LANGUAGE AND LANGUAGE EDUCATION POLICY

SEAMLESS EDUCATION PROJECT UNIT

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

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Definitions and Quotations

FIRST LANGUAGE (L1)

The language which is normally acquired first and which serves as the language through which an individual conceptualizes and experience the world. It is the language that informs the thought processes of the individual and best measures the individual's level of mental maturity. Normally, it is also chronologically first.

SECOND LANGUAGE (L2)

The term is used to refer to any language learnt after the first language. It is to be distinguished from a foreign language in the sense that a second language is often available in the community in which the first language is used e.g. French or English in Canada; English in a Guyanese Indigenous Indian community. Historically, second languages have often been used as the language of education.

FOREIGN LANGUAGE (FL)

A foreign language is usually one that is learnt/acquired outside of its normal cultural community contexts. Although it may be learnt second chronologically, it is not normally used as the language of education nor is it generally available in the community.

DIALECT

A dialect is a version of a language that is restricted, (on the basis of such features as Age, Social Class, Occupation etc.) to a particular sub group of speakers of that language which subgroup interacts more frequently internally than with speakers of other dialects of the same language. A

dialect is not itself a language but a subset of a language. Normally, dialects of a language share the same grammar though the sound system and the vocabulary may vary.

STANDARD

Strictly speaking, the standard is a dialect. It is that version of a language that is used on formal occasions as well as for education. The standard version of a language is usually the target of learners of that language.

VERNACULAR

The mother tongue of a group which is socially or politically dominated by another group speaking an different language (UNESCO 1953 p46).

ENGLISH

The term English (in recent times Englishes) refers to that language which originated in England and spread subsequently to a number of territories around the world. It often serves as the official language, or one of the official languages, of such territories. Each such territory eventually develops its own standard dialect of English. Each such standard reflects the requirements of the particular community of users of that language. Because of this, it has become accepted to recognize these varying versions of English by referring to them as World Englishes, a group of standard dialects of English which reflect the cultural, geographic and historical experiences of each of these English speaking communities. English s itself subject to social and other dialect variation.

CREOLE

Creole languages of the Caribbean are new languages which developed in situations where social relationships made it necessary to have a medium of communication between a small powerful group of persona and a large, often multilingual group of persons who did not share a common a language. Creoles are full languages and often have dialects as does any other language.

CREOLE DIALECT CONTINUUM

This term is used by some persons to describe the range of variation between the Creole forms and the Standard English forms in the Caribbean. The gradual change in forms is seen as moving from an extreme Creole end(the Basilect) through a range of forms (the Mesolect) looking more like English the Standard English forms (the Acrolect)

SPECIALIST TEACHER

A Specialist Teacher is one who has been prepare to teach Language only. (English, Spanish, French etc.)

LANGUAGE OF INTERNATIONAL COMMUNICATION

A language of international communication is a language that may be used in a range of geographic, political and geographic circumstances

LANGUAGE OF WIDER INTERNAL COMMUNICATION

Language of internal communication is the language most widely used in the country

1.0 **INTRODUCTION**

1.1 General Background

It is argued that language policy cannot be understood apart from its social context or from the history that produced that context (Cooper, 1989). A language policy, specifying a national or official language, and sometimes the role of majority and minority languages, is often enshrined in the state's constitution (Faingold, 2004). Language planning, which is the actualization of a language policy, is therefore dependent on the policy decisions made at the level of the state or nation. Yet, in the absence of a formal statement on the national or official language, language planning lacks a philosophical base for its development. Indeed, without a clear policy statement, the linguistic *status quo* risks becoming the *de facto* policy (Herriman & Burnaby, 1996; Schiffman, 1996). This *de facto* policy in turn gives rise to an implicit language policy with assumptions on the acceptable language for use in education, business, government, the media and so on.

Successive governments in Trinidad and Tobago (TT), whatever their orientation, have had as their primary concern, the development of a nation that is united, maximally productive, innovative, self-reliant, resilient, caring, tolerant, well educated, healthy and prosperous

Caribbean governments articulate a vision of ***united, resilient, productive, innovative and prosperous nations, which rely on disciplined, caring, healthy, well educated persons whose education has helped them to be self reliant, respectful of others and their rights, tolerant of difference.***

The government of Trinidad and Tobago recognises the significance of "knowledge, information and human capital for" the advancement of the nation. The government proposes an approach that "will ensure that our young people are literate, numerate and that they also possess critical thinking skills "as part of the framework for sustainable development in preparation for national advancement. The Government further recognizes the need for "curriculum reform to address the needs of twenty first century development and to build a foundation for responsible citizenship. The education system " must ensure that our children are literate, numerate and aware of e-learning and internet-based opportunities. The foundation must be so laid that they (i.e.the students) will have a love of learning, and become critical thinkers, use their creativity and have an entrepreneurial outlook." It is intended that the system would focus on all learners and not just those deemed academically gifted. ith a disciplined caring, fun-loving society, comprising healthy, happy and well-educated people and built on the enduring attributes of self reliance, respect, tolerance, equity and integrity."

One of the main foci of the policy is the establishment of a framework for sustainable development to which a sound education could contribute

The Ministry of Education is responsible for producing "a highly-skilled, well-educated people aspiring to a local culture of excellence that is driven by equal access to learning opportunities" p2

Excellence in innovation, a highly skilled and talented work force in the context of a diverse culture place a significant level of responsibility on any Ministry of Education. The undertaking must

overcome significant human, social, economic and political challenges. For all these, education is the "sine qua non".

1.2 Purpose and Scope

In the initial documents, this project was seen as part of the second component (i.e.) to improve the quality and relevance of the primary sector. However, the issue of language education policy cannot be so tightly constrained to any subsector of the education system. The remit has therefore been expanded to address the policy matters as they apply to the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE), Primary and Secondary sectors. The tertiary sector is not included here because it does not fall under the direct control of the Ministry of Education. Since only a relatively small proportion of the education sector is at the tertiary level the offerings are not generally seen as part of the integrated education programme. The Language Education Policy addresses a number of issues including the language(s) of education, the use of language for education, the roles of heritage and other languages in education and the determination of a first foreign language. The consultancy is also concerned with the development of an action plan for implementation to guide language education in the education system in order to support the achievement of education goals.

This component is aimed at the articulation of the primary curriculum with curricula at both the secondary and ECCE levels accompanied by new assessment methods, accommodation of Internationally Acceptable English (IAE) in the primary curriculum, and the introduction of Spanish as the first foreign language.

The objective, therefore, is to assist the MOE in the development of a language and language education policy and an action plan for implementation to guide language education in the education system to support achievement of national goals. Since the education sector is responsible for the training of persons to service the national requirements for language, it is assumed here that the education language policy must be robust enough to deal with the national requirements. In addition, the positions presented here are being advanced in current contexts. They are all subject to the dynamics of social and political change at the global, regional and national levels.

The Vision

The development of an education system that is maximally inclusive and optimizes the development of the human resource. It recognizes language as the critical factor for the realization of a coherent, tolerant, sensitive, and informed society.

1.3 Methodology

Spolsky (2009) locates Language Policy within Language Management. Language Policy, for him, is a sister to planning and implementation. Approaches to the formulation of such policy could be top down in which case the decisions are taken by authorities and sent down to persons responsible for implementation. Approaches could also be bottom up in which case the entire process is guided by the persons who operate the system and give a sense of what is necessary to the controlling authorities. Finally, policy could focus on inclusivity, a consultative set of processes through which a cross section of

stakeholders have an opportunity to participate in the determination of policy.

1.3.1 Stakeholder Consultations

In order to maximize stakeholder input in the limited time available for the preparation of the document, meetings were held with Curriculum Officers and School Supervisors of the Ministry of Education, a selection of Early Childhood Caregivers, Primary Teachers, a selection of Secondary Teachers, Teachers from Tobago, The Professor in charge of the Primary Teacher Training Programme at the University of Trinidad and Tobago, as well as with a wide range of non government organizations in Trinidad and Tobago, including Deaf Pioneers, Moms for Literacy, Adult Literacy Association of Trinidad and Tobago, The Chair, Education Committee Hindi Nidhi, National Centre for Persons with Disabilities, Lady Hochoy School, School for Blind Children, Cascade School for the Deaf, Tobago School for the Deaf Speech and Language Impaired, Tobago Literacy Unit. Other knowledgeable persons within the society were also interviewed or consulted as was convenient within the time available.

