

A Language Strategy for Scots?

Strategy n. a plan of action designed to achieve a long-term or overall aim.

(*Oxford English Dictionary*)

On 1 July 2001, the *European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages*¹ came into effect, whereby the United Kingdom government recognised that ‘Scots and Ulster Scots meet the charter’s definition of a regional or minority language for the purposes of Part II of the Charter’. Within the terms of the charter the United Kingdom government is obliged, among other things, to:

- Facilitate and/or encourage the use of Scots in speech and writing, in public and private life.
- Provide appropriate forms and means for the teaching and study of Scots at all appropriate stages.
- Provide facilities enabling non-speakers living where Scots is spoken to learn it if they so desire.

The above obligations imply the implementation of a language strategy.

Developing language strategies is not new in a European context. However, in the case of Scots, this has only recently become a serious possibility. As a consequence, many of those who may be involved in developing and implementing a language strategy for Scots will likely have limited knowledge and experience of such endeavours. Ultimately, developing and implementing a language strategy is a political exercise and as such is dependent on the resources that politicians are willing to allocate to it. In these budget-conscious times, what lessons can be learnt from corporate strategy planning in order to maximise the effective deployment of the resources that politicians are willing to allocate?

To survive in a competitive environment businesses engage in strategic planning, clearly defining realistic objectives founded on facts and empirical data rather than supposition, anecdotal evidence or unrealistic wish lists. Both the internal and external situation of the business or organisation has to be assessed in order to implement the strategy, progress needs to be

¹ <http://conventions.coe.int/treaty/en/Treaties/Html/148.htm>

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evaluated and any necessary adjustments made in order to ensure that the strategy fulfils the objectives which have been set.

A simplified overview of the strategic planning process can be summarised as follows:

1. Objectives have to be clearly defined and measurable.
2. The environmental scan identifies available resources and analyses the environment in which the strategy is to be implemented, often by analysing the political, economical, social and technological (PEST analysis) factors. The internal factors are usually analysed in terms of strengths and weaknesses and external factors in terms of opportunities and threats (SWOT analysis).
3. Strategy formulation is usually based on the information from the environmental scan, where strengths are matched to the opportunities identified while addressing weaknesses and external threats.
4. Strategy implementation is often done by people other than those responsible for formulating the strategy. It is therefore essential to communicate the strategy and the reasoning behind it in order to ensure success.
5. Evaluation and control is carried out by monitoring the strategy, determining if the previously defined measurable parameters have been met and then making adjustments as necessary to ensure the desired outcome.

When determining and implementing the various aspects or elements of a strategy, what lessons can be learnt from commercial marketing in order to maximise the strategy's potential? Marketing implementation decisions often fall into four controllable categories referred to as the 'four Ps', also known as the 'marketing mix'. All elements of the 'marketing mix' need to be coordinated in order to ensure that they all contain the same 'message' and avoid confusion by sending mixed 'messages'. For example, is the objective of the language strategy of which the 'marketing mix' is a component to encourage and secure diglossia or bidialectalism, or a process of language planning? Are the elements of the strategy consistently promoting one or the other or sometimes appearing to promote one and sometimes appearing to promote the other?

A simplified overview of the 'four Ps' and examples of the kind of questions that may be asked in order to define the marketing mix for elements of a strategy for Scots may be summarised as follows:

Product

- What do Scots-speakers want? What needs are satisfied?
- How and where will it be consumed by Scots-speakers?

Price

- What is the value to Scots-speakers of what is made available?
- How much time and effort are Scots-speakers prepared to invest in what is made available?

Place

- Where do Scots-speakers expect to consume what is made available?

Promotion

- Where and when will Scots-speakers be made aware of what is available?
- What are the choices for promotional activity?

Once answers to the four Ps above have been found it is usual to look at each 'P' again using 'why' and 'what if' questions in order to challenge the 'marketing mix'. *Why* do Scots-speakers need what is made available? *What if* changes and adjustments are made to what is made available? How will that affect interest and uptake of what is on offer? Answers have to be based on sound knowledge and facts. What market research or facts still need to be gathered? Finally, the 'marketing mix' of what is offered has to be tested from the consumer's, in this case the Scots-speaker's, perspective:

1. Does it meet their needs? (**product**)
2. Will they find it where they expect it? (**place**)
3. Will they be prepared to invest time and effort in accessing it? (**price**)
4. And will the publicity reach them? (**promotion**)

What are the objectives of a language strategy for Scots?

