes on inside the walls, is crucial. This mostly inarticulate question is the reason for the turmoil and the angst that has gripped university establishments all over the world. In our own country, the matter is contrapuntally underscored by the contingency of affirmative action strategies in favour of black, female and disabled staff, necessitated by the peculiar transition to a bourgeois democratic dispensation from the illusory certainties of the apartheid state.

Not surprisingly, those who have discussed the issue recently have been most concerned about the "clash of cultures" inherent in the confrontation between the previous dispensation driven by collegial self-management and the emerging situation in which administrators and fundraisers call the shots. To quote Miyoshi (1998:267) again:

Higher education is now up to the administrators. And sooner or later, research, too, will be up to the administrators. Of course, we know that the administrators are merely in the service of the managers of society and the economy, who exercise their supreme authority vested in the transnational corporate world.

However crude this opinion might appear, it resonates in the more measured tones of André du Toit (2000:129) when he concludes that

The key issue for the current practice of academic freedom is how to define and strengthen internal accountability, bearing in mind the growing pressures for forms of external accountability. (Italics in the original)

This debate will, clearly, continue for some time in the future. Paradigm shifts are never easy. But let me conclude these introductory remarks by returning to the 11th of September. Whatever else the destruction of the World Trade Centre and the attack on the Pentagon will give rise to, there can be no doubt that its economic consequences will lead to the albeit temporary ditching of the neo-liberal economic orthodoxy. As soon as the strategists in the North (previously referred to as "the West") noticed that the recession is going to have destabilising effects in all of Europe and North America, they moved to set in place state interventionist financial market measures such as lowering the interest rate in order to stimulate borrowing for purposes of investment in productive enterprises and postponing "essential" privatisation of state-owned corporations. Except for our own Governor of the

Reserve Bank, every other finance boffin in the world has called for immediate and massive state regulation of capital flows and financial markets. While it is difficult to be specific at this stage, it is clear that the routine link we have been taking for granted between so-called globalisation and the neo-liberal economic orthodoxy is, albeit temporarily as a kind of war measure, about to be broken. This is bound to have a significant influence on the way in which universities, among other institutions, will be funded and managed tomorrow. At the very least, universities will have to ask themselves which constituencies they can and should prioritise. In the light of these unexpected, trend-breaking developments, it is clear, if it ever needed proof, that it is not in fact true - as du Toit seems to imply - that there is no alternative to the servitude imposed by the transnational corporations.

### **Changing the software**

In the South African context, the focus on the issue of who shall be taught and the related question about who should do the teaching, is understandable, even if it does point to a rather parochial horizon. This question and most of the others that have been raised explicitly or implicitly in the course of the size and shape exercise, such as whether or not there will be redundancies, whether or not the HBUs are going to be condemned to death by merger and whether or not there are sufficient funds to give each student who needs it, a grant or a loan, all of these and many others deal with what we might call the hardware of the system. As such, they are obviously of extreme importance. However, there are questions concerning the systemic software which, because they tend to be avoided, will come back to haunt us in the not so distant future, unless we begin to address them directly and without regard to where they lead us.

It is on this neglected area that I want to focus. I want to use this opportunity to put the spotlight on the how to teach element of the four questions which constitute the T.B. Davie formula. It is the one question which is never interrogated, yet it is in some ways perhaps the most important of the four. I am not in this context concerned with logistical and delivery issues in the narrower sense. The point I want to focus on goes to the very heart of all learning, i.e., the language of tuition. The extent to which South African intellectuals have chosen to close their eyes to the significance of this question is truly incomprehensible, given the fact that anyone who is endowed with even a modicum of pedagogical imagination knows that there is an indisputable causal link between the mediocrity of South African intellectual performance, generally speaking, and the language, or languages, of tuition in our educational institutions.