Relevant documents on language and language education in Trinidad and Tobago (TT) were used to develop an appropriate sense of the history of approaches to the development of a language education policy. Research reports at the national and regional and international levels provide a breadth of perspective necessary for the purposes.

2.0 BACKGROUND

The Republic of Trinidad and Tobago is the most southerly of the Archipelago of islands in the Caribbean Sea. It sits less than ten miles off the northern coast of Venezuela and is in close proximity to the islands of Grenada, St Vincent and the Grenadines, and other former colonies of Britain with which it shares a largely similar history of European colonialism, slavery and indentureship, regional in migration, relatively stable government. Trinidad and Tobago holds membership and influence in regional institutions such as the University of the West Indies, The Caribbean Common Market The Caribbean Development Bank and it supports the Caribbean Examinations Council as the region's authority on matters of educational certification.

Among the territories of the region, Trinidad and Tobago has had the most stable economy in recent times largely because of the oil and gas reserves on which much of the nation's economic stability is based. It is a nation of just under one and a half million persons occupying a total landmass of less than fifteen hundred square miles.

Despite its small size, it has significant international trade and other interaction with the international community. This small nation is one of the world's leading producers of methanol. Its asphalt is central to the paving of roads and airport runways the world over and its natural gas supplies more than seventy percent of the needs of the eastern seaboard of the United States of America. Within the last year, Trinidad and Tobago hosted the Commonwealth Heads of Government conference as well as the Fifth Summit of the Americas. Both these meetings signal some significance for any language education policy as they reflect the

historical and regional/hemispheric links that this country must seek to maintain.

Regionally, Trinidad and Tobago enjoys a relatively high standard of living and is considered the most economically stable of the nations in the Caribbean Common Market (CARICOM).

3.0   LANGUAGE AS RESOURCE

Languages are perhaps the single most significant resource for establishing national identity, for establishing cultural identity, for promoting internal social cohesion, for ensuring social connectedness, for facilitating respect for internal and external cultural diversity and, at the same time, for maintaining proper international connectedness. It is often the case that resources like language, which are all too readily available and familiar, are given little significance in national affairs.

There is therefore a critical need to identify such language resources, to understand them, to value them, to nurture them, to promote them properly and to understand the implications of engaging each language for the national good. This is no less true for Trinidad and Tobago than it is for any other nation state.

Management of the language resources of the nation holds the keys to individual and national advancement. Understanding the linguistic resources of a nation and their significance must therefore be at the centre of any attempt at national development.

4.0 LANGUAGE AND EDUCATION

There is an intimate link between language and education. The late Christopher Brumfit thought this link to be so integral that he asked the twin questions, "Is language Education? Or, Is Education language?" Brumfit (1990)

Language is the primary, some would say essential, tool through which education is experienced and actualized. It provides access to all areas of learning. It is the capacity of language to reduce the concrete world to a set of linguistic signs that allows people to understand, to develop, and to manipulate concepts, and the manipulation of concepts is at the heart of education processes.

The intimacy of this relationship between language and education leads inevitably to some central questions for every education system.

1) What languages are available in the society?
2) Which of these languages is/are suitable for education?
3) What criteria should be used for choosing between and among the potential languages for education?
4) What roles would the languages not chosen have in the education process?
5) What information about these languages should any educated national have?

In addition to these specific linguistic issues, the development of an appropriate language education policy must take into consideration global and regional matters which could be instructive in the local instance.

Trinidad and Tobago is not the only nation that has had to face significant issues in the development and articulation of a Language Education Policy. Importantly, many countries have, over time, assumed a policy and behaved as if there were one. In so doing they were defining one through practice. Even where policies might have been articulated, the dynamics of such features as population growth, migration, politics and regional, global and national trends have led, as has been the case of Britain and the European union, to careful examination to determine their continuing relevance. In this regard, the emergence of the European Union has brought to many the awareness of the complex linguistic world in which we live as well as the desirability of encouraging the multi perspectives that such linguistic diversity reflects.

The absence of an explicit language policy with a clear statement on the role of other languages (international, minority, heritage and so on) is now becoming especially problematic in English-dominant contexts. This phenomenon is linked to the rise of English as the global *lingua franca*. May (2005, abstract) notes that in English-dominant contexts, 'monolingualism in English is seen as being a sufficient, even an ideal language model, while literacy *in English* comes to stand for literacy (and related social mobility) per se.'

Further, according to Schopenhauer(1951.)

> *In learning any foreign language, you form new concepts, you discover relationships you didn't realize before, innumerable nuances, similarities, differences enter your mind; you get a rounded view of everything. Which means that you think differently in every language, that learning a language modifies and colors your thinking, corrects and improves your views, and increases your thinking skill, since it*

will more and more detach your ideas from your words. (1951:49 in van Lier 1995.)

Suddenly, it is no longer considered appropriate for the world to be reduced to the perspectives of the few languages that could be considered truly global in any sense.

Consequently, determining an appropriate language education policy for Trinidad and Tobago requires careful consideration of a number of factors, including the languages available within the society, their usefulness as national and sub national resources for achieving the kinds of targets set out for the system, and properly reflected in the Trinidad and Tobago Government's Policy Framework for Sustainable Development document in which the imperatives for national development are set out.

5.0   ROLES OF LANGUAGE IN EDUCATION

Language is at one and the same time a set of skills to be acquired or learnt and the primary tool for learning. It facilitates learning through the unique property of being able to deal with abstract concepts and to manipulate the realia of every education system in any society.

Beyond these, language provides the key to understanding self. It helps to identify the individual as part of a community and it uses its resources to ensure that the cultural traditions of each particular group are identified and maintained.

All the functions of language are directly relevant to the objectives of education systems.

Although the primary mode through which learning takes place is language other species display the ability to learn. This alerts us to the fact that language is not the only medium through which learning takes place. For the education system, however, language presents the most economical tool for learning in human beings.

5.1   *Concept formation and manipulation*

Perhaps the most significant role that language plays in education is that of allowing human beings to name things and, accordingly, to have some control over the things they name. According to Vygotsky, "Learning to direct one's own mental processes with the aid of words or signs is an integral part of the process of concept formation". Significantly, the things that a human being could conceptualise could be manipulated in their displacement, i.e. in their absence. This is critical to education which seeks to have persons deal with thoughts, ideas, information through the intervention and manipulation of language and concepts rather than through direct interaction with the realia.

Learning could be facilitated and accelerated once the concept could be grasped, manipulated and explored. Indeed, for the more abstract concepts this is that much more obvious.

Consequently, the students' control of the language of education is critical to their achievement.

5.2   *Teaching, learning and management*

The belief that a child learns best in the language of his/her socialization, i.e. his/her first language, is well attested and generally accepted. While it is perfectly possible to learn through another language, there is considerable evidence that the first language is the best language for learning

5.3   *Levels of mental maturity*

Children learn, through their first language, to develop the concepts and worldview of the adult users of their language. The extent to which the child displays control of the adult categories is indicative of the extent to which the child has matured within the world view of its particular linguistic group. Any child, therefore who is educated in a language other than its first language could not reasonably be expected to have his/her levels of mental maturity judged on the basis of performance in a language other than the first.

5.4   **Assessment**

There are clear implications here for how test scores are understood and interpreted as well as for evaluation of the student based on test scores. The student for whom the language of the test is not the first and for whom control of the language of the test is restricted, has to approach the assessment exercise through the mediation of the native or first language.

Nearly fifty years ago, in similar circumstances in the United States of America, Baratz indicated that the performance of speakers of African American Vernacular English and those of speakers of American English on the same tests were directly related to the use of one or other of the languages as the language of the test. The scores indicated that the language of the tests and not knowledge or skill was the critical factor in determining success levels. This suggests that the test may be a valid one for the skills and abilities being tested only if the appropriate language were used.

Languages other than the first language could not, therefore, be the automatic media through which learning and performance should be evaluated

5.5   Literacy development

Given the above discussion it appears that the most appropriate language for developing literacy skills is the first language of the learner. The general practice of Early Childhood and Primary level teachers in Trinidad and Tobago is instructive. The teachers and caregivers surveyed for this exercise attest that the language the children bring to the classroom is of considerable assistance in developing language and other skills as well as facilitating the socialization processes in the classroom. Their positions are impressionistic but a survey would readily validate their position.

