

Language policy and practices in the Global North and South: Challenges, opportunities and future directions

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Time: 13:00 – 14:30 CET

Prof. Bernard Spolsky, Bar-Ilan University, Israel

Can language repertoires be managed?

Abstract:

In trying to answer questions after a recent talk entitled “Continued thoughts on language policy,” I was reminded of a presentation I gave a decade ago, with the title “Can languages be managed?” Taking into account the expanded model I have developed, I plan to return to this question. Linguists in the 1960s offered what they believed was useful advice to newly independent states, but in fact it was not followed; most African states for instance continued their commitment to colonial policy and imperial languages, ignoring the need to recognize the value of indigenous varieties and multilingualism. Whatever plans the states adopted, implementation was regularly blocked by failure to recognize actual language practices at all levels from the home, by variation in individual beliefs, and by many non-linguistic factors like wars and droughts and corruption that kept resources away from the education system. In spite of valiant efforts by activists and linguists, it seems that language is no more easily managed than climate and disease.



Born in New Zealand in 1932, Bernard Spolsky earned his MA in English at Victoria University of Wellington (which made him Honorary Doctor of Literature in 2008). He taught at high schools in New Zealand, Australia and England, and moved to Israel in 1958. In 1961 he earned a Ph.D. at the Université de Montréal. He was a professor at Indiana University, and Bar-Ilan University, retiring in 2000. He was foundation editor of the journals *Applied Linguistics* and *Language Policy*. He has been President of International TESOL and the International Language Testing Association. He has written and edited two dozen books and over 240 chapters in books and articles and reviews in academic journals. He is a Fellow of the Linguistic Societies of America and of India.

Registration link: <https://universiteitleiden.zoom.us/meeting/register/u5Atf-CrrDIpHtTalMQ7CV6Kbm9DRFJtOmPh>

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