For those who are determined not to understand the potential social dangers inherent in this question, it might not suffice to point to the fact that the language of teaching was the proximate cause of the Soweto uprising which, as we now know, heralded the end of apartheid as a political system. The imposition of Afrikaans as a language of teaching on senior primary and junior secondary classes by the ideologues of Bantu Education in the mid-1970s was, after all, not a "university" issue. It is, perhaps, helpful, therefore, to point out that in the current civil war in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, the demand for an Albanian language university and for the recognition of the Albanian language as an official language of the state are two of the the three central demands of the so-called ethnic Albanian minority (see Kola 2001). Nearer to home, it should be noted that in the Maghreb, especially in Algeria, the struggles of the Berber communities are centrally driven by their passionate desire to have their language(s) officialised (see Saleh 2001). A parallel struggle is looming in Ethiopia around the recognition and promotion of the Oromo language and others (see

Bulcha 1998). More ominous still is the fact that a similar sentiment is gathering support among increasing numbers of Afrikaans-speaking people in this country. I should stress that as yet, we are dealing with a sentiment, not a movement. However, as Giliomee and Schlemmer (2001:129) warn, all those naively trusting young Afrikaans-speaking South Africans who believe that their linguistic human rights are constitutionally guaranteed but who are uninformed as to what is actually happening in respect of language policy in the public sector, may well wake up one day to find that they have been caught napping. The authors go so far as to make the ominous prediction that "(hul) saak kan uiteindelik op verbittering en op 'n verdraagde taalstryd uitloop". The recommendations, as reported in the press (see Giliomee 2001), of the Gerwel Committee, established by Minister Asmal to investigate the question of Afrikaans as a language of tuition at South African universities, give some hope that a pre-emptive approach consistent with the constitutional obligation to promote multilingualism and to observe the language rights of all speech communities in this country, will guide government in this matter.

Why am I raising this issue in the context of an academic freedom lecture? The answer is astoundingly simple. If I am unable to express myself fluently in the only legitimate language on any campus in this country, my freedom of speech and *a fortiori* my academic freedom are literally curtailed. Simple as it is, the answer raises extremely complex questions, which involve a radical reorientation of the educational system of this country. If we take as our point of departure the proposition that the academic requirements and practices of universities, because of the social prestige of these institutions, have a decisive backwash effect on all pre-university education, we will understand that the ramifications of any change in the approach to the language of tuition at the universities are necessarily systemic in nature. To put the matter beyond all doubt: the core issue is that we have to begin to work out the implications at every level of the educational system of the need in this country to rehabilitate mother-tongue, i.e., first-language medium education in the school system. To put the issue in even bolder relief: we have to consider the implications of changing the language medium basis of the educational system from a second or, for most South Africans a foreign, language to a first language or a mother tongue. The fact that seven years into the new democratic, post-apartheid period we have not done so is an indictment in the first instance on the foresight and the sense of social responsibility of the tertiary educational sector. South African educators have to realise that the time has come to lay to rest the ghost of Dr Verwoerd and to lead South African education back into the mainstream of global education. One of the preconditions for doing this is to rehabilitate what, for the sake of convenience, we can loosely call mother-tongue education as not only a valid pedagogical principle but even as indispensable to teaching and learning, an educational approach which is universally accepted as being the most effective.

The misguided rejection of this principle and this approach to education by what used to be thought of as a very large number of South African parents and teachers is the single most disastrous legacy of apartheid and colonialism with which we have to grapple in post-apartheid South Africa. That it is a political hot potato is more than obvious. But, equally obviously, unless we tackle the issue aggressively, we are dooming countless generations of South Africans, especially black South African youth, to a destiny of mediocrity and failure. For, we cannot repeat often enough the paradoxical fact that the only children in South Africa who are the beneficiaries of mother-tongue education from the cradle to the university are first language speakers of English and many first-language speakers of Afrikaans. And every single year the results show up in the Matriculation examination results as well as in the disastrous drop-out rates which render most of our learners functionally illiterate. If nothing

else, the economic costs of the system manifest in the billions of Rands wasted annually in paying teachers to produce a 50% failure rate (using criteria which are pathetically low by any standard) should give us pause to reconsider the issue. Add to this, the social costs in escalating alienation, crime and violence and we know that we have to prioritise this issue and the related educational and socio-economic issues as a matter of dire necessity. In order for us to assess this adequately, it is necessary that we undertake a brief digression into the field of the sociology of language.