5.6   Use of First Language (L1) as initial language for education.

Classroom teachers surveyed also indicated that they rely on the first language of their students when communication through the English medium proves ineffective. This reality indicates that, despite the unwritten policy of English as the language of education, classroom teachers find the use of the language brought to school by the students, Trinidadian and /or Tobagonian English-lexicon Creole a more productive linguistic medium for instruction and an easier medium for the transition from home to school.

Creative work and Cultural issues

Issues of culture are more complex at both the receptive and productive levels since the language, dialect or even usage register chosen may be determined by any of a number of discourse factors such as topic, purpose, and relationships between participants. Language as a bearer of culture is validated on the basis of the fit of language used for the purposes. One thing that is certain, though, is that creative work and in

particular literary work would depend on what is appropriate for the particular event or genre.

Folklore

The language of the folklore is most obviously the language of the folk. While these languages are often not at the core of education systems in the Caribbean, there is really no good reason why they should not be especially since some folk belief and traditions could be used for education and the promotion of a positive self concept. They promote a deep sense of self and validation of ego.

Oral history and indigenous knowledge would continue to be seriously disadvantaged if the education system fails to recognize that these are the critical defining areas of many people and groups within the society. They speak to a democratic approach to self definition, and are preferable to top down approaches through which the individual or group is provided with a definition of how one could be seen by others. The issue is probably best captured in a public speech of the late Dr. Walter Rodney, historian and activist.

"It was the White world that told me I am black. I was not conscious of my blackness until that world drew it to my attention."

Indigenous Knowledge

Much of the indigenous knowledge of any nation is encapsulated in the normal language of the persons who are bearers of such knowledge. Proverbs, aphorisms and other reflections of and on life experiences are best retained in the language of the folk.

Communication: Intranational

Language is central to communication across the various groups within the nation. A clear appreciation of this is central to any education policy that attempts to promote internal cohesion and mutual respect. The language used for such communication cannot be ignored or downplayed. The significance of the vernacular language, defined by Labov as the "language of widest internal communication" cannot be ignored by the education system. Trinidadian English lexicon Creole (TCE) and Tobagonian English lexicon Creole (TOB) are the vernacular languages of these islands.

International

International communication, by contrast, is best conducted in a language that itself has international status. Countries that have been part of the British colonial system have English available to them as Official, First, Second, Other Language. Unfortunately, the status of English as a global language is too readily accompanied by a level of linguistic complacency and even arrogance. Consequent linguistic behaviours could be restricting and counterproductive especially so in a developing country.

Heritage

Wherever a society is built upon inputs from a range of social structures and cultures, there is bound to be a level of linguistic retention directly related to the heritage. Often such retentions are so restricted to the group that while they form a strong intra group bond they also have the potential to be a barrier to inter group activity and confidence. This, too, must be part of the consideration for any language education policy that seeks to be inclusive and empowering.

6.0   LANGUAGE EDUCATION POLICY PRINCIPLES

A language education policy document contains a set of principles and guidelines for determining the roles that language in general plays in that education system as well as for ensuring proper management in the execution of that policy by the system. Broadly speaking, any language education policy that is likely to succeed in Trinidad and Tobago must be driven by global, regional and national imperatives as well as by stakeholder concerns, by resourcefulness, by academic awareness levels and by the general human resource capacity available to the system.

6.1　Global Imperatives

At the international level, Trinidad and Tobago, "is committed to providing quality education for all by 2015. …is in agreement with UNESCO's affirmation that education has a fundamental role to play in personal and social development and sees it as the principal means available to foster deeper and more harmonious form of human development." Language itself is the foundation for all such education.

Given the much talked about contraction of the world into what has been termed the global village, it becomes imperative that every nation should possess control of at least one language that facilitates interfacing with as wide a section of the world as is possible. Trinidad and Tobago, and indeed the entire Commonwealth Caribbean, has the advantage of already having English, a language of global significance, within its historic experience. This, however, should not lead to the unquestioned acceptance of English as the preferred language of education especially in the context of national and regional sociolinguistic realities. Consideration

of emerging powers (both trading and political) such as China and other economic powers in the East to which some links may be had in TT should also caution that some consideration should be given to the roles that such languages could play in the nation's affairs at the global level in the medium to long term.

Spolsky, (2009), among others, points to one major negative linguistic characteristic arising out of globalisation. He notes that there is a growing tendency to move nations to monolingualism by forcing users of other languages to conform to an "official" language to the exclusion of languages of more local significance and usefulness. It is argued that every language presents a fresh perspective. Many educators feel, that linguistic variety and diversity are vital to the retention, enhancement and development of the capacity of the human being for critical and creative thinking as well as for coping with the increasing harmony within social networks.

It is important that language education policies do not so constrain Trinidad and Tobago of this particular asset base which the peculiar history has created.

6.2   Regional Imperatives

At the regional level, Trinidad and Tobago is "committed to developing the "ideal Caribbean person" which includes among it (sic) respect for law and authority and a drive toward competitiveness."

Trinidad and Tobago shares a considerable socio-historical, cultural and linguistic bond with the remainder of the Commonwealth Caribbean. A significant proportion of its trade is with the nations of the region and

issues such as regional security, the fight against the drug trade make interaction with the remainder of the region a high priority factor.

In terms of language and education, the following characterize all the regional issues.

1. Vernacular or languages of widest use are not the language of education. These languages are often lexically related to English or French

2. The language of education is English

3. There is widespread popular misunderstanding of the relationship between the vernacular and English even among teachers.

4. The official language is ill defined in that even among the classroom exemplars there is no consensus about which version of English, British, American, International or National and Regional should be the target.

5. The vernacular languages are subject to considerable negative stereotyping

In terms of culture, the region shares a number of characteristics that speak to a similarity or even identity and a common distinctiveness from other culture blocks and there is a high level of cultural and economic interdependency. The entertainment industry in TT, for instance, is also heavily dependent on the patronage of the remainder of the region.

In education, the systems of the region, emerging as they all do from the British colonial model, are largely similar. Caribbean Examinations Council examinations remain the most widely accepted measure of academic proficiency at the end of the period of secondary education

Language education policies for TT, therefore must also bear in mind the regional experiences, imperatives and the advantages that accrue to regional approaches on like matters.

6.3   National Level

At the national level, one aim is "to ensure that the education system produces citizens with a sense of democracy, respect for the rights of others and elders and with the ability to contribute meaningfully to the social and economic development of the country".

The Kingsman Report prepared for the British government some years ago, noted that

> People need expertise in language to be able to participate effectively in a democracy… As members of constituencies, people need the resources of language both to defend their rights and to fulfill their obligations. Competence in language is essential to competence in any job

Although regional and global concerns are of considerable significance and relevance, TT must ultimately determine its policy largely on the basis of its own unique characteristics.

Perhaps the most outstanding of these characteristics must be the peculiar history/histories of the two islands.

For much of its colonial history, Trinidad was a Spanish territory, though there was little growth during this period and the population was small. Spanish, however, has remained central to the life of the nation

maintained largely through a small group of persons who speak Spanish as their first language and also through regular contact with Venezuela. Culturally, Parang music has become more and more entrenched and its musical structure has even been adapted to a special brand of calypso, popular during the Christmas parang season.

In similar vein, the earliest expansion of the colony came with the Cedula of Population which, in 1783, created opportunities for persons from the French controlled islands of the region to move to Trinidad in large numbers. Planters from the French islands moved to Trinidad bringing their entire set of slaves who spoke a French-lexicon Creole. This population dynamic had a dramatic effect on the linguistic social structure of the island. Even today, according to Solomon (1992), one of the unique features of Trinidadian English-lexicon Creole is the significant influence from this French-lexicon Creole.

Another of these significant features is the fact that TT is a twin island state in which there are significant differences in political organization, in language background and sociocultural practices between the two constituent islands.

The political affairs of Tobago are administered by The Tobago House of Assembly which was established by an Act of Parliament and charged with responsibility for the management of the island's internal affairs. The island also has two seats allocated to it in the National Parliament.