1. Encouraging and securing diglossia or bidialectalism through dialect maintenance where standard English remains the “H” variety and the Scots dialects the “L” variety. A situation in which literacy in Scots would likely consist of little more than a knowledge of dialect writing, thus negating the need for any written standard or regularised literary form for use in domains occupied by the “H” variety.
2. A process of language planning (cf. Haugen 1961) to facilitate bilingualism, either in a diglossic situation or in one where Scots may function as a ubiquitous alternative to Standard English with the attendant implications of a written standard (or at least a regularised orthography) but not necessarily a spoken standard.

How will a language strategy be influenced by popular perceptions of the status of Scots *vis-à-vis* language or dialect definitions? In developed literate western societies, the popular consciousness generally thinks of a language as having a standard written form and, perhaps also, a standardised spoken form which are taught in schools and used as a medium of instruction, with the standard form generally being used for public discourse in both print and electronic media. Closely related varieties lacking the above characteristics are generally considered dialects of the standard language which fulfils the functions described above. That position closely mirrors the *Ausbausprache* — *Abstandsprache* — *Dachsprache* framework described by Kloss (1967), also reflected in the findings of the 2010 ‘Public Attitudes Towards the Scots Language’ study (see below). The study determined that 64 percent of the adults in the sample agreed that they do not think of Scots as a language. Interestingly, those who speak Scots most frequently are least likely to agree that Scots is not a language. However, overall support for the use of Scots in culture (arts, drama, music, etc.) and broadcasting was found to be high, and with regard to education a majority were in favour of encouraging children in Scotland to speak Scots.

Presumably an integral objective of a language strategy would be ensuring intergenerational mother-tongue transmission rather than merely good things or impressive symbolic splashes. (Fishman 1991:12) Nevertheless, securing bidialectalism would tend to conform to the popular perception that

the varieties of Scots are heteronomous to and thus dialects of, Standard English, where English functions as the *Dachsprache*. However, the terms of the charter² would imply planning for bilingualism in autonomous languages, something a sceptical public would be unlikely to accept. Such scepticism would tend to indicate that an attempt to establish Scots as a ubiquitous alternative to Standard English would be met with both derision and hostility. However, attitudes can be changed by government action, as has been shown by legislation and awareness campaigns, over a period of decades, directed against prejudice and discrimination based on race, ethnicity, gender and sexuality. Such measures have resulted in considerable changes in public attitudes regarding such issues.

Implementation of the obligations entered into under the *European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages* has generally come to be the responsibility of the two devolved jurisdictions, Scotland and Northern Ireland.

Since the implementation of the Charter, government policy towards Scots has been incoherent, poorly assembled and implemented in a half-hearted and contradictory manner, with little evidence that the issue of language policy for Scots has been or is being taken seriously. (Millar 2005:76, 82) In the Scottish Executive's *National Cultural Strategy*³ published in 2000, Scots was little more than a footnote.

In 1997 the Labour–Liberal Democrat coalition which formed the then Scottish Executive published *A Strategy for Scotland's Languages: Draft version for Consultation*,⁴ which stated little more than that ‘the Scots language will be treated with respect and pride’ and ‘encouraging Scots language and literature in schools where appropriate.’ There was no mention of how it was intended to ensure that Scots will be ‘treated with respect and pride’; nor of what is considered appropriate or inappropriate use of Scots in a school environment. As such, the document fails as a strategy with respect to Scots. (Unger 2010:104) The consultation responses to the draft strategy

² General provisions, Article 1 – Definitions, a. “it does not include [...] dialects of the official language(s) of the State”

³ www.scotland.gov.uk/nationalculturalstrategy/docs/cult-00.asp

⁴ www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2007/01/24130746/2

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were also made available.⁵ A number of responses suggested that the document was in fact not a strategy, criticizing the contradictory nature of the proposals and lack of joined up thinking. The seriousness of any commitment to fulfilling the terms of the Charter with regards to Scots was also questioned, in particular the lack of a proposal to ensure an explicit mention of Scots in future curricula guidelines and the subsumption of Scots in the ‘different languages of Scotland’, which includes immigrant languages. Furthermore, the accuracy of the conclusion that ‘Scots is not an endangered language’ was also questioned as no supporting evidence was cited.