### **Symbolic power and the linguistic market**

The French sociologist, Pierre Bourdieu, has for some three decades now been clearing away the cobwebs that encumber our understanding of the relationship between language policy, language use and political, economic and social power. In order for us to appreciate the essential point that language policy and language practices in institutions such as universities inevitably either reinforce or counter societal tendencies towards the unequal distribution of resources, opportunities and life chances, it is appropriate that I summarise some of the relevant insights from the work of Bourdieu and his school.

To begin with, Bourdieu's notion of "symbolic power" is similar to the Gramscian concept of hegemony. The term refers not so much to a specific form of power but to an aspect of most forms of power. It is an invisible power that suffuses all spheres of social life in such a manner that the very people who are subjected by it are actively complicit in their subjection. In the words of John Thompson (1994:23), one of the scholars who have popularised Bourdieu's work in the English-speaking world:

Dominated individuals are not passive bodies to which symbolic power is applied, as it were, like a scalpel to a corpse. Rather, symbolic power requires, as a condition of its success, that those subjected to it believe in the legitimacy of power and the legitimacy of those who wield it.

The second decisive concept is that of "the linguistic market". As in the case of economic markets and to a large extent coterminously with their evolution, linguistic markets come about as the result of historically determined interaction between peoples who speak different dialects or languages. In the course of struggles, marked by the peculiarities of each individual social formation, one or other dialect, variety or language becomes dominant in such a manner that its native speakers are thereby advantaged over others. This hierarchy of languages or speech varieties apportions differential value to each of the varieties concerned. Those who have acquired competence in what comes to be viewed as the "legitimate language" are said to possess a larger measure of "linguistic capital" than those who lack such competence.

On a given linguistic market, some products are valued more highly than others; and part of the practical competence of speakers is to know how, and to be able, to produce expressions which are highly valued on the markets concerned.... (D)ifferent speakers possess different quantities of "linguistic capital" - that is, the capacity to produce expressions *à propos*, for a particular market.... The more linguistic capital that speakers possess, the more they are able to exploit the system of differences to their advantage and thereby secure a profit of distinction.... (Thompson 1994:18. Italics in the original).

Crucial to the understanding of how this market subjugates the speakers of language varieties other than the legitimate one(s) is the process by which speakers exercise self-censorship, a fact which arises from their completely rational assessment of what counts in the market concerned. It is this complicity in their own subjugation which is the greatest obstacle to any attempt to change the conditions ruling on any particular linguistic market. In order to do so - and any society involved in a process of radical social transformation has to do so - what Bourdieu calls the "linguistic habitus" has to change. This is a similar process to that which Ngugi wa Thiong'o, writing in the post-colonial and neo-colonial context, dubbed "the decolonisation of the mind". Thompson's (1994:17) definition of the linguistic habitus is most illuminating for the purposes of this address:

The linguistic habitus is a sub-set of the dispositions which comprise the habitus: it is that sub-set of dispositions acquired in the course of learning to speak in particular contexts (the family, the peer group, the school, etc.). These dispositions govern both the subsequent linguistic practices of an agent and the anticipation of the value that linguistic products will receive in other fields or markets - in the labour market, for example, or in the institutions of secondary or tertiary education.

This might be considered by some to be a long-winded way of making the simple point which Ngugi (1994:5) made so eloquently many years ago in his celebrated and passionate essay on "The language of African literature", i.e., that the African intelligentsia "...(e) ven at their most radical and pro-African position in their sentiments and articulation of problems... still took it as axiomatic that the renaissance of African cultures lay in the languages of Europe". For that is indeed what we are speaking about here: the hegemony of the languages of Europe, in our case English, on the African continent. It is important, however, to realise that what we are experiencing as one of the most dastardly consequences of colonial conquest and the subjugation of the peoples of the so-called third world is merely a special case of a general phenomenon. That realisation is the great value of the investigations of Bourdieu and his students, since it also points to the magnitude of the task that awaits those of us for whom the so-called African renaissance, the hoped-for revival of the creative energy of the people of the continent, is more than a rhetoric of convenience and of a dubious diplomacy. In this task, the universities have a crucial role to play.