7.0   LINGUISTIC PROFILE

Trinidad and Tobago is a twin island state in which the two islands have slightly different linguistic profiles. Except for a study done by Sealey et al in the mid eighties, there is available no other attempt to provide a broad sociolinguistic profile of Trinidad and Tobago. Carrington (1990) provides a brief indication of the historical sequence in which languages arrived/developed in these islands. In addition, Carrington, Borely and Knight (1974) provides some indication of the linguistic exposure of Trinidadian children at that time. Though the dynamics of usage would have shifted since, it is clear that Trinidad and Tobago is a complex linguistic community. The number and range of languages, their patterns of use and their primary users vary and overlap as do their domains of use.

Trinidad may be distinguished from Tobago by the range of linguistic communities that have significant numbers in this part of the state. These include a numerically significant Indic community with Bhojpuri, Hindi and Arabic as their heritage and/or religious languages, Chinese, and a significant Arabic-speaking Syrian/Lebanese community, and an equally small group of West African descendants who use Yoruba in the main in their religious activities. In addition, as has been pointed out above, there is a significant French lexicon Creole linguistic influence on the Trinidadian language situation. There are a few significant communities of speakers of this French-lexicon Creole language in locations such as Paramin, Lluengo, and Moruga. Though these communities are aging ones, there is renewed interest in this language and it is possible to save it from becoming extinct in Trinidad. All these bear some relevance and significance for any language policy for Trinidad but they need not be of

similar significance in Tobago where the sociolinguistic heritage is not quite as complex.

Trinidad, has a sociolinguistic profile that is virtually identical with that of Grenada and very similar to St Lucia and Dominica. In the cases of Grenada and Trinidad, there are residual elements of a French lexicon Creole language and a level of English lexicon Creole that does not, on the surface, appear to be as remote from English as is the English lexicon Creole languages of Tobago and the other territories noted earlier. The situation is reflective of an earlier time in the early twentieth century when the vernacular language in Trinidad would have been a French lexicon Creole similar to those spoken in the lesser Antilles especially St Lucia and Dominica. The French lexicon Creole language still being spoken in Paramin and other pockets of Trinidad remains mutually intelligible with this Lesser Antillean variety.

Tobago, by contrast, has an English lexicon Creole that is superficially further removed from Standard English than is the English lexicon Creole used in Trinidad. Indeed, The Creole spoken in Tobago is much closer to those spoken in St Vincent, and Guyana than any of them is to that used in Trinidad. So close are these varieties that one could accept that Tobagonian is mutually intelligible with Vincentian and Guyanese. The Trinidadian variety of English lexicon Creole is what has become known among Creole linguists as a mesolectal variety, sharing more superficial features with English than the more basilectal Creole variety of Tobago does.

The national challenge, therefore, is the preparation of a national language education policy position that is sensitive enough in scope and flexibility to address the concerns of the various factions and their interests.

8.0 CONTEXT AND STRATEGIES

Historically, language education policy for Trinidad and Tobago, (de facto rather than in jure,) has always been premised on the notion of what is seen by the relevant authorities as best for the country as well as on the prevailing understandings of the linguistic situation and the relative significance of the languages involved. Ironically, though, since the third quarter of the nineteenth century, according to Keenan, (1869) the significance of Spanish, French, German and Hindustani(sic) were recognized since official interpreters were recognized for purposes of law and commerce, yet the education system made no concessions to languages other than the official one, English. For as long as the imperatives of education were determined by the colonial powers, perceptions of what could legitimately qualify as "language " were determined by notions of social class, power and control. The official language, English, was the language of major significance for officialdom, though persons involved in spreading the gospel of Christ quickly recognized the currency and significance of languages such as French lexicon Creole, Hindi, Bhojpuri and other languages, (Carrington 19..) including those used by persons from West Africa. Such recognition was directly relevant to their religious pursuits.

At that time, the focus of the education programme was the satisfaction of British demands, including the provision of a mid-level public service,

rather than the preparation of the human resources of Trinidad and Tobago for the development of the territories themselves. It is to be acknowledged that as early as the nineteenth century, E.J. LaTrobe, (1838) and Keenan (1869) drew attention of educators to the negative impact of the Spanish language and vernacular French lexicon Creole in Trinidad and the English lexicon Creole in other Caribbean territories on the attempts to educate persons who spoke those languages.

Keenan

> **The extension of the ward schools, has, no doubt, extended the use of English to districts where English has been previously unknown. But the diffusion of the English language has been accomplished by the most irrational process that could possibly be conceived. French and Spanish speaking children have been set to learn English alphabets, English spelling, and English reading without the slightest reference whatever, in the explanation of a word or the translation of a phrase, to the only language they could speak or understand.**

Once the interests became more national in their scope and focus, the need for a more relevant set of policy guidelines became more evident. The preparation of the human resource for national duty demanded that proper attention be paid to what may be termed "national language education issues" because these continued to have a profound effect on the ability of the system to deliver good quality education sufficient to deal with personal and national development needs of the society.

The issues are complex and are being rendered more so as groups within the society become more self asserting and demanding.

Proper language education policy for such a complex and dynamic situation requires careful consideration of the social, linguistic, academic, national concerns and the dynamics of the interplay between and among these. The paramount prerequisite is the will to address such a significant paradigm shift with resolution and conviction.

9.0 LANGUAGE EDUCATION POLICY IN TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

9.1 Deriving the Policy from Practice

For many persons acquainted with the education system in Trinidad and Tobago, there is no language education policy. This is only true in so far as there is no single coherent document that sets out such policy. While it is to be acknowledged that there is no specific language policy document, there are some clear indicators of policy positions derivable from the ways in which the system is operationalised.

The first of these is the choice of English as the language for education. While the position is often breached without sufficient conscious reason to do so, English is the language that all teachers are expected to use for instruction. At the same time English is also the only language in which all students are expected to develop and demonstrate linguistic competence. It is seen both as a means to several curriculum ends and as a curriculum end in itself. That English is the language of literacy is a clear indication of a policy in operation.

In recent times, the Ministry of Education has clearly articulated the desired education qualifications for persons entering the service as

English teachers at the secondary school level. All aspirants are expected to hold significant qualifications in both English Literature and Linguistics. This is a clear indication of the intention to see these two areas of the curriculum as being closely linked and to treat them as one. In addition, the requirements are a clear indication of the knowledge base required for teaching English at the secondary school level.

In the education system in Trinidad and Tobago, all examinations are normally conducted in English. This assumes that competence in English is sufficient to facilitate the optimum measurement of student competence in the curriculum area being examined. There is considerable evidence that this is a false assumption.

In addition to this, other stakeholders in the world of work take the cue from the education system and impose English language certification for employment in areas for which such competence could not be readily or easily justified. Competence in English is also used as a marker of social and linguistic development.

Certification of competence in English is vital for advancement in the world of work.

These indicators suggest a language education policy in which competence in English is both a desired goal and a medium through which competence in other areas of the curriculum as well as levels of mental maturity are to be assessed. As far as could be determined no position is consciously taken on any other language save for those teachers who

determine on their own to switch to the Creole vernacular for ease of communication with students. This switching is very idiosyncratic and is frowned upon by many school administrators within the education system.

Among the teachers surveyed for this policy preparation, there was little or no consciousness of an overt policy, largely because such a policy has not been spelt out. Given this status quo, this document will attempt to articulate a policy position based on clear identifiable guidelines and criteria.

9.2. Guiding Principles

The approach to policy development here is based on the following principles that are in alignment with the stated education emphases and, consequently, in line with the National Strategic plan.

Any language Education policy, therefore, must

1. aim to empower as wide a range of citizens as possible
2. enhance the chances of personal success both within the education system and in the wider society.
3. contribute to better understanding of self and appreciation of others both within and outside of the society
4. develop self confidence at the national and international levels
5. be guided by the regional considerations as well as by global ones.
6. be properly resourced and managed

9.**3. Language Awareness**

The pivotal consideration for an appropriate language education policy for Trinidad and Tobago, and indeed for any other Caribbean state with a similar sociolinguistic and historical architecture, is language awareness. Language Awareness is the knowledge of, and sensitivity to language, the way it works and the way in which it influences human behaviour. It provides the basic levels of informedness necessary for taking reasonable decisions and for setting out practices that have good potential for success.

