

Official status confers specific rights and obligations depending on the particular regime. In Paraguay, Spanish is the official language and therefore carries the obligations for records, publications, TV, and radio. Because both languages are used as vernaculars, the native language Guarani is not threatened. There is not a sense of necessity to record in Guarani or meet other obligations given to Spanish.

In Canada, official status of English and French confers obligations to meet speakers' rights in either language when dealing with the Federal Government and its institutions. In Wales, the specific requirement of the Welsh Language Act is for recognition of the right to use Welsh in any of the courts. This is the one of the two official (i.e. statutorily declared) forms of recognition given to the Welsh language. All the current developments are through local interest and change in local county laws by community persuasion.

Ireland is a case where the "second official" language, English, is for all intents and purposes the first language of the Republic.

In Israel, Hebrew and Arabic are the official languages of the state, yet English is mandatory for all school pupils from 10 years of age and up.

In Singapore, English has gained pre-eminence over the other official languages in the educational institutions of the State. By 1987, all education will be in English and one other compulsory language, i.e. English and Malay, or English and Mandarin, or English and Tamil.

For most of these countries, English (or Spanish in Paraguay) was seen as a practical necessity. It is an international language of commerce, business, hi-tech, and diplomacy and therefore indispensable in the eyes of these nations. However, they viewed the question of national identity as demonstrated through national or official recognition of their indigenous language (except Canada) as of equal importance.

In New Zealand, a solution that could meet both the ideological and practical necessities of our total society would be:

(a) Declare maori as the official language of New Zealand, because of its indigenous/tangata whenua status and territorial uniqueness in the world context.

(b) Declare maori the national language of New Zealand in recognition of its pre-eminent status as the founder language of this land.

(c) Declare English an official language of New Zealand because of the recognition of its practical role as unifier of the country's different ethnic groups (c.f. Israel), as New Zealand's international language, and as the language of the identity for a large majority of non-Maori New Zealanders.

This recognition of maori and english as official languages of New Zealand should be seen also as a reaffirmation of the Treaty of Waitangi contract.

How can legislation be implemented and administered so that its effects are positive rather than negative?

Language is both divisive and unifying. The history of maori language in New Zealand is testimony to that. English has always been seen by the British colonists as the language for unifying Maori and pakeha, and maori the language that kept the two people apart. The unifying forces of maori language among the Maori — or for the nation — was seen as neither desirable nor necessary and consequently all past policies have forcibly or tacitly been directed at its demise. The devastating effects of language loss is reflected throughout maoridom today — grasping for an identity through language.

Compounded by the effects of low socio-economic status, continuing education under-achievement, unemployment, high youth criminal offending, the sense of 'being Maori' for most New Zealanders is completely negative. Ironically, nearly all Maori today speak english intelligibly, and for many youngsters who are identified as Maori, english is their 'mother tongue'. The fact that english is now the only working language for the vast bulk of maoridom has not brought about the societal unity promised by the anti-maori language policies of the past 150 years.

Maoridom today appears to be more bent on remaining Maori despite the poor self-image that post-European history has bestowed on the label 'Maori'. Clearly, maori language is being seen by many as a rallying point for a restructuring and piecing together of a much broken and damaged people. It serves to restore an identity for people to see themselves as Maori and want to be recognised as such.

For the nation at large who are Maori, very few speak maori willingly or even perfunctorily. This situation is understandable given the nature of New Zealand's colonial background, and the low status perceived both of the native inhabitants and their language. For these reasons it would be entirely counter-productive to legislate in any shape or form for maori to be made mandatory/compulsory in a state institution of the country for all New Zealanders. Therefore, for the sake of developing the nation towards the goal of national unity, and gain the advantage of bilingualism a policy of 'scaled development' is recommended, which could be:

(a) Priority in the promotion of maori language in New Zealand be for the

purpose of re-instating it as the mother tongue of Maori-New Zealanders — the re-vesting of maori language back to the tangata whenua, the Maori people. A massive awareness programme supported by government should be mounted to lift the status of maori language among the Maori people. The Maori people themselves will need to take the initiative on this programme and carry it out with the vigour and urgency demonstrated by the Te Kohanga Reo movement. Maori as the only language of use in the marae setting would be a first step for maoridom's first imposition on itself, like the kohanga reo.

(b) For the rest of the nation, participation in the use of maori language be by choice rather than legislation. However, the state institutions such as the education system, media — especially TV, radio and newspapers and private organisations that receive state funds, must be required to provide maori language policies that give recognition to the use of maori language. For any such policies to succeed, the real lead has to come from the country's leadership in Parliament — from the Prime Minister down. This clearly is the reason for dual language success in countries such as Paraguay, Canada and Israel. For the New Zealand Public Service, the Canadian model of designating 'imperative bilingual positions', i.e. fluency in the two languages can be adopted for many positions in New Zealand, e.g. Department of Maori Affairs, State Services Commission, Ministry of Works and Development, Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries, Social Welfare, Justice, Health, Housing Corporation and Education Department. The courts, which is specifically mentioned in the government's policy statement must be addressed also. This policy could be met by the development of a cadre of interpreters who must be competent bilinguals.

Policy development and administration

In order that policy be developed and administered in a rational and gradual manner, it is recommended that a body such as a Commission for Maori Language be set up. Among its duties would be the development of future policy, reporting annually to Government, acting as ombudsman for maori language.

All countries visited had an officially recognised body which dealt with overseeing policy development. A similar body with mana should be set up in New Zealand. Because of the vast imbalance in the status and functions of the two languages — maori and english — it seems more appropriate to designate this body, the Commission for Maori Language. Its principal tasks would include promotion of maori for the next 10 years."