Shortly after publication of the draft strategy, elections resulted in a new SNP Executive, now rebranded as the ‘Scottish Government’. Consequently a final version of *A Strategy for Scotland's Languages* never came to fruition. However, the then and current SNP Government has shown signs of a willingness to take the issue of language policy for Scots more seriously and published an Audit of Current Scots Language Provision in Scotland in 2009.⁶ The findings were presented at the Scots Language Conference, a report of which was published.⁷ In 2010, a survey of public attitudes towards the Scots language was published.⁸ In October 2009, a ministerial working group with the task of making recommendations on steps to promote the Scots language was established.⁹

The report of the ministerial working group was subsequently published in November 2010.¹⁰ Although not a strategy, the report certainly included what could be the objective of a strategy in that Scots should ‘have an established, institutionalised and formally recognised place in all aspects of the national life, comparable to that enjoyed by Welsh in Wales and Scottish Gaelic in Scotland.’ The recommendations then focused on the following fields: education, broadcasting, literature and the arts, international contacts, public awareness and dialects.

⁵ www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2007/06/29140150/0

⁶ www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2009/01/23133726/0

⁷ www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2009/06/08164441/9

⁸ www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2010/01/06105123/9

⁹ www.scotland.gov.uk/News/Releases/2009/10/29151643

¹⁰ www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/332491/0108193.pdf

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The issues of Scots-speakers' awareness of their own and other dialects, literacy in Scots and the place of Scots in schools, further education institutions, adult learning, museums etc., the creative arts and the media were a thread throughout the report. Suggestions made towards addressing those issues were; to include a permanent 'Scots Language/ Scottish Literature Bureau' within the new Scottish Education Quality and Improvement Agency (SEQIA), to establish a nationwide network of coordinators able to deliver Scots language training and advice on resources, and to ensure greater availability of free teaching resources and improved teacher training. It was also recommended that the existing Scots bodies be consolidated and strengthened in order to ensure a source of expertise and that publicly funded media and culture organisations be 'actively encouraged to develop specific Scots language policies.'

A further recommendation was the 'recognition of dialect diversity'. The summary of discussions described the 'existence of striking differences between local dialects' and that 'divergent though the dialects are, they are nonetheless forms of the same Scots language.' The report recognised the 'need to preserve the individual dialects and respect their distinctive identities, while at the same time developing the language as a whole, will require careful planning: in particular, the necessity of developing a standard form of Scots for official purposes must be presented so as to avoid any appearance of a threat to the dialects.' It is assumed that 'standard form' refers to institutionalised transactional writing, the present author is not aware of anyone who advocates a spoken standard. People are free to indulge in creative and dialect writing as they please. Nevertheless, the differences between the (broad) Scots dialects are not as 'striking' as they may at first appear, all Scots dialects share the same underlying phonological system and much the same syntactical and morphological conventions. The different pronunciations of the same general Scots words are largely predictable, the differences are more often than not on the level of accent, particularly among the Central Scots dialects spoken south of the Tay. A number of words do, however, have only local or regional currency, in particular the insular dialects. An emphasis on divergence may run the risk of causing Scots-speakers to assume their dialect is specific to their locality and has little in common with the dialects spoken elsewhere in Lowland Scotland. That may then unwittingly foster a feeling among Scots-speakers that their

dialect is marginal and of little relevance or use elsewhere in Lowland Scotland, thus encouraging the use of more (standard) English rather than the habitual use of more Scots. It would perhaps be more profitable to describe Scots as being comprised of a number of (closely) related spoken dialects accompanied by a literary tradition employing established and prestigious (pan-dialect) orthographic conventions,¹¹ thus emphasising languageness rather than dialectness.

In March 2011 the Scottish Government published its response to the Scots Language Working Group Report.¹² The response was wholly positive with most all of the recommendation being ‘taken on board’ and some already implemented. With the election of a majority SNP government in the May 2011 elections there is an increased likelihood of further recommendations being implemented. However, whether there will be an integrated policy or strategy geared towards ensuring long-term intergenerational mother tongue transmission, or a continuation of uncoordinated ad hoc measures remains to be seen.