According to van Lier 1998: 98

> Language awareness can be defined as an understanding of the human faculty of language and its role in thinking, learning and social life. It includes an awareness of power and control through language, and the intricate relationship between language and culture.

> Specifically, language awareness provides the system with the following appropriate sets of knowledge for intelligent decision making by any stakeholder at virtually any level.

> - accurate knowledge about the nature of language itself
> - specific knowledge of the languages available to the society.
> - indications of the status of each language within the society.
> - clear indications of the functions which each language is used for in each community.
> - indication of the levels of readiness of each language for accomplishing any or all of the goals of education
> - the potential of the language to satisfy all the major purposes that education is intended to serve in the community (i.e. as the language of education)

- the significance of socio-historical factors in determining teaching and learning activities**.**
- the significance to be attached to the performance in the selected language(s) of education

10.0 IDENTIFYING THE LANGUAGE(S) FOR EDUCATION

10.1 Fitness of language for purposes of education

To qualify for consideration as a language for education a language must satisfy certain criteria. It must:

1. be generally available within the society.
2. have wide currency in the society
3. have high level of acceptability within the society
4. possess the capacity to address the objectives of any education system.
5. possess acceptable norms
6. have potential for promoting scribacy and literacy
7. be reflective of the major interests of the nation or any group within it
8. have potential for global, regional and national connectivity .

10.2 Relevant Aims/Objectives of the Education System

Philosophical positions taken by the Ministry of Education in the White Paper on Education (1993-2003) provide clear guidelines for determining policy.

I.   Every child has a right to an education which will enhance the development of maximum capability regardless of gender, ethnic, economic, social or religious background.

II.   This right pertains to all children regardless of location, physical or mental ability.

The philosophical guidelines indicate a need to encourage inclusivity and an advocacy approach to policy formulation. This is particularly important because the policy must be sensitive enough to ensure these less known and but more value laden objectives are given every chance to be realized rather than be swamped by the straight academic ones

10.3 Linguistic Issues

The analyses presented here suggest that three languages (Trinidad and Tobago Deaf Sign Language (TTDSL), Trinidad and Tobago Standard English (TTSE) and Trinidad English Lexicon Creole (TCE) Tobago English Lexicon Creole (TOB) available within the community qualify for serious consideration as the primary languages for education within the education system.

The case of Trinidad and Tobago Deaf Sign Language (TTDSL) is special.

At no time in the history of education in the country has there been sufficient information on deafness and Deaf Education for a policy position to be arrived at. Some issues are clear. The Deaf do possess a valid form of language which functions differently from the sound based languages of the hearing. The Deaf Sign Language clearly depends on physical space and on movement. Concept formation, and expression , therefore, are significantly different from that of the hearing and the insistence that the expression of those concepts in a writing system that is premised on the existence of sound would be unwise.

Where the Deaf are forced to respond in writing and such writing is evaluated along the guidelines or principles applied to the hearing considerable disadvantage and even discrimination could result. The education system that seeks to provide equity must, as a matter of policy insist that the Deaf be given appropriate treatment and that their sign language be properly exploited as the main means for developing appropriate measures for assessing their levels of competence and development.

Historically, the official position has been that Trinidad and Tobago Standard English is the language of education. Two considerations give strong support for this choice of language for education, its historical significance and its global reach. Historically this was the language of education despite the fact that it is not the de facto primary language of instruction and learning for students in general. Most students and a significant number of teachers themselves have limited control of TTSE, the language of education. In earlier times teachers would not have admitted this but in the current situation teachers have grown to accept more and more the fact that they do not operate in the TTSE at all times in the classroom though they frequently cite student lack of competence as the reason for the significant use of TCE in the classroom. It is in fact an acceptance by the teachers of the simple linguistic truth that people learn better in their first language.

The surveys conducted among teachers and students for this project indicate quite clearly that there is increasing awareness of the existence of the two languages in the education system and of the roles they actually perform. In all cases, the teachers stated that TTSE should be seen as a

second language. This is a significant development and allows for a more realistic approach to the problem since it acknowledges that English is not the first language. It is important to recognize that the situation in Trinidad and Tobago is not a typical second language one but one that has some unique characteristics.

Although the major role of language in education is that of medium for teaching and learning of curriculum matter, there are several other roles for which language is the most suited resource. In addition to the development of the skill bases of individuals within the society, the MOE's remit is to cater to Self Reliance, Tolerance, Equity, Respect, Integrity, Skill.

Self-reliance requires an acute sense of self and especially self in relation to other. Language is an important part of the definition of self. Language provides a direct and specific link to the community or group with which one seeks to be identified. In order to satisfy this aim of the education system, therefore, careful attention must be paid to the selection of language that is most likely to bring about a positive sense of linguistic self and not distance the student from the group through which that student is socialised.

Respect for others, tolerance of difference could best be realized in a context in which the source of such difference could be readily isolated. After physical appearance language is perhaps the most powerful signal of difference. At the same time highlighting the need to understand and even use the language of others is perhaps the most significant compliment and

mark of respect that one person or group of human beings could pay to another. In these critical areas of socialization therefore it is important that sufficient cognizance be given to the languages in the society and to their significance for the specific aims of the education process.

10.4 Languages of Education

Of the languages identified within the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, Three are clear candidates for use as languages of education. There can be little or no controversy about the first of these, the Deaf Sign Language. The failure of the education system to deal adequately with this significant and obvious segment of the population, the Deaf, needs urgent and highly focused attention. There are several grounds on which such attention would be readily justified. Deaf Sign Language is the first language of the Deaf. Given that persons learn best in their first language and that their mental maturity should be best judged through the use of this medium to deny the Deaf this opportunity for advancement purely on the basis of language amounts to a serious violation of their human rights. Equally, to deny the nation of the opportunity to make use of the considerable potential of the Deaf is to be guilty of a serious breach of the responsibility for proper management of the nation's human resource. There is abundant evidence that, their deafness apart, these members of the population are fully capable of carrying out all functions of their hearing counterparts.

A modification of this policy would also be applicable to the blind who, though possessing normal hearing and speaking skills, are limited to oral aural linguistic activity if special systems such as the use of Braille are not put in place for them. The difference between the deaf and the blind is

that the former use a different language system as indicated while the latter use the normal phonated language though a specific writing system is used for their writing and reading. Tasks requiring use of colour, drawing and alignment are tasks not readily handled by the blind.

From the very inception of education in the Caribbean the issue of the language of education has been a major bone of contention.

In 1838, La Trobe commented on the situation in a number of Caribbean territories, Keenan (1869) commented on the situation in Trinidad. Both these persons indicated the lack of wisdom in pursuing a policy that seemed to fly in the face of the linguistic realities of the country and to ignore the obvious advantages of using the vernacular languages to inform education processes. John Jacob Thomas prepared his *Theory and Practice of Creole Grammar* to mediate in some of the discrimination within the legal and education systems against speakers of French lexicon Creole, then the dominant vernacular in Trinidad. Thomas' second reason for preparing the grammar was to facilitate the religious enlightenment of the speakers of that Creole language.

This practice of educating persons in the language with which they were most familiar was the norm for the early Christian missionaries as they converted persons to Christianity. Their work in developing writing systems, describing languages, and preparing materials indicates that the codification tasks could be accomplished. Indeed, the practices within the Christian churches in the Caribbean continue to today. The Holy Bible and or the New Testament have been translated into several of the Creole languages and for decades Bible translators have been at the heart of developing writing systems for the region's Creole languages.

By contrast, recommendations from Caribbean linguists to have the vernacular Creole languages taken into account in the education systems of the various territories have met with little success in the places where it matters. There is an outstanding case in Curacao, where the Creole language Papiamentu is used with considerable success in one set of schools from nursery to tertiary level. In Curacao as well, there is a functioning Institute for the planning and development of languages

As the chart of languages featured below indicates, the Creole languages of Trinidad and Tobago are the languages used to address the more significant aspects, especially the socializing ones, of the education system. Interpersonal communication on the widest range of issues is normally conducted in that language even sometimes in domains for which a specific English language qualification is considered desirable. Some public advertisements for counter workers in Fast Food outlets, for example, have indicated the desirability for CXC type qualifications in English.

