
The book under review is a collection of papers from the First Eastern Africa Conference on Language and Linguistics, held in Dar es Salaam in December 1968, under the auspices of the Survey of Language Use and Language Teaching in Eastern Africa.1

The papers represent a very wide range of interests - too wide for adequate treatment in a short review - within the two fields indicated by the title of the conference (although those dealing with language-teaching predominate). The primary aim of this conference was, we are told in the introduction, 'to bring together for the first time, scholars and teachers within Eastern Africa who were concerned with the description and teaching of languages and with related sociolinguistic issues, so that they could inform one another about the circumstances prevailing in their area of work, and exchange information about common problems, particularly with regard to the teaching of languages'.

The collection is competently edited by T.P. Gorman, whose brief Introduction points up some of the more important problems facing language education in multilingual developing areas. The papers are arranged according to the educational level with which their content is concerned, rather than by geographical area. Thus, the first six papers are concerned with problems of language-learning at the primary-school level. The other eleven are concerned with such topics as 'interference' as the cause of learners' errors, diagnostic testing, the effects of bilingualism in university education, and matters concerned with specific language-teaching problems at various post-primary levels; one paper is devoted to the use of television in language-teaching.

For readers who are not concerned with language teaching in the countries of Eastern Africa these papers can be most usefully viewed as exemplifications of linguistic problems encountered by multilingual societies2 in a state of rapid transition - transition involving their form of government, the increasing impact of outside influences, the emergence and propagation of notions of national consciousness, the choice of a national language and the repercussions of such a choice within the education system.

Some of the contributors to this volume are clearly aware of the conflicts arising from such a period of change:

'...there is also, in the minds of some, a significant distrust of English as a means of communication - because it provides access to Western cultural values which are inimical to the teachings of Islam. There is often, therefore, a conflict of loyalties, and because of this, a conflict of attitudes in the minds of those
students seriously intent upon the study of English, but subject to the pressures of social conformity'. (M. Macmillan, 'Aspects of Bilingualism in University Education in Sudan').

'The first reason why a subject is included in the curriculum is because it is useful and relevant to the community to which the pupil belongs. Literature in English can be included only if it is made useful and relevant. I am not convinced that much of what is happening in the name of literature today, is either useful or relevant to Tanzania'. (P.J. Roe, 'The Teaching of Literature in Tanzanian Schools').

'The world of the school and the world of our cultural heritage seem to be two separate worlds'. (E. Gachukia, 'The Teaching of Vernacular Languages in Kenya Primary Schools').

'... home and school make highly contrasting psychological demands on a young child. To add a complete change of language for what is the central part of each day may, to some children, mean that school becomes a traumatic experience...'. (R.P. Fawcett, 'The Medium of Education in the Lower Primary School in Africa, with Special Reference to Kenya').

The papers from which the last two quotations were drawn are both concerned with the languages used in primary education; both hint at possible sources of conflict, but this line of discussion is not pursued as they are mainly concerned with practical matters involved in the use of more than one linguistic medium. Indeed, very little is known about the 'contrasting psychological demands' of home and school in Eastern Africa, and studies elsewhere of the effects of bilingualism on cognitive development are largely conflicting and inconclusive. Certainly, not all difficulties of a psycho-linguistic nature necessarily stem from a difference in the languages of home and school.

In discussing possible differences in the 'linguistic climate' of home and school it is important to bear in mind that the school systems of most of the countries of Eastern Africa have been closely modelled on an alien education system based on an ideal of individual excellence and containing a strong element of competition. Many children entering school grow up in a rural environment in which there are still some built-in constraints on the over-assertion of individuality and competitiveness (essential, traditionally, for survival) and where at least some socialization by verbal means is conveyed through language closely tied to the local environment and culture. Reprimanding undesirable behaviour by quoting an aphorism, and the inculcation of cultural moves by means of traditional stories rich in symbolism are cases in point). Many rural children learn to perform important tasks in and around the home more by imitation than by verbal instruction; this is, indeed, the best way to learn them. However, we can begin to see the possibility that the language of home is more culture and context-tied than the language used at school, where new concepts are the stock-in-trade. One might also point to linguistic evidence of the importance of social roles, at least in Bantu languages - and not only in the matter of greetings; see, for example, Mbaga and Whitley 1961. At school, inevitably, language is progressively less tied to the 'here and now', and the acquisition and maintenance of literacy, in particular, represents an enormous investment in abstraction. Whether the language of the classroom is referred to as 'elaborated code'
(Bernstein 1971), 'middle-class verbosity' (Labov 1969, referring to Standard American English) or 'messages where the maximum communication load is carried by words' (Gumperz 1972) — and remembering that there will not be a clear-cut division between home and school 'codes' — the fact remains that the uses to which language is put at school and at home (particularly a rural and/or pre-literate one) are very different. The additional factor of the actual languages of home and school being different for most children has hardly been mentioned; these may, of course, be 'closely-related' — according to current classifications; some, in fact, may be so 'closely-related' that their classification as separate languages may appear as no more than an arbitrary whim of the linguistic geographer. A further phenomenon which must be noted in connection with the language of schoolchildren, and one which provides a rich field for sociolinguistic research, is that of code-switching. This appears, in the light of the small amount of information available, to be dependent on such variables as the geographical location, the social setting, the topic of discourse, the relationship of the participants and the purpose of the exchange. (For discussions of code-switching with particular reference to East Africa see Whiteley 1971).

To return to the task in hand and — for the moment — the first six papers in this collection, it is notable that five of them are concerned with 1968 situations stemming more or less directly from an 'experiment' in the use of English as the medium of education from the first year of school. This began in Kenya in 1957, and came to be known as the 'New Primary Approach', as the change of linguistic medium was accompanied by a more active and child-centred approach to education. It was an attempt to solve the problem of the medium of education in multilingual classes in urban areas. The first classes were carefully selected, the teachers given special training in the use of the new methods and materials and the 'experiment' proved a success, judged by the progress of the children and the enthusiasm of teachers and parents. It is hardly necessary to enumerate all the factors which add up to the now predictable 'Hawthorne Effect' to which any such venture is subject. It was not until the 'N.P.A.' scheme had been extended far beyond the few urban areas used for the initial experimental work that the first rumblings of criticism began. Some of this focussed on the European orientation of much of the content, and some on the extensive reading failure that was apparent. The non-achievement of literacy by many children was, no doubt, partly due to faults in the reading-scheme itself. More important, however, was the fact that there was often insufficient oral control of the language before reading was begun (in some cases reading was being started in English and in the vernacular at the same time) and insufficient development of pre-reading skills — including spatial discrimination. The studies in cognitive development (specifically the categorization of familiar objects by form and function as opposed to colour) described by Bruner et al (1966) may well have a bearing on the important question of the development of pre-reading skills, which include the ability to distinguish between symbols of different shape and size. Extensive cognition studies of this sort, are just one more type of research badly needed in Eastern Africa; only when some solid research of this kind has been done will it be possible for those concerned to decide what ought to be happening at the lower end of the primary school.

One lesson which was learned from the Kenya experiment was that almost native-speaker ability is needed for teaching through the medium of a second language. When this ability is lacking an almost intolerable
burden is placed on teachers who, often, have problems enough already, arising from their equivocal position in society. The difficult role of many African primary-school teachers, half-way between the old world and the new and frequently ill-equipped for the task they are required to do has been well stated by Jahoda (1968). The observations of C. Musiisi and J. Heaton ('Research in English Medium Problems in Uganda Primary Schools') in the volume under review hint at the problems involved:

'One of the most disturbing revelations of the study was that the old traditional lecture method, sometimes interspersed with questioning is, still, almost exclusively, the teaching technique used in schools in the sample'.

The sixth paper dealing with primary education (A.M.K. Bagunywa) discusses the aims of education at that level in relation to the value of teaching through a vernacular; much of the discussion is of particular relevance to educational policy in Uganda.

Turning now to the other papers in this collection, we see that only two deal specifically with the training of language-teachers: B. Taska - 'Training Teachers of English in a Francophone African Country' and J.C. Tan - 'English Language Teacher-Training in Developing African Countries'. A third is more or less addressed to language-teachers; L. Billows - 'Defining the aims of the language course'. The linguistic situation which provides the setting for Taska's discussion is without parallel in the other states of Eastern Africa; the population is monolingual. The implications of this for the teaching of French (the second official language of the country) and English are obvious. A lingua franca is not needed, and outside class - even in secondary schools where the medium of education is French - pupils use Kinyarwanda. The addition of English to the curriculum is largely the result of Rwanda's reorientation of outlook, from her geographical position in the centre of Africa: '... as Rwanda enlarges her horizons and looks more and more towards East Africa for future commercial ties and expanded development, the need for a practical command of English becomes evident. As ties with French-speaking Africa loosen and ties with English-speaking Africa are consolidated, the country serves its own best interests by extending the teaching of English in secondary schools and by training competent teachers of English to staff these classes. One might well ask whether such a change in outlook will eventually have to take account of Swahili as well as English; much will depend on the economic development of Tanzania and its future status among the states of Eastern Africa'.

Tan, in his paper, outlines the requirements of a comprehensive training programme for teachers of English, drawing extensively on the system used in Indonesia 'because there are certain interesting parallels between the functions for which English is used in Ethiopia and Indonesia. In order to achieve a reasonable standard of English language teaching in developing countries, he suggests, it is important to give careful attention to teacher-training teaching methods and materials and where co-ordinate development of these three is not possible, then priority should be given to teacher-training. The same point is made by W.L. Radford in 'The Teaching of English in Kenya Secondary Schools: Problems and Possibilities'. The importance of this view cannot be over-emphasized, for no account of sophisticated 'curriculum development' at
national level can compensate for poor teaching. The little we know of the teacher's role as model (in the psychologist's sense - not only as a linguistic model) in the learning situation suggests its central importance in language-teaching at all levels. (Constrast this view with that of R.W. Sherrington whose paper 'The Organization of Schools Television Service: its Use in Language Teaching' contains the following:

'Television is one more component in the educational system, along with other media - textbook, visual aids, the individual teacher').

The third of the papers specifically concerned with teachers (Billows') makes several admirable pleas - for realistic aims for language courses, for teaching to be based on recorded samples of language-variety appropriate to various social contexts, for teachers to initiate study of the roles particular languages play in the school and outside it, and to make what happens in the classroom more meaningful in terms of this knowledge. Mention is also made of the tyranny and the often unsuitable nature of public language - examinations and this finds an echo in the only paper specifically devoted to the teaching of Swahili.

J.D.W. Welime, in 'Some Problems of Teaching Swahili at Advanced Level in Kenya', aims some well-founded criticisms at an externally-set Swahili examination at Advanced Level. This examination, with its massive translation component, has in the past tended to test attainment in English rather than Swahili, and one can only hope that Welime's comments and those of other enlightened teachers formed a basis for negotiating the modification of this examination or the planning of an internally set one. The role of Swahili in Kenya (considerably different from its role in Tanzania for a variety of historical reasons) has in the past, as Welime points out, militated against a strong motivation for its study at advanced level, except perhaps at the coast. It remains to be seen whether President Kenyatta's 1969 policy statement and subsequent KANU statements referring to Swahili as a national language have any effect at all on its status in Kenya society.

Another reminder of the difference in the roles of Swahili in Kenya and Tanzania is given in R. Isaacs' paper, 'An intensive preparation course for pupils entering English Medium Schools in Tanzania'. This switch of language for the medium of post-primary education is, if current policy is pursued in Tanzania, a temporary phenomenon, since the education system appears to be committed to the eventual use of Swahili as the medium of education throughout the secondary school; some school subjects are, indeed, already being taught through the medium of Swahili at the lower end of the secondary school. The type of pre-secondary intensive course involving project work through the medium of English described by Isaacs was thus another attempt to deal with temporary educational problems thrown up by post-independence language policies.

At a different level, another remedial project in the use of English ('reading and study skills'), for first-year students at the University of Zambia, provided an opportunity to test whether such a course did, in fact, contribute to the overall academic success of the students. The situation, and the types of tests administered are described in A. Heron's contribution to this volume: 'The Relative Importance of Reasoning Ability and of English Vocabulary and Comprehension in First Year University
Achievement by Zambian Students'. The investigator was well aware of the problem of the validity of measures designed to assess present facility in the use of English, and intellectual ability. The view was taken that if several independent tests 'in which success would appear to depend on operations involving various types of reasoning' did intercorrelate one would be justified in identifying the ability involved as 'reasoning', within the limits imposed by this 'construct'. A similar construct validity could, it was hoped, be demonstrated for tasks involving various kinds of competence in English. It was also hoped that the results of the tests could be used for predictive purposes. The interested reader is referred to the paper itself for the results of the tests, and correlations of them with university grades; (not all correlations reached statistical significance).

There is some justification for taking issue with the operational definition of the four tests which were stated to involve 'some of the principal abilities required for the use of English language as a medium for university work'. Specifically it is the reliance of synonymy in two of the tests which is being questioned. The context-dependence of this particular sense-relation has been pointed out by Lyons (1968) among others, and the examples quoted from the tests indicate the culture/context-tied nature of some of the items. The three 'reasoning' tests will not be discussed except to note, in passing, that from the examples given, Test Number 6 looks as much a test of English as of verbal reasoning. How justifiable is it, in fact, to separate second-language ability from 'verbal reasoning' ability when the latter is tested partly through the medium of a (by definition) imperfectly-controlled second-language? However, this is a careful account of a valuable pioneering experiment, and the writer was clearly aware of some of the pitfalls.

A paper in this collection which makes interesting reading alongside the one noted above is Hocking's 'Types of Interference'. The section on lexis is the most useful and focusses on lexico-conceptual 'interference' resulting from differences in conceptualization in English and Bantu languages. The Bantu examples are all from Swahili and demonstrate differences in the semantic range of such pairs as 'weza' and 'can', 'mon' and 'too' as the probable cause of learners' errors in English. Differences between Bantu and English kinship systems are also noted as sources of English errors but an unfortunate prescriptive note emerges here: 'my youngest mother strikes very few Bantu speakers as absurd, though they may have learnt not to say it'. If this is considered deviant the question is, What are they to say, if they want to refer to one of the relationships subsumed under this term in English? Clearly the word 'mother' has to be retained if the ties and responsibilities associated with this role are to be conveyed. (A circumlocution would be possible, of course, but this is not the stuff of which informal conversation is made).

The section on syntactic interference is, unfortunately, firmly rooted in the notion that transformational rules have psychological reality and that errors can result from differences in the transformational rules of the two languages. A speaker is referred to as operating sets of transformational rules 'to reach his actual utterances'. Apart from the fact that transformational-generative theory is not equipped to concern itself with 'utterances' it seems unwise to assume that linguistics construct such as sets of (ordered or unordered!) rules, subject to
continual modification and refinement, can, at a particular point in
time, represent the neurological route by which a bilingual individual
says what he wants to say. 6 The writer is on much surer ground when
dealing with errors arising from the presence of syntactic features in
L1 which have no analogue in L2. But one of his examples is the case
of contrastive stress in English. He refers to the omission of emphatic
stress on the auxiliary 'do' in sentences such as, ' . . . many people
do pay them promptly . . . ', which 'would be read by almost all the
adult and frequently well-educated students . . . with 'do' completely
unstressed'. One could possibly argue that since active declaratives
are no longer formed in this way, that is, with the auxiliary, the
stress is redundant and emphasis is indicated for them simply by the
presence of the auxiliary, but Hocking asserts that his students 'take
it to be just another form of the present'. The crucial point is that
this 'negative interference' is said to occur when sentences of this type
are read. We are not told that these learners use the auxiliary
(without emphatic stress) in their own speech; it is implied that the
structure is unfamiliar to them. No doubt they have other ways of
indicating emphasis when it is required. Examples of this kind and
others in the same paper can probably be regarded as evidence of the
beginning of the emergence of an East African variety of English and this
material could be very illuminating if treated within a framework of
contact and linguistic change.

This paper and most of the others in this collection need to be
related to their social and linguistic setting and a useful companion
volume, focussing on the social implications of multilingualism in Eastern

The range of topics covered in this collection is admirably wide-
raging and such a conference could not fail to be of benefit to the
participants in terms of the sharing of problems and research. It is
to be hoped, however, that any future conferences of this kind might
narrow their focus, and attempt to concentrate in depth on specific
topics of major concern.

Joan Russell
NOTES

1. The Survey of Language Use and Language Teaching in Eastern Africa began in January 1968. Its goals were:
   i To gather and disseminate basic information on the use and teaching of languages in Ethiopia, Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia.
   ii To stimulate research and development in linguistics and language-teaching in the region.
   iii To assist in strengthening the resources of Eastern African institutions concerned with the language, arts and sciences.
   iv To foster closer productive intraregional and international relations among specialists in linguistics and related disciplines.

2. The only country represented in this collection which cannot be described as multilingual is Ruanda.

3. It should be noted that the year before this conference saw the publication of the 'Arusha Declaration', the now famous TANU policy statement on social and economic development in Tanzania and the complementary and highly idealistic 'Education for Self-Reliance'. (March 1967).

4. Ethiopia is an exception. The following quotation from Habte Mariam Marcos' paper 'Amharic as the Medium of Instruction in Primary Schools in Ethiopia' is self-explanatory:

   'In the past education was largely entrusted to the church, which institution, completely isolated from the outside world, was not able to keep abreast of modern developments in the field of the preparation of textbooks adapted to the mental abilities of children. The traditional schools merely aimed at conveying religious instruction'.

   The paper dealing with language-teaching in Ruanda (B. Taska) describes the secondary-school system as being partly government-run, and 'all schools of whatever type are affiliated with one or another church of missionary orientation. Even the official schools are directed and largely staffed by various teaching congregations'.

5. For example:

   'Part III, with twenty-four items, requires the subject to "think of a third word which can mean the same or nearly the same as the word on the left, and, in a different sense, the same or nearly the same as the word on the right". For example:

   UNCOOKED . . . . . . . . . BLEAK'
6. I am aware of the experiments of Miller and Isard (1964) and Savin and Perchonock (1965), noted in Slobin (1971), involving short-term memory and various grammatical structures. The results of these experiments suggest that the subjects in each case apparently remembered the sentences in relation to their grammatical complexity - or as Slobin says 'in terms of their knowledge of the grammar'. This does not solve our problem, however; it is still implicit in Slobin's cautious comment: 'this knowledge seems to be something like that described by transformational grammar' - and he is referring to native-speakers of English.

REFERENCES


Lyons, J. (1968) Introduction to Theoretical Linguistics, C.U.P.

