1 Prologue

In this introductory section we will demarcate the area covered by the term “global scale sociolinguistics” by asking three questions relating to its historical underpinnings, its methodology, and methodological tools. If we consider sociolinguistics as a sort of generic label, one could then ask the question: What type of sociolinguistics? And to that query one could answer the sociology of language tradition, if sociolinguistics on a global scale is what we have in mind.

Next, we could ask the question: What specific methodology is applied to this tradition? The answer is, that both descriptive-comparative (historical/anecdotal/typological) and descriptive-analytical (questionnaire/statistical) approaches are available. The former is based on the language usage of human groups and the latter on a structured database resulting in numerous multivariate analyses, involving ascribed and acquired criteria of languages, their speakers and communities on the one hand, and the whole sociocultural universe with its countless variables on the other.

Finally, one could ask: What specific analytical constructs/tools are available to this tradition, which will allow it to better structure and subsequently analyze this sociocultural universe? First, there is the typologizing of both languages and social groups, which can give rise to numerous juxtapositions, comparisons, dichotomies, grids, and formulas, generally resulting in useful but gross types of measurements, and beyond that, comparisons with the all–encompassing sociocultural universe. How that universe impinges on human social groups and their languages can be tested and approximated at this stage by examining a number of “external” variables, in relation to “internal” variable “presence/usage” for languages or “representation/control” for groups. Through various types of multivariate analyses we can begin to monitor changes in both these internal and external variables, with the aim of arriving at valuable hypotheses regarding both causes and effects or even outcomes. Once more research has been done along these lines, we should be able to see beyond short–term, direct linear relationships to cyclical ones. Hence what is designated in any model as “internal/external” is only internal and external in a relatively restricted way, as in the case of a construct or a convention. The real nonmodular world is more systemic, layered, and cyclical in nature.

Apart from empirically recording, measuring, and mapping this presence/usage of languages and representation/control of groups, we also want to know more about specific criteria linked to maintenance and diffusion, so as to discover whether such criteria are universally so linked in time and space, or whether their action depends on types of contexts and more particularly types of language and community contact patterns. If these questions can be clarified by a process of continual testing (adding and discarding criteria) in context within the sociology of language research tradition, then much can be accomplished in the future toward understanding the play of social forces in general and the effectiveness of language planning in particular.

A structuring of the above analytical approach by the continuing preparation and application of new analytical tools and other frame–of–reference constructs is important and this we have done in
particular for language (presence/usage) by developing (1) “an illustrated model of language
development,” which has allowed us to develop various types of vitality rates for languages and (2) “a
general power model of contextual and vital forces and their resolution,” which has allowed us to work
on multivariate analyses (see details of these models in section 6).

If the sociology of language is preoccupied with language presence/usage in terms of social functions
and roles, as well as the environmental forces of change that influence these roles, then it may be
argued that some sort of program of control or planning should be applied to influence the course of
events. Hence, language planning can be treated as a subdiscipline of socio-linguistics on a global
scale and within it status planning, which refers specifically to the roles or purposes of languages in
society and hence their relative importance. From a structured point of view the role of language in
society is clearly a functional role (presence/usage) that perforce must be contextualized institutionally
and geographically. Now it stands to reason that if this functional type role for language can be
demarcated, it can also be recorded, measured, and even mapped. In doing so, we provide a
fundamentally new, measurable, and internal type of variable, which designates “presence/usage” of a
language in a society and against which many other external, socio-cultural, and explanatory variables
may be compared. This “internal” usage variable we have called language vitality, which reflects the
“inner” force of a language’s presence. As a concept, it can also be perceived in terms of development,
as seen in the illustrated model of language development in section 6. Here it is structured and
positive in outlook but it can also be seen as stable or even negative, when, for example, a language
has a dropping vitality rate. Apart from its intrinsic interest and value as a quantified measurement of
functional change, vitality rates are also a useful tool for specific comparisons and more global
multivariate analyses. For this reason it constitutes a valuable tool for global scale sociolinguistics.

In considering the above three questions regarding (1) the type of sociolinguistics covered in this
article, (2) the methodological approaches available, and (3) the supportive models and tools
developed, we can more easily assess sociolinguistics on a global scale with regard to its present
situation and future prospects. Then by adding the concepts of language planning and language
vitality, we can better understand what is fully meant by sociolinguistics on a global scale. Let us now
turn briefly to its relationship with other types of sociolinguistic studies, which also involve the study
of language in society.

2 Sociolinguistics – Definitions and Orientations

This section gives two examples regarding the historical underpinnings of sociolinguistics on a global
scale, namely, the sociology of language school of Fishman and the social linguistics school of Hymes.

The type of sociolinguistics most closely related to sociolinguistics on a global scale is that proposed
by J. A. Fishman (1972) in The Sociology of Language. For him there are two parts to the sociology of
language universe: (1) “the descriptive sociology of languages” and (2) “the dynamic sociology of
languages.” The descriptive part “is concerned with describing the generally accepted social
organization of language usage within a speech community,” and “tries to disclose the norms of
language usage.” The dynamic part seeks to answer the question, “What accounts for different rates of
change in the social organization of language use and behavior toward language?” Fishman’s definition
is closely related to our global orientation, because its thrust basically concerns functional,
institutional, and norm–oriented usage. