

the direction of education. Given Zimbabwe's professed goal of building a democratic socialism, the most disturbing aspect of current debate on education in Zimbabwe is the almost complete absence of class analysis and the consequent failure to develop a coherent socialist education strategy. Histories such as the one reviewed here have an important contribution to make to the development of such an analysis and strategy, but only if they use sharper, more committed, concepts.

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Bilingualism, Language Contact and Planning By *E.A. Ngara*. Gwelo, Mambo Press, Zambezianna 12, 1982, xii, 162 pp., Z\$8.70.

Dr Ngara's book is a welcome addition to the Zambezianna Series as it is the first work in the series which examines issues of language in Zimbabwe.

The phrase 'issues of language' bespeaks an enormously wide range of topics and problems. Dr Ngara begins with a discussion of bilingualism, that is, the relationship between languages in contact within a particular boundary (here, Zimbabwe) and the problems of acquiring two or more languages for the individual member of a community. This is followed by a survey of the language situation in the country itself with some interesting observations from the writer's 1975 study on the attitudes to language of Black teenage students. Clearly the war for national independence created a growing awareness of a linguistic and cultural identity with Shona, although, as a counterbalance to this, the study records a positive attitude to a neutral world language like English.

The central chapters of the book discuss the specific linguistic and learning problems for the Shona student in learning English. The contrastive studies of Shona/English phonology and grammar are the first easily accessible accounts of these subjects and should provide language teachers and laymen with a valuable reference source. To the linguist, these chapters are a spur to deeper study.

Languages in contact inevitably influence each other's development in every aspect of the linguistic systems from phonetics to semantics. Ngara introduces and analyses the important principles of 'penetration', 'interlarding' (for example, when a Shona speaker is so accustomed to using particular phrases of English that he cannot avoid using them in his first language) and the idea of 'alternation' which is 'an advanced form of interlarding where the bilingual introduces so much English that it may be difficult to tell whether he is speaking Shona or English' (p. 97). There are some interesting examples:

Hwahwa hunopinda right through
Vanhu vacho vari devoid of sense ambuya
Iye ndiye trouble causer

It should be emphasized that from the linguistic point of view these are natural processes of language interchange. They look forward to a future variety of spoken Zimbabwean English in which there may well be so much 'alternation' in a speaker's language that the new variety could in fact assume a separate language identity. Such speculation is of the future but decisions concerning the relationships between our three most widely spoken languages in contemporary Zimbabwe may well affect the kind of language which future generations of Zimbabweans use.

In many respects, Ngara's book addresses itself to the future. The subtitle 'Proposals for language use and language teaching in Zimbabwe' is the culmination of much preceding debate, on the influence and inter-change language resources between Shona, Ndebele and English. As Minister Mutumbuka notes in the foreword they are 'a good basis for discussion'. Ngara proposes, *inter alia*, as one alternative, that Shona and Ndebele should be regarded as our national languages and accorded official status while English would remain the language of international communication and the prime medium of higher education, while a second alternative would be to regard the majority language, Shona, as the one national language. As far as classroom communication is concerned he proposes that English should be introduced in gradual stages so that it would only be a medium of communication at secondary level. Clearly the medium of teaching at primary level would be in the child's mother tongue.

Many problems would obviously require careful analysis before such proposals could be successfully implemented: the wishes of parents, for example, would, in my own experience of contact with schools, favour the retention of English as the medium of instruction from the earliest stages of education and there is no doubt that Zimbabwe has inherited a sound infrastructure of English teaching in terms of syllabus design, the quality and linguistic ability of teachers, the design, testing and production of suitable teaching materials and a much closer involvement with English over the years than countries such as Zambia, Botswana and Lesotho. It would be unfortunate to dilute the progress we have made in these respects.

On the other hand it is vital to develop the cultural linguistic consciousness of Shona and Ndebele speakers and clearly such impressions are best developed with learners of school-going age. To this end Ngara discusses an outline content of new Shona studies ('Rurimi noUnhu HwavaShona'); he proposes the establishment of a Ministry 'charged with the task of promoting and developing the national languages' (p. 137), and a National Languages Development Bureau. Ngara also offers proposals on the restructuring of the University departments to fulfil new development needs, including guide-lines for the preparation of language teachers.

Ngara has produced a most useful book in that it sets out virtually all the relevant issues pertaining to language development in Zimbabwe and the policy options which planners and politicians may choose from. There will no doubt be much change in the years to come but whereas, to make a comparison, for a nation's economy, the market-place is a dynamic force, for a nation's educational system, the classroom and the forces within that system are conservative and slow to change. Innovation in education is a slow process, particularly when so many people are involved; discussing proposals for innovation is an even slower process because so many people are involved. But, in a sense, this is right and proper because appropriate decisions will shape the character of our new nation for many years to come. Ngara has stimulated us to think about new processes and there will be no shortage of discussion about them.