A question on Scots was included in the *2011 census*¹³ asking whether respondents can understand, speak, read or write Scots. However, in answer to the question ‘Do you use a language other than English at home?’ Scots speakers will presumably have written Scots under ‘other’. In order to address concerns about respondents’ linguistic awareness, the website *Aye Can*, presenting examples of both spoken and written Scots, was set up to address the issue.¹⁴

Broadcasting is a reserved matter and as such outwith the remit of the devolved administrations. Of the six public purposes expressed in the 2007 BBC Trust Charter which defines the main objective of the organisation, one

¹¹ And the Scots tongue has an orthography of its own, lacking neither “authority nor author.” (Stevenson 1905: 152) [...] Scots remains the one British dialect which may be represented today by a consistent (and traditional orthography). (Scragg 1975: 37)

¹² www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/346190/0115217.pdf

¹³ www.scotlandscensus.gov.uk/en/faq/209.html

¹⁴ www.ayecan.com

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is representing the UK, its nations, regions and communities,¹⁵ which includes a commitment to ‘support the UK’s indigenous languages where appropriate’. However, no elucidation is provided about what is considered appropriate.

The presence of Scots on television and radio is currently marginal and usually limited to comedy. The 2008 ‘Platform for Success’ final report of the Scottish Government’s Scottish Broadcasting Commission¹⁶ does not mention Scots at all. Mention is made of ‘Gaelic and other languages’ in relation to community radio output and a proposal to expand programming in the English language on the new Gaelic language television service BBC Alba (MG Alba).

Interest in Scots in Ulster was until fairly recently marginal but gained prominence from the 1980s, often being seen as a Unionist effort to match the growing popularity of Irish and influence of Irish language activists. In some quarters, the varieties of Scots spoken in Ulster being promoted as a sister language to Scots in Scotland — justified by such fanciful claims as that the relative positions of the two are analogous to those of Irish and Scottish Gaelic. (Robinson 2003:112) However, the linguist James Milroy observed that the Scots varieties spoken in Antrim and North Derry are barely distinguishable from those of Ayrshire. (1982:27)

In Northern Ireland, what was traditionally referred to as (*braid*) Scots or Scotch (Traynor 1953:36, 244, Nic Craith 2002:107) by native speakers has been rebranded as ‘Ulster-Scots’ — the hyphen emphasising its separate status (Kirk 2008:217) — and was recognised as such in the 1998 Good Friday Agreement¹⁷. In the agreement between the United Kingdom and Ireland establishing implementation bodies,¹⁸ the term ‘Ullans’ was used, defined as the variety of the Scots language traditionally found in parts of

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www.bbc.co.uk/bbctrust/assets/files/pdf/about/how_we_govern/purpose_remits/nations.pdf

¹⁶ www.scottishbroadcastingcommission.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/4/0000481.pdf

¹⁷ www.nio.gov.uk/agreement.pdf

¹⁸

www.nio.gov.uk/agreement_between_uk_government_and_irish_government_establishing_implementation_bodies.pdf

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Northern Ireland and Donegal. The Ulster–Scots Agency was established as part of the Language Body,¹⁹ its legislative remit being ‘the promotion of greater awareness and the use of Ullans [...] both within Northern Ireland and throughout the island’.

One immediate result of the Charter and the ‘parity of esteem’ expressed in the Good Friday Agreement was the appearance of numerous *Ulster–Scots* versions of official publications, most of which were symbolic rather than transactional in nature — being largely unintelligible to native speakers, often using mixed orthographies bearing little resemblance to that of the established literary tradition.

Proposals for an Ulster–Scots Academy had been circulating for a number of years, and in 2007 the Northern Ireland Department of Culture and Leisure (DCAL) published a public consultation document regarding proposals for such an Academy.²⁰ However, the reaction of academia in the responses²¹ was generally critical. The Ulster–Scots Agency criticised the proposed Academy for intending to promote Ulster–Scots as a language distinct from Scots. If Scots in Ulster is to be promoted as a sister language to Scots in Scotland, in particular with a divergent orthography, any advantages gained by economies of scale would be seriously diminished.

Although explicit mention of Scots in Scotland is absent in documents referring to BBC objectives, Ulster Scots fares better receiving mention in the UK Department for Culture, Media and Sport’s 2006 *A public service for all: the BBC in the digital age*.²² The BBC Northern Ireland management review for 2009–10²³ mentions coverage of Ulster–Scots stories and events and a new Ulster–Scots website rather than programming in Scots. In February 2010 the

¹⁹ www.northsouthministerialcouncil.org/index/north-south-implementation-bodies/language_body.htm

²⁰

www.dcalni.gov.uk/index/languages/public_consultation_on_proposals_for_an_ulster_scots_academy.pdf

²¹ www.dcalni.gov.uk/index/languages/usaig_-_consultation_-_full_responses__53_-2.doc

²² www.official-documents.gov.uk/document/cm67/6763/6763.pdf

²³

www.bbc.co.uk/northernireland/audiencouncil/docs/nations_mr_northern_ireland_0910final.pdf

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United Kingdom Government announced a pledge of £5 million for an Ulster–Scots Broadcasting Fund, but indications are that most programming will be about aspects of Ulster–Scots culture rather than in Scots.