### **The responsibility of the universities**

Bourdieu's problematic assists us in understanding the ways in which language practices and the language policies of states constitute vital connectors between the system of production and the system of social reproduction. It is completely logical, therefore, that the educational institutions, in Althusserian terminology one of the main ideological state apparatuses, should be singled out as the decisive agencies in shaping the linguistic market in any modern capitalist state. It is unnecessary in the present context to belabour this point. Suffice it to say that every member of a university ought to make the effort to understand, besides the manner in which his or her own speciality is transmitted to the next generation, how the particular vocabulary and, *a fortiori*, the language in which that vocabulary is embedded installs, as it were, a particular software into the minds of the students. Given what we understand today of the relationship between the language(s) of tuition and the empowerment of the elite by means of university and other tertiary education, it is essential that, as far as possible university teachers do a course in the sociology of language. This would have the effect of making every such professional aware of the enormous responsibility each of us carries

simply because we teach in a particular language or register of a language, all of which we take as self-evident.

This is not a simple matter of effective pedagogy. It is much more than that, since it involves the very character of the system of reproduction, i.e., whether it is meant to replicate generation after generation the same inequities, or whether it is calculated to flatten these out. In the final analysis, the question is about the definition and the consolidation of a democratic society, i.e., one in which all citizens have not only equal rights on paper but the equal opportunity of exercising their rights. Put differently, I am suggesting that the university has to re-examine its essentially elitist character not in order to generate some populist illusion about a "people's university" but in order to use its resources and privileges for the empowerment of the urban and the rural poor. In another era, we would have said that what is called for is that the collegium should commit some kind of class suicide, not because this is the noble thing to do but because it is the only way in which the democratic responsibility of the university in a state engaged in a process of radical social transformation can be fulfilled. This implies, if I need to spell it out, a very different agenda from that which is being forced on the universities by the transnational corporations in most countries of the world.

### **A practical programme**

What, concretely, should and can universities do in respect of addressing the language question in the spirit of an African revival and the broadening and deepening of a democratic post-apartheid society? My colleagues and I at the Project for the Study of Alternative Education in South Africa (PRAESA), which is based in the University of Cape Town, have outlined and in some cases spelled out in detail what has to be done. I note with a feeling of optimism that a growing number of language professionals and language practitioners, individually and as teams, have been doing similar work in different parts of the country and that the lobby for a consistently democratic language policy in South Africa is acquiring a voice that can no longer be ignored. Here, I wish to repeat in programmatic form the most urgent tasks, as we see them.

To begin with, we have to take it as our point of departure that South Africa is a multilingual society in Africa. It is not simply a variant of an English-speaking society. This means that in the longer term, as far as languages are concerned, the indigenous African languages will become the most important means of communication in everyday life. Today already, they are dominant in some sectors, such as the radio, even though they are not yet acknowledged as such by the advertising industry largely because of a kind of prejudiced inertia and lack of creative insight but also because the relevant listeners' purchasing power is considered not to be significant as yet. The direct task emanating from this realisation is that we have to begin to change the manner in which most South Africans, including first-language speakers, see these languages. Instead of being complicit in cementing them in their lowly status in this country, it ought to be the endeavour of those who are able on the basis of comparative historical and sociological research to discern in which direction things are bound to develop, to promote proactive strategies which will save this country decades and even generations of unnecessary economic stagnation and social dissensus. For, let us make no mistake about it: even though it is not possible in this address to quantify the degree of wastage in our economy, which is the direct result of the neo-apartheid language policy we are currently implementing by default, sooner or later, those of us who are engaged in this research will be able to demonstrate for even the last of the doubting Thomases that only a consistently

democratic language policy can help us to break out of the secular tendency towards economic stagnation and social regression in which we appear to be trapped.

