THE KEY ACTORS IN LANGUAGE REVITALIZATION

Rodrigue Landry (PhD, University of Wisconsin) was from 2002 to 2012 the first director of the Canadian Institute for Research on Linguistic Minorities. Promoted to professor emeritus in education in 2012, he was from 1975 to 2002, professor at the *Faculté des sciences de l'éducation at the Université de Moncton* and Dean of that faculty form 1992 to 2002. His research has focussed on Canada's official language minorities, the linguistic vitality of linguistic minorities, minority education, ethnolinguistic identity, bilingualism and school learning. He has authored more than 200 publications and has given more than 450 conferences and scientific communications. He has acted as a consultant for numerous governmental and non-governmental organizations, and has served as expert witness in legal litigations involving the linguistic rights of francophone minorities in most provinces and territories. In 2012, he was awarded by the *Fédération des communautés francophones et acadienne (FCFA) du Canada* the *Prix Boréal* "in recognition of his immense contribution to a better understanding of the reality of Francophones living in a minority situation".

Even in the best of conditions the process of language revitalization is long and arduous. This article discusses the importance of a synergy of actions by essential societal actors: individuals and the family, the linguistic group's civil society and the State. The respective roles of these actors are defined within the framework of the sociolinguistic model of cultural autonomy. Cultural autonomy is part of a dynamic that is the product of the interaction between three components (social proximity, institutional completeness and ideological legitimacy) and the group's collective identity that reinforce or weaken each other.

The concept of language revitalization (e.g., Grenoble and Whaley 2006) was influenced mainly by the work of Joshua Fishman, who proposed a "reversing language shift" model (Fishman 1990, 1991, 2001). This model, rather prescriptive, stipulates various stages to follow according to the state of the language we want to revitalize, from a dead language to one with a high level of *cultural autonomy*.

Fishman makes a distinction between cultural autonomy and political autonomy. For him, cultural autonomy is reached, to varying degrees, when the minority can go "beyond diglossia", when the language is alive in the private sphere, transmitted intergenerationally, and used in the public sphere. Cultural autonomy is exercised within the State whereas the revitalization of a language by political autonomy requires a separation from the State. It must not be concluded, however, that the implementation of a cultural autonomy project is not a political project and that it only involves cultural enhancement. This is a real political project. The clearly political project of affirming the French fact in Quebec, for example, remains a project of cultural autonomy (Landry 2008; Landry, Allard, and Deveau 2010).

The key actors in any language revitalization project remain undefined in their respective roles. The theory of ethnolinguistic vitality (Giles, Bourhis, and Taylor 1977) has developed certain perspectives regarding the mobilization of the group and the phenomenon of resistance (Allard 2005), and Fishman

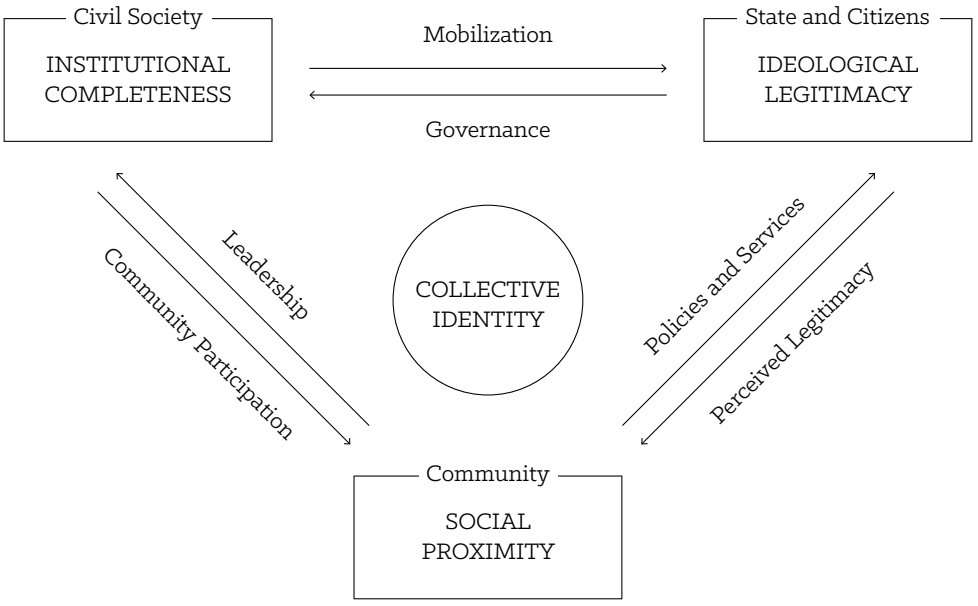
(2001) insists on the importance of the group taking charge of its language revitalization project, going as far as minimizing the role of the school, and even that of the State.