In addition to the straightforward aim of intellectual development, the objectives set out for the education system in the White Paper include,

1. Promoting social cohesion
2. Maximizing personal development
3. Ensuring cultural development and sensitivity
4. Appreciation of heritage
5. Recognition and appreciation of different others

The English lexicon Creole languages of Trinidad and Tobago are the first language of the majority of persons entering education from the respective islands. Historically, neither of these Creole languages has ever been

officially accorded more than nuisance value in the education system. Despite the efforts of linguists over the past fifty years, these languages have been accorded little or no official role or status in the processes of education though the negative impact on attempts to teach English is readily accepted.

Language	L1 % Users	Status	Roles in Society	Readi- ness	Codification	Comments
ENGLISH	15	Official	Education International	Ready	Codified	Official language of education
TCE	85	Vernacular Heritage	Intra-national Culture History	Semi	Partial	Widest range of usage; Largest group of speakers
TOB	85	Vernacular Heritage	As above	Semi	Partial	As above
FR. LEX	5	Heritage	Intra group. Restricted	Semi	Codified	Geographic Restriction
HINDI	10	Heritage Religious	Intra group Restricted Religious	Ready	Codified	Restricted to heritage groups
ARABIC	3	Heritage Religious	Intra-Group Restricted Religious	Ready	Codified	Restricted to heritage groups
SPANISH	3	Religious Heritage	Intra-Group	Ready	Codified	Geographic restriction Hispanic culture
DEAF SIGN LANGUAGE	3	Restricted	Intra group	Semi	Codified	Deaf/Hearing Interface
YORUBA	>1	Restricted	Religious/ Heritage	Ready	Codified	Increasing interest by persons of West African and' Yoruba ancestry

TABLE: MAJOR LANGUAGES, THEIR USE AND STATUS IN TT.

Key: V-vernacular; H- heritage; O-official; COD-codified;
　　TCE-Trinidad English lexicon Creole;
　　TOB-Tobago English lexicon Creole.

The Table shows the usefulness and readiness of language for instruction and languages for other functions within education and clearly indicates that the Creole languages are the languages that have the potential to cover the widest range of educational objectives.

 At the level of speech, the respective Creoles TEC and TOB are in widespread use in the respective islands. They serve every communicative purpose that the speakers are involved in except, officially, education. They set Trinidadians and Tobagonians apart from other Caribbean people. It is the language in which the calypso and Chutney art forms are most widely practiced. There has been significant use of it in literary texts especially the works of Samuel Selvon. Education cannot continue to ignore them in the context of enfranchisement and the desire for total involvement of the population. These Creole languages are at the centre of all formal education. They contribute in a powerful way to internal social cohesion.

Until recently, the major limitation on the Creole, was that at least in one sense, careful codification, it has not been fully prepared for use in some education activities. The recent publication of *A Dictionary of Caribbean English Usage* (Allsopp:1996)*, a Dictionary of the English/Creole of Trinidadian and Tobago* (Winer 2009), and a text on *Trinidadian Speech,(Solomon 1995)* provide good starting points for the identification

of norms and for the selection of an appropriate standard version of the Creole. There is sufficient expertise and experience on such matters among persons who have examined these issues in the region for this limitation to be quickly overcome. These limitations are no longer as significant as they used to be and any attendant difficulties could readily be addressed in the short to medium term. The establishment of a language institute (which will be recommended here) could bring this and related matters to a head in short order.

The advantages that could accrue from the careful consideration of a policy for maximizing the use of these Creole languages for the education system would be worth the investment in time, research and money. One major hindrance to the achievement of high levels of education competence is the attitude to the Creole languages. This is based mainly on very emotional but very inaccurate and uninformed positions to which many stakeholders seem wedded. The policy must, as a matter of priority, seek to disabuse such stakeholders of the positions they hold and try to persuade them of the wisdom of the different vision for greater general success. The investment in the effort to mobilize the entire population will provide considerable support for the release of human resources that now remain marginalized because of inadequate language and language education policies.

Perhaps the most compelling argument against the Creole languages is the restriction of currency to the local environment. Properly handled this could be made to work to the advantage of the education system. The proposals here will address that concern.

In the present circumstances, the Creole languages are felt to present considerable barriers to education which is conducted in English. A significant proportion of the population is prevented from maximizing their potential simply because the system does not address the education implications of Creole language competence seriously.

Properly understood, and properly used for education purposes, Creole languages would lead to higher levels of inclusivity as well as to better performance in English, the very language that now constitutes a significant barrier to the enhancement of the skills and abilities of a significant section of the population. The advantage of defining the roles of Creole languages would be to facilitate the acquisition of English for whatever purposes the nation may determine.

The difficulty lies in getting the stakeholders to turn their minds to the real issues and to use the appreciation of these issues in a forthright and structured manner rather than in an emotional and uninformed one. The failure to understand the relationship between these two languages and to appreciate the ways in which they could be used to support linguistic development has worked against the speakers of Creole language even where the speakers exhibit the necessary mental maturity. The nature of the relationship between these two languages, Creole and English, needs to be properly understood.

It is clear that Trinidad Creole is the first language of the majority of persons. It bears a superficial resemblance to standard English. Over the

past forty years linguists like Carrington, Craig, Devonish, Simmons-Mc Donald, Robertson have argued that relationships between the Creole and the English are so badly misunderstood by education stakeholders in general that even among the more enlightened the relationship which has unique characteristics is forced into familiar moulds of first language, second language, first dialect and second dialect. Teachers believe that they must use second language techniques which often are a partial and not a perfect fit, because of the inadequate characterisation of the situation.

Craig points out that because of the mainly lexical similarities between Creole and English, students often think that they are in control of English when they are not and there is a popular but mistaken belief that Caribbean persons are first language English speakers. Educators, on the other hand, assume that students are merely using English badly when they are not using it at all but are using the Creole.

It is acceptable that English continues to be one of the languages of instruction. It is clear, though, that the roles of Trinidad Creole and Tobago Creole in education must be properly determined. The failure to do so over time has had considerable deleterious effects on the education of nationals.

The use of English as one of the languages of education has much to recommend it. Its international reach is unmatched among the world's languages. It is also the language of technological and academic development the world over. These are vital functions that cannot be easily performed by any other language available within the education system. It is ready for the purposes of education even though the adequacy

for measuring mental maturity of Creole speakers and the cultural challenges of some materials prepared for general English audiences must be challenged.

11.0 LANGUAGE AND LANGUAGE EDUCATION POLICY

11.1 Attitudes to Language

One of the major challenges to a reasonable language and language education policy in any situation is the level of stakeholder involvement. But stakeholders involvement requires a certain level of informedness. Brumfit points out that language and education share the common disadvantage of persons assuming expertise on the basis of exposure to language and to processes of education.

'Language' and 'Education share two disadvantages that many other areas of study avoid- they are both too familiar. We all used language- and many of us have strong views about it; we have all been educated- and we all have strong views about that. He is careful to point out that a language education policy could not be based on whim but must be determined on the basis of a clear set of principles.

11.2 Determining the Language and Language Education Policy

The ultimate aim of Language and Language Education Policy is to provide the nation with citizens who are,

1. secure in their knowledge and understanding of and competence in, the language(s) needed for education and other official purposes,

2. secure in their appreciation of and identification with the linguistic subgroup to which they may belong.

3. secure in at least one other language of international significance beyond the official language.

4. able to demonstrate full appreciation of the areas of internal linguistic difference within the nation

5. able to demonstrate a high level of awareness of the significance of language in all human experience

6. able to manage and administer the system fairly and with justice

11.3 Policy Objectives

It is proposed that at the end of the processes of formal schooling within the education system the citizen should

1. Possess sufficient competence in one of the official languages of education, English, in order to fulfill all the requirements that could normally be expected to be carried out in that language at the national and international levels

2. Possess sufficient competence in the National language, the relevant Creole language, Tobagonian or Trinidadian English lexicon Creole, to be sufficiently literate in that language, and to perform the wide range of socially integrating tasks that Creole is clearly best suited to.

3. Acquire sufficient knowledge and awareness of all languages in the society and particularly those of which his heritage is a part.

4. Be self confident in his/her linguistic heritage.

5. Demonstrate informed awareness of and/or competence in the national Deaf Sign Language

6. Demonstrate competence in the first foreign language Spanish.

7. Demonstrate sensitivity to language and its roles in society.

8. Determine an appropriate definition for the languageTT context to be defined as the creole sociolinguistic complex.

11.4 Policies and Proposals

In order to realize these objectives the following policy proposals are being made.