In August 2010, the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure Research and Statistics Branch published a survey of ‘Public Views on Ulster–Scots Culture, Heritage and Language in Northern Ireland’.²⁴ Some 57 percent of respondents, of which more than 70 percent were over 50, said they were aware of the ‘Ulster–Scots language’, but only 18 percent expressed any interest in learning more about ‘the language’ and only 22 percent of them thought that children should have the option to study ‘the language’ in school.

One of the objectives of the DCAL Business Plan²⁵ for 2010–11 is to protect and enhance indigenous minority languages in line with the *European Charter* and the *Northern Ireland (St Andrew’s Agreement) Act 2006*²⁶ by developing a Minority Languages Strategy and putting in place the conditions for the establishment of the Ulster–Scots Academy mentioned above.

A question on ability to understand, speak, read or write Ulster Scots is proposed for the *2011 Census*,²⁷ a formulation implying that Scots–speakers from Scotland could indicate speaking ability only if they were able to imitate a Northern Irish accent.

Those recent reports and surveys have certainly gone some way towards identifying the available resources and analysing the environment in which a language strategy for Scots would be implemented. However, what information the census may deliver for language planners remains to be seen. Nevertheless, the inclusion of a question on Scots language ability will at least raise awareness of Scots as an issue.

Although a situation exactly comparable to Scots is difficult to find elsewhere, language revitalisation and planning endeavours in Europe and

²⁴ www.dcalni.gov.uk/ulster-scots_follow-up_report_-_secondary_analysis-2.pdf

²⁵ www.dcalni.gov.uk/departamental_business_plan_2010-11_-_final_version_-_april-2.doc

²⁶ www.nio.gov.uk/st_andrews_agreement.pdf

²⁷ www.nisranew.nisra.gov.uk/census/pdf/proposals.pdf

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further afield certainly provide insights into the issues likely to be confronted when developing a language strategy for Scots.

Language revitalisation endeavours in Catalonia, Friesland, Luxembourg and Norway involved, among other things, the establishing of normative orthographies and the expansion of the use of previously marginalised languages into domains from which they were previously largely excluded.

Catalan provides insight into a situation where a politically autonomous or devolved 'region or nation' enacted a process of language normalisation. In Catalonia the policy of recent decades has been to institutionalise Catalan as a functional language in all of the most powerful domains of modern life and overcome the legacy of native-speaker illiteracy and inferiority inherited from the Franco years, when official policy was to displace Catalan in favour of the closely related Castilian Spanish. From the thirteenth to the sixteenth century Catalan was the language of a considerable Mediterranean empire. By the nineteenth century Spanish had made serious inroads into all formal domains, but upper middle-class vernacular use of Catalan survived even up to the twentieth century. Immediately following the Spanish civil war, Catalan was denied any public presence and all public use of Catalan banned. The language was declared a mere dialect and those who spoke it described as 'barking like dogs' or as 'non-Christian'.

Frisian illustrates a situation in which a dominant language, Dutch, is spoken alongside a lesser-used but closely related language, Frisian, still spoken as a mother-tongue by approximately 54 percent of the population. The Fryske Akademy²⁸ was founded in 1938 as a scientific centre for research and education concerning Frisia, its people and language. Frisian is also an ethno-cultural expression of Frisianness. Frisian is taught in public schools as a school subject and is often used when communicating with local service industries and local government. The provincial public broadcaster Omrop Fryslân transmits exclusively in Frisian during its daily 17 hours of radio and two hours of television. Some programmes are subtitled in Dutch, such as the documentaries Fryslân DOK, which are also broadcast on a national channel. Apart from that, Frisian is heard extremely rarely on national radio and television. In the courts, spoken Frisian is accepted, but documents in

²⁸ www.fryske-akademy.nl/fa

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Frisian are only accepted as accompaniments to the official and obligatory Dutch ones. In the provincial assembly presentations can be made in either Frisian or Dutch without translation.