In this article, given the inherent complexity of any language revitalization project, I discuss the importance of a synergy of actions by the societal actors essential to such an endeavor. To do so, I use the sociolinguistic model of cultural autonomy (Landry, 2009; Landry, Allard, and Deveau 2007a), which draws as much from the theory of ethnolinguistic vitality as from Fishman's sociolinguistic approach (as well as from numerous sociolinguistic and sociological studies of language). This model tries to highlight the role of the key actors who, if missing only one, can cause the language revitalization project to abort. This model is a component of a more global macroscopic model linking two opposing forces (Landry, Allard, and Deveau 2007b). The power of "social determinism" dominates when the structures of society (e.g., its demography) impose themselves on the linguistic group, forcing a certain resignation both in the individual and in the community. The force that opposes social determinism is that of "self-determination" and takes effect when the group becomes aware of the injustices suffered and the group's vitality potential. These opposing forces range from society to the individual, the latter also being able to self-determine when his/her language experience has been sufficiently strong in promoting autonomy and raising awareness (Landry, Allard, Deveau, and Bourgeois 2005). The model of cultural autonomy is situated at the societal level of the macroscope and analyzes the group as a collectivity. It should be noted that the sociolinguistic vision of cultural autonomy (Garcia 2012; Garcia and Fishman 2012; Fishman 2012) is distinct, but related to its legal vision dating back to the time of the First World War and more particularly in Eastern Europe (Smith and Cordell 2008). Let us add that these two visions are especially useful for minority groups without legal territory.

THE THREE CATEGORIES OF ACTORS OF CULTURAL AUTONOMY

As can be seen in Figure 1, cultural autonomy identifies three components that interact with the group's collective identity. Each component is associated with a different category of social actors. According to this model, these actors are essential to any language revitalization project. The collective identity is at the heart of the model, which is what allows the community to give itself collective projects. Raymond Breton describes collective identity as a prerequisite to the realization of collective community projects (Breton 1983). It is a bit like the central support of a tripod, the legs of the tripod being the three components of the model. While being influenced by these three sources, the collective identity reflects the image that the group has of itself. It is more than the sum of the individual identities of the members of the minority group and it is expressed at the societal level by various actors, mainly those of civil society and by all the institutions it manages. Having a public face (Thériault 2007), collective identity projects itself onto society and onto others. It can assert itself in the face of the State through the voice of its representatives or its governance structure, and manifest different aspects of its personality in its institutions and linguistic landscape. The three components of cultural autonomy interact with the collective identity, which is shaped by the collective actions that operate on the community's vitality. These actions are managed by the three categories of actors who manage these components.

FIGURE 1: MODEL OF CULTURAL AUTONOMY (LANDRY 2008, 2009; LANDRY, ALLARD, AND DEVEAU 2007)



A) INDIVIDUALS AND THE FAMILY ("COMMUNITY OF INTIMACY")

As a basic component, social proximity is the place of what Fishman calls the "community of intimacy," that is, the community dynamic in the private sphere where the "home-family-neighborhood-community nexus" is found. This sphere nourishes the bonds of intimacy forged by the geographical proximity and the territorial concentration of the group, and allows the sharing of a "language of solidarity". The main actors in this component are individuals and families. They are the ones who manage this private sphere and their main role in the maintenance or growth of linguistic vitality is that of primary language socialization. They influence the vitality of the group through the language dynamics adopted in the family and their entourage, by transmitting the group's language to the next generation and by their contribution to the identity development of children.

The territorial concentration of the group and other demographic factors have real influence on the language behaviours of individuals and families. The proximity favored by the members of the minority group is itself a source of socialization (hence the name of the component) and makes it easier to access institutions (Gilbert and Langlois 2006). In a weak vitality situation, with a low social proximity, only people with a strong and committed identity tend to resist the social norm dictating the use of the majority language. It is within this context that the school plays a determining role. Without the support of the model's other components, the minority language group is condemned to a situation of diglossia and "low language" status (Fishman 1967).

B) THE GROUP'S CIVIL SOCIETY

As the second component of cultural autonomy, "institutional completeness" (concept borrowed from Breton 1964) is the place of civil society, whose members often exercise leadership in the public arena. A source of power and influence, civil society does not constitute a government but can implement different forms of governance allowing the minority to be represented and to express itself collectively. Sometimes civil society can also be a source of mobilization for the minority group.

Institutional completeness forms the operative foundation of cultural autonomy. Without the support of cultural and social institutions that give life to the minority group in the public sphere, its presence is invisible and it is unable to give itself collective projects for a distinct identity. Institutions allow the group to manage their "identity frontiers". It is through its institutions and symbols of durability that the linguistic minority really becomes a "distinct and active entity" (Giles, Bourhis, and Taylor 1977) and ensures its historical continuity. Indeed, the greater the "institutional completeness", the more the "language of solidarity" is confirmed and the more it asserts itself as "language of status", mainly if its "legitimacy" is recognized by the State.

The cultural autonomy model distinguishes two types of institutions with respect to their influence on the group's linguistic vitality. Educational institutions, the media and workplaces act as an extension of social proximity. These institutions contribute to primary language socialization as well as identity building. They help forge the "language of solidarity". Other institutions act more as sources of secondary socialization in the public sphere and are essentially places of "status", which can represent a symbolic force in the social representations of people. A linguistic community whose status is weak is invisible in the public sphere. Our research shows that these two types of institutions combine to influence the desire to integrate the minority group (Landry, Deveau, and Allard 2006).