1. Deaf Sign Language should be made an official language of education and evaluation. The deaf constitute the most marginalized and underserviced and disadvantaged group in the education system. Hitherto, little was known about their communication systems but it is now clear that but for their hearing disadvantage they could participate fully in the affairs of the society. There is therefore a clear need to bring them into the mainstream by using the communication system that is natural to them. Its orientation is visual and spatial and therefore adjustments would have to be made to ensure that they are properly engaged in the mainstream. At the same time, other members of the society need to develop sensitivity to this group of persons and, wherever necessary, to acquire their language.

2. English should be formally declared an official language so that its relationship to other languages could be clarified. The authentic relationship between English and Trinidadian and/or Tobagonian English–Lexicon Creole has never been properly understood or appreciated among stakeholders in the education system and, as a consequence many uninformed or underinformed decisions have

led to the failure of the system to cope adequately with the issues of education, learning, evaluation and assessment which arise.

3. English should be seen as one of the languages of education. This has much to recommend it. This language has served as the language of education for centuries and though its efficacy could be improved with a more enlightened understanding of the total linguistic situation, its historic depth, its international reach and its status as a world language and as the language of technological advance and business make it a necessary choice for education.

4. The study of Literature be officially regarded as the most highly evolved and sophisticated area of English use. There is a mutually reinforcing relationship between language and literature . Literature provides the widest range of examples of the use of language appropriate to the particular situation. Language policy must make it mandatory that the study of the related literature be part of the language practice. Together, language and literature allow learners to develop a wide range of social skills and understandings considered central to the development of national social cohesion.

5. The respective Creole languages be declared NATIONAL languages Creole languages have had a long history of rejection within the education systems of the Commonwealth Caribbean region. This is a virtual rejection of self and one that has serious implications for the proper evaluation of the nation's human potential. The reasons for the rejection are historical, sociopolitical and economic but this has led to significant failure within the system to cater to the needs of all students and to maximize their

potential to contribute to the national good. Once the Creole language is declared a national language, its range of functions could be properly investigated and its roles in education firmly established. Given that these languages are the first languages of the majority of Trinidadians and Tobagonians, classifying them as national languages provides them with the proper status for incorporation at appropriate levels of the education system. At the same time, these languages could be made more ready for education.

6. The respective Creole languages be readied for education and evaluation in the short term with the aim to be declared languages for education in the nation. One of the challenges to be addressed is the state of readiness of these languages for educational purposes. Codification, preparation of materials, recognizing an appropriate writing system for the Creoles all have vital roles to play facilitating and enriching the education of the persons for whom these Creole languages are a first language.

7. The heritage languages be properly documented. Often in the Commonwealth Caribbean, sections of the population have ancestral links to other parts of the world, typically West Africa, India, Madeira, China and the Middle East. These peoples were brought in to satisfy the labour requirements of the territories, Those who arrived initially, brought their languages. The subsequent fates of these languages have been varied, and there is a need to ensure that these are properly established in order to make informed decisions about the roles they should play in the education system.

8. Where the numbers of persons belonging to the heritage language group is significant access to the languages should be provided in the school system. Such access could either be through the development of awareness or through the actual teaching of the language The process of education must ensure that all students develop an informed awareness of the linguistic heritage of the country in order to ensure a proper appreciation of some of the differences inherent in a nation that is sociologically complex. This will ensure the development of a positive concept of linguistic self and a deeper appreciation of the linguistic differences. Where the school population reflects a high level of use of the language or of sensitivity to it, the language should be taught in the school.

9. An Institute for Language Education be established to take responsibility for all language research, documentation and preparation of language learning and language teaching materials for use in the various levels of the education system. There is, at the moment no body with the specific remit to ensure that the necessary information base is available and available in a form transparent enough to ensure that the full benefits of this more enlightened approach. The Institute will, among other things have these tasks as part of its remit.

10. Specialised training be required for teachers of language at each level of the system. The linguistic situation is a dynamic one and the tendency to rely on a range of general skills in various curriculum areas would not suffice for language in the complex situation being proposed here. Language teachers should be

properly prepared to address the specific needs of the national situation. A further consideration is the dynamic nature of the situation. The specialist teacher would more readily keep abreast of changes in the dynamics.

11. All teachers should be required to demonstrate a satisfactory level of language awareness. The good work of language teachers require support from all staff. In this sense only, every teacher has a need to be responsible in their linguistic behaviour and practices.

12. Sufficient numbers of curriculum officers be provided to have the desired impact on language in education. The task of Curriculum Officers in this policy framework would automatically become more complex and more demanding. There is a need for significant quantitative adjustment upward and for very focused qualitative adjustments as well.

13. Spanish be instituted as the first foreign language in light of the geopolitics of the region. This decision has already been taken and there is clearly a need for adequate provision for competent teachers. The teaching and learning of this language would also be affected by the general language conditions.

14. Special foreign language teaching be implemented as early as the primary sector

15. Centres for language learning and education be established in each education district in order to sustain the thrust in language education. These centres would support at the district levels the initiative of the Institute and the Curriculum Planning and

Development Division of the Ministry of Education to upgrade, monitor and guide the teachers.

11.5 Programmes and Projects

The major programmes/projects on which the policy would focus are:

1. Establishment of Deaf Sign Language as the language of education, evaluation and socialization of the Deaf

2. Establishment of English as the official language and one of the languages of literacy and international communication

3. Recognition of Creole as the national language given that it is the one language that has currency with the widest section of the population and across the widest range of uses.

4. Codification and standardization of the Creole languages

5. Promotion of use of Creole languages to facilitate education and learning

6. Promotion of Spanish as the first foreign language given the current socio-political context

7. Reorientation of stakeholders to the new paradigm through a sustained programme for improving language awareness.

12.0 POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

12.1 Implementation Strategies

The policy initiatives being proposed here are a significant departure from the status quo. Maximum success and effectiveness in the implementation of the policies indicated above is premised on a number of factors.

1. **The Will**. The proposals presented here represent a significant shift from the established thinking and practice. Such fundamental change cannot be successful unless there is a clear commitment to the change and a readiness to make the necessary structural and administrative adjustments that such change will inevitably require

2. **The Resources** **T**he proposals presented here will also require significant expansion on the human resources of the national education system. The three Curriculum Officers currently employed by the Ministry of Education cannot reasonably be expected to carry out the tasks that the new policy requires. The proposed Language Institute and the District Area Language Centres (DACL) would have to be adequately staffed to carry out the broader and more varied requirements and responsibilities that will be their remits. There will also be a need for expanded physical and technological facilities to encourage timely interventions and to help ensure local relevance and focus.

3. **Systemic Restructuring.** Some systemic restructuring may be necessary given the expanded vision of the language policy and its commitment to try to cater to the needs of all persons in the society.

4. **The Institutional Framework.** In order for this policy to succeed the proper institutional framework must be put in place. In addition to the existing institutions, there is a need for two further facilities.

   a. The first of these is an Institute for Language Education (ILE) under whose ambit would fall a range of functions which are either not carried out now or which could only be partially carried out because of the absence of dedicated staff, facilities and finance for the critical areas of policy monitoring, evaluation and training that are all needed to bring about genuine efficiency.

b. The second is a series of DALCs located one in each educational district. These Centres would have the responsibility for providing professional support and in house training for stakeholders in the particular district. They will facilitate the work of the ILE by organizing stakeholder groups to address the needs of the local community while at the same time ensuring that the community practices are properly integrated into the national requirements for language education.

12.2 Implementation Mechanisms

The major agencies responsible for ensuring the operationlisation of this policy are the Curriculum Planning and Development Division of the Ministry of Education, the proposed Institute for Language Education, the proposed District Area Language Centres (DALC), and the Teacher Training Institutions (ILE).

The main concerns of the ILE would be

1. Research, and documentation of language and language use in the society, the relationships between and among languages in the society.
2. Overseeing the expansion of use of some languages in the national interest.
3. Standardization of Creole languages
4. Codification of Creole languages
5. Expansion of levels of stakeholder awareness
6. Preparation and production of relevant materials for the various levels of the school system. In addition, the Institute would provide

advice to the decision making bodies of the Ministry on the evaluation and use of materials produced.