Luxembourgish, recognised as the national language of Luxembourg, is a High German variety, containing some French loans, and is thus closely related to Standard German. An official orthography was introduced in 1975, with further modifications made in 1999. Pre-school education is in Luxembourgish, primary education is in German and French, and secondary education is in French. Parliamentary debates are usually in Luxembourgish, though some French is also used. However, laws are drafted in French. When dealing with the authorities people are free to use French, German or Luxembourgish. Luxembourgish is also used in broadcasting.

The situation in **Norway** illustrates a longer-term language planning process which established a national language. From the sixteenth to the nineteenth century, Danish was the standard written language of Norway. During the twentieth century an ongoing process of developing a national language ensued, which resulted in the two official forms of *written* Norwegian — Bokmål (a Norwegianised variety of Danish) and Nynorsk (based on the traditional Norwegian dialects) — currently used. There is no officially sanctioned standard spoken Norwegian. The basis and rationale of the language planning process was and is dialect maintenance. Consequently, most Norwegians speak their own dialect in all circumstances.

Swiss German offers an example of a fairly stable diglossia between the use of an essentially extraterritorial written standard and autochthonous dialects for verbal communication. In Switzerland almost all writing is done in Standard German, albeit a marginally differentiated Swiss variety thereof. However, it is normal for all people in German-speaking Switzerland to speak their own dialect in all social situations. At the end of the nineteenth century, indications were that Standard German was on the way to becoming the prestigious spoken form. However, during the early twentieth century a number of popularly supported *Mundartwellen* (dialect waves) swept German-speaking Switzerland. Those started in Bern with a renaissance of dialect literature and the use of dialect in the Canton parliament, spreading to Zürich by the 1930s, then soon becoming part of the *geistige*

Landesverteidigung (intellectual defence of the country) against Nazi Germany. The ultimate outcome was a tradition of vigilance and respect for the dialects which, from the 1960s, saw the use of spoken dialect spread into almost all domains of everyday life. Nevertheless, the dialects are under pressure from the standard language in a process whereby dialect lexis is replaced by standard equivalents, dialect levelling is brought about by increased mobility and there is what is known as *Großratsdeutsch*, where Standard German vocabulary and syntax is expressed using a Swiss–German pronunciation rather than being translated into dialect.

Examples of the development of bidialectal education policies can be found in the **Caribbean** and the **United States**. There, until relatively recently, the norm for education policy was to enforce the superiority of the English spoken by the ‘social elite’ and, by extension, the superiority of that group itself, a consequence of which was to denigrate non–standard varieties of English and Creole, and devalue the speakers of such varieties themselves. Since at least the 1960s, more culturally responsible curricula have been developed where strategies for improving Standard English acquisition among non–standard speakers value and celebrate diversity in language (and other areas) as good for everybody. For example, in Trinidad and Tobago, official guidelines encourage bidialectism between local Standard English and Creole by including works of fiction in both Caribbean English and Creole in the curriculum, in particular ensuring that Creole is not limited to the functions of amusement. In the United States the recognition that African American Vernacular English is a linguistic system rather than simply ‘bad English’ had begun to shape approaches to improving Standard English proficiency amongst AAVE–speaking pupils. The so–called Oakland Ebonics Controversy illustrated how negative publicity can undermine the ‘marketing’ of an inclusive language policy by failing to bridge the chasm between popular ill–informed language beliefs and professional specialist expertise. The ‘controversy’ raged around misinterpretations, based on prejudice and ignorance, of proposals which recognised that Standard English proficiency amongst AAVE–speaking pupils could be improved by applying principles derived from bilingual or second language learning in a bidialectal situation. A common popular misconception, finding resonance in the media, equated

the proposals with teaching pupils slang or drug culture.²⁹ The situation was mirrored in the United Kingdom, where a commentator in the Daily Express summarised the Teaching and Learning Scotland's website³⁰ content about Scots in Schools as an exercise in teaching pupils how to send mobile telephone text messages in slang.³¹

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²⁹ Daily News (New York 26.12.1996) "Don't Get Hooked On Ebonics". (www.nydailynews.com/archives/opinions/1996/12/26/1996-12-26_don_t_get_hooked_on_ebonics.html)

³⁰ www.ltscotland.org.uk/knowledgeoflanguage/scots/index.asp

³¹ Daily Express (21.08.2010) "Schools teach children how to text in slang". (www.express.co.uk/posts/view/194590/Schools-teach-children-how-to-text-in-slang)

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