The model of cultural autonomy stipulates that the community school constitutes the basic institution, the cornerstone of institutional completeness, which is not only an extension of social proximity as a place of primary socialization, but also the parent institution of all other institutions and the foundation of all civil society in the group (Landry, Allard, and Deveau 2010). For the school to effectively play this formative role, it is important for the minority group to be able to take charge of all the relevant elements of its educational mission (Landry and Rousselle 2003).

Institutional completeness is also a source of leadership for the minority group that often has a ripple effect on members. Institutions are run by the leaders of its civil society. The people who work in these become models of social success for the members of the minority group.

C) THE STATE AND ITS CITIZENS

"Ideological legitimacy" includes factors related to the support of the State and its citizens. In a democratic society, it is the citizens who elect representatives of the State who, in the model of cultural autonomy, can support the vitality of the linguistic minority group by legitimizing its existence through policies of recognition (individual and collective rights) and the delivery of programs and services that flow from it.

The macroscopic model in which the model of cultural autonomy is inserted stipulates that this legitimacy recognized by the State is situated in an ideological framework (Landry, Allard, and Deveau 2007b). According to the continuum proposed by Richard Bourhis, the ideological orientations of states towards linguistic minorities can be situated on a continuum ranging from a pluralism to an ethnicism ideology, going through a civic and assimilationist ideology (Bourhis 2001). Only a "pluralist" ideology allows real and proactive

support for the vitality of a minority group. Without official legitimacy, the minority is condemned to fend for itself while the majority group's language is supported by the entire state apparatus.

State-recognized language rights not only provide access to programs and services in the minority language but provide status and legitimacy to the group. This positive action by the State influences, along with the other minority social institutions, the perceptions members have of their vitality and legitimacy, which is designated by the concept of "perceived legitimacy" presented in the model. This influence can be complex in a federal state such as Canada where linguistic rights and services can come from a variety of sources: federal, provincial and municipal. A minority group can hardly have a sense of legitimacy in society when its language is not part of the "linguistic landscape" and the conditions of legitimation are absent (Landry 2015).

CONCLUSION

In short, the cultural autonomy of a group and any language revitalization project are part of a dynamic that is the product of the interaction between three components (social proximity, institutional completeness and ideological legitimacy) and the group's collective identity that reinforce or weaken each other. Dynamics can establish a virtuous circle when conditions are generally positive or a vicious circle when conditions supporting the group's vitality is eroding. Negative conditions to the group's vitality generally lead to powerlessness and collective resignation; in other words, linguistic assimilation and acculturation. A language management plan for the revitalization of a minority language will always be more effective and productive if it succeeds in creating a synergy between the three categories of actors.

Authors like Fishman insist on the group taking charge of its language revitalization project. We are fully in agreement, because a language that its speakers or heirs no longer want can hardly be revitalized even with proactive support from the State. A group whose position is very weak in the hierarchy or the "language market" may even come to denigrate its language and culture (Bourdieu 1982, 2001). But we disagree completely with Fishman's position that state and school influences are minimal. Fishman's position can be understood a little when one considers that his studies were mainly conducted in the United States, a state whose ideological orientations towards linguistic minorities are above all "assimilationist" (Bourhis 2001), and where the idea of taking charge of their own schooling by Hispanic-American minorities, whose origins are diverse, is ideologically inconceivable by the minorities themselves.

In a pluralistic state open to the recognition of certain historical minorities such as Canada, particularly Aboriginal and official-language minorities, it seems to us of paramount importance that any language planning action plan seeking to maintain or revitalize language, should foster an optimal synergy between the three categories of actors identified by the model of cultural autonomy. It is important not only that civil society be engaged and that the State provide proactive support, but also that members of the minority group be informed and sensitized. For example, the federal government's action plans or "road maps", in their support for official-language minorities, have tended to provide resources for them and to support civil society by subsidizing certain social associations or organizations but without informing the members of these minority groups of their ideological orientation and without raising awareness among minority groups. Concretely, the plans created two-legged tripods, neglecting to educate individuals and families about the goals and issues of these plans (Landry 2010). In addition, these plans (with the exception of the 2003 plan, the first to be formulated by the federal government) do not appear to be based on research and established principles of language planning, setting neither objectives nor priorities.

Favoring a synergy of action between the three categories of actors is certainly not a panacea. Revitalizing a language when conditions of vitality are far from favourable may seem like an impossible mission but the chances of success will always be stronger than when one or two of the essential actors are missing. As the language planning experience shows, it is important to engage the main stakeholders, that is, the families and future speakers of the language (Spolsky 2009). In a democratic society, these individuals and families are autonomous beings capable of committed intentions and behaviours. Many may no longer want to speak a language that may seem to them to be of no relevance or identity value in their adoptive culture. These are often the consequences of strong enculturation in the dominant group. But when a minority still has the desire to take charge of the revitalization of its language and culture, it is the implementation of a tripartite strategy, combining synergy with concerted actions that seems to be the most hopeful.

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