The concrete programmes and projects ranging from, among many other things, language audits in all provinces through language profiles in all institutions and firms, awareness-raising campaigns which will raise the visibility and the esteem of the African languages, training programmes in mother tongue education and various types of bilingual or multilingual education, the stimulation and promotion of a culture of reading in African languages with special emphasis on early literacy learning, incentives for producing creative and scientific writing in those languages, to the need to support print and electronic media : in short, a comprehensive language planning and policy development programme at all levels, national, provincial and local, are implied by what I am putting forward here. This is no less than the initiation, establishment and consolidation of a language industry, together with all that it implies in terms of the export of linguistic products to other parts of Africa and to the rest of the world. We have to counter the disingenuous arguments based on empiricist research methods and surveys which allegedly demonstrate "conclusively" that black people are quite happy to use their languages in private and in low-status functions. That many of them are trapped in what I have called a "static maintenance syndrome" (see Alexander 2000), is undoubtedly true. But, this is no more than an implicit acknowledgement that the colonised mind is still with us. It is precisely the task of the university community which ought to understand the drastic consequences of forcing an entire nation to operate on virtually all significant socio-economic and socio-political levels in a second or third language, to give the leadership which the historical moment in a sense imposes on them.

As with all long-term planning, compensatory or band-aid projects and even programmes have got to be undertaken while the long-term trend is being established. The show, as the saying goes, must go on! But, we have to make a decision: either we move in the direction of an authentic multilingual and multicultural democratic society, in which all citizens have the opportunity to empower themselves, or we consolidate the elitist reality of the present in which one's status and life chances depend on, among other things, how well one speaks and/or writes the English language. Afrikaans needed from 50 to 75 years to develop from a "kombuistaal", a lowly patois, into the language of high status that we know today. How many years, any or all of the African languages will need to evolve along those lines and exactly how this will come about is something about which we need not break our heads just now. Van Wyk Louw, the best known Afrikaans poet of an earlier generation, once remarked very wisely that during periods which are seen by the people themselves as turning points in their history, there is on both sides of a debate an "ewewig van argumente", an equivalence of arguments before the fateful decisions are made. I believe that the evolution of the social sciences has reached a stage where it would be culpable on the part of the specialists in the field of language policy and planning as well as of the political and cultural leadership of this country to refuse to launch at the very least a wide-ranging debate about the implications of a policy of promoting multilingualism as opposed to one of English mainly or even English only. That is the challenge. It is a challenge of monumental significance, since the decision that is taken will involve the kind of development and social interaction in which the next generation and their progeny will have to find their happiness and their fulfilment. A poignant parallel is staring us in the face today in regard to the decisions we are making about the prevention of and the fight against the spread of the AIDS pandemic.

Another inescapable issue to be addressed is that of the character and the future of the Departments of African languages at all South African universities. Besides the fact that the

numbers of students enrolled in undergraduate as well as postgraduate courses in these languages have dropped catastrophically as the result of the laws of the linguistic market. the linguistic and pedagogical as well as the sociolinguistic and sociology of language deficits in these Departments have to be addressed urgently, so that they can acquire the leadership capacity and the dynamism which alone can turn an "infant industry" into a trendsetting sector. Those trained academic and cultural practitioners who are committed to the kind of transformation I am referring to in this address, have got to stand up and begin the intensive training programmes which will help to produce the creative writers, the lexicographers, translators, interpreters, teachers, journalists, editors and other language practitioners implied in the establishment of a language industry. We could do much worse than undertake a detailed study of the success of such a strategy in countries such as Australia and Nigeria.

I speak here in the full knowledge that what I am saying is backed up by the constitution of this country. In accordance with the constitutional provisions concerning the language question, the national Department of Education is at present formulating a framework for language policy in higher education. If the recommendations of the Gerwel committee are anything to go by, I am confident that that framework will tend to establish the conditions in which at every university, well-considered strategies for promoting the development of the African languages as languages of tuition in higher education and as languages of high status more generally, will soon become a factor in the planning of institutions of higher education.

Allow me to conclude with an anecdote that has acquired a rather double-edged significance for me. Four weeks ago, at a conference in the U.S.A., on the 10th of September, a person from the Languages division of the United States defence forces was explaining to us how the U.S.A. needed urgently to mobilise selected languages for the purpose of reinforcing the national security of the "sole" superpower, as he facetiously referred to it. In answer to a question I raised about whether the best strategy for ensuring the national security of any state today might not be a policy of promoting international peace by, among other things, devising policies that would help to make all citizens multilingual, he agreed with me in principle but insisted that in the meantime, the most powerful languages in the world had to be prioritised. The next day, the catastrophe occurred in New York and in Washington.

I am convinced that there is a lesson in this for all of us to ponder.

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