7. Preparing specialised programmes on language for non-specialist teachers and care givers. Stakeholder needs do vary and the successful implementation of the kinds of positions being proposed here requires that stakeholders be given the information relevant to their functional levels within the system. School Principals and administrators, for instance, would require significantly different levels of information from parents and care givers. These sessions would have to be tailored to suit the particular stakeholder group.

The District Area Language Centres

The Centres within the education districts would allow schools to collaborate in developing good, sensitive users of the range of languages on offer in the system. They will

1. Liaise with the ILE on matters of national significance
2. Identify the local language education imperatives within the national context.
3. Provide in-house training opportunities for teachers in the respective catchment areas
4. Provide human and textual support for schools within the district
5. Facilitate dissemination of information on best practices within the district
6. Monitor the language use patterns within the district for the guidance of the ILE
7. Ensure the language education knowledge and competence levels

are attained

8. Ensure language competence levels remain at desirable levels among students.

Teacher Training Institutions

The Teacher Training Institutions should be responsible for the following:

1. Establishing language as a foundation area in education in order to ensure that all teachers are sufficiently informed on the linguistic issues critical to the education of the student from this nation.

2. Ensuring that teachers are sufficiently literate in Creole and English and any other language relevant to the system so that they could properly implement the education of students from any section of the nation

3. Ensuring that appropriate strategies are provided for promoting positive and constructive language learning practices

4. Preparing specialist teachers for the school system.

5. Sensitizing teachers to recognizing the differently-able so that early intervention would be possible.

6. Provide such upgrading as may be required from time to time

7. Provide short-term specialist courses in special areas of language education, including the use of Deaf Sign Language and Braille.

Curriculum Planning and Development Division

The Curriculum Planning and Development Division (CPDD) of the Ministry of Education should be responsible for,

1. Implementation and monitoring and evaluation of the delivery of the programmes within the system.

2. Determining competence levels to be achieved by students

3. Production of textual materials

4. Selecting teachers for the system

5. Mounting of upgrading workshops for teachers within the system

6. Monitoring the effective implementation of the policy

The language awareness activity would where necessary, offer teachers the opportunity to upgrade their levels of awareness of language and the language issue as they impact the system.

The establishment of the ILE is critical to the implementation of the policy proposals and would be established within the first six months of implementation. It is being proposed that the projects identified and related activities be implemented on a phased basis over a period of five years. The first phase would be completed in one year, the second phase a two year period and the third phase is the following two year period. While many activities may have a finite time for implementation many must be continuous (See Action Plan)

It should be noted that a fundamental principle which underlies all recommendations is the recognition that language contexts are complex and dynamic and may be influenced by a range of factors at the national, regional and global levels. The emergence of China, for example as a global power could in time lead to the focus on Chinese as the language of international alternate. Also at the regional level, as integration advances the inclusion of the francophone Caribbean could change the status of both French and French lexicon Creole in the Trinidad and Tobago education process. Also of critical importance is the need to determine the best use of resources.

The Implementation of the language and Language Education Policy will therefore occur in two stages

Stage 1 Development of the Strategic Plan

In year I of the policy implementation, the MOE as the primary agency will lead the development of the comprehensive strategic plan.

The plan will be developed recognizing that the programmes identified would be subject to the availability of resources. Integral to this plan is stakeholder commitment. This necessitates a sensitisation programme.

The MOE will undertake a review of priorities and resources in the early stages of the process and prior to consultation

The strategic plan will therefore outline:

- appropriate programmes and strategies to achieve the goals and objective outlined in this policy,
- Establish the critical success indicators for each of the goals and objectives
- Identify the strategic thrusts that will, be used to achieve the ideals desired goals
- Determine the culture necessary to support the strategies and programmes, the success factors and strategic thrusts
- Determine the appropriate level and sources of funds required for implementation
- Determine performance indicators to monitor the effectiveness of programmes and strategies

The process must be a consultative one involving other agencies, training institutions, Employers and Special Interest groups

Stage II   Implementation of Strategic Plan

On completion of the Strategic Plan, the policy will be implemented in line with clearly defined guidelines. It is expected that the views of a large cross section of citizens would be solicited and leaning on the advocacy approach the implementation of the policy would be made easier.

13.0 MONITORING AND EVALUATION

The projects and activities undertaken would be monitored to determine their usefulness, relevance and effectiveness and provide feedback to inform recommendations. A Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) team should be established and the M&E activities should be undertaken by a team drawn from the ILE and the CPDD. Projects would be monitored based on a schedule set out by the M&E unit to ensure that the projected outputs are realized. The unit would also be responsible for evaluation studies and assessing the impact of the policy on the education system.

14.0 CONCLUSION

The Language and Language Education Policy could be a major contributor to the realization of the national objectives set out for the education system. These objectives refer to inclusivity, social cohesion and optimization of human resource capacity and regional and international commitment. The Policy is unlikely to succeed in the absence of an enabling environment including the necessary will, timeliness and appropriateness for the prevailing education context.

One consideration here is the issue of timing. The case for early exposure to language is well established both through research literature and in the experience of several institutions. In particular, early language learning is less stressful and more conducive to the development of positive attitudes to language learning and teaching than is the case with learning language in the more mature years despite the advantages that maturity might contribute.

It is important that a seamless transition from early language learning to later language learning should facilitate change of attitude to language learning in general at the more mature levels.

APPENDIX

ACTION PLAN

No	Project/Activity	Time-frame	Resources Required	Responsible Agency /Collaborator	Priority/ Phase	Comments
1.0	**Establishment of the Institute for Language Education (ILE)**					
1.1	Recruit staff	6 months.	Institute Director, 4 Research Linguists, clerical and technical support	MOE, Institute Director	1st	Appropriately qualified
1.2	Document languages of Trinidad and Tobago	12months	Research Linguists, clerical and technical support, transportation, equipment, historical data	CDD/MOE, ILE, Public	1st	Conduct Language Survey and Develop Linguistic Map of Trinidad and Tobago. Information on the status and impact of languages on society
1.3	Preparation of materials for all languages	On-going	Subject matter Specialists, Materials Production/Writer	Classroom Teachers, Syllabus and Curriculum developers, Teacher Trainers	1st	All languages are readied for education purposes indicated
1.4	Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E)	On-going	Specialist, Clerical and Technical support	MOE, Curriculum Officers, Classroom teachers, students	1st-3rd	M&E Unit established
2	**Establishment Of District Language Centres**					
2.1	Recruit Staff	8 months	Centre supervisor. Specialist staff	MOE/ CPDD	2nd	Determine appropriate qualifications
2.2	Liaising with ILE	On-going	Centre Supervisor	ILE	1st-3rd	There will be a need for constant updating and feedback
2.3	Identify local language education imperatives	Periodically	School student intake / Parent Teacher Associations.	DALC	1st-3rd	Monitoring significant shifts in local population
2.4	Training	On going	Specialist Clerical Technical	Teachers	1st-3rd	Need for regular updating and integration of new teachers.
2.5	Preparation and dissemination of resource information	On going	Materials producers writers Info tech practitioners	DALC Staff	1st-3rd	Materials specific to the catchment requirements to be disseminated
3.0	**Training**					
3.1	Teacher Training-English, Trinidad Creole, Tobago Creole, Deaf Sign Language, Spanish,	On-going	Trainers Clerical and Technical support, Technological support	Teacher Training Institutions Curriculum Officers	1st-2nd	Education programme reoriented so that all language teachers are specialists: have competence and knowledge in the

No	Project/Activity	Time-frame	Resources Required	Responsible Agency /Collaborator	Priority/ Phase	Comments
	Hindi, Other			DALC		language/s of their specialisation and exhibit language awareness
3.2	Training of Curriculum Officers	On-going	Specialist Trainers, clerical and Technical support	Training Institutions	1 st	Ability to recognize any language pathologies Ability to recognize potential learning difficulties
4.0	**Language Awareness**					
4.1	Investigation of language situations in Trinidad and Tobago and the World (English as a global language)	On-going	Specialist Linguists	MOE, Training Institutions, Teachers, students	1st- 2nd	Awareness of all languages that exist Information used to inform the education system
4..2	Awareness activities and dissemination of materials	On going	Tech and materials production staff	Varying	1st-3rd	Delivery of information through various media esp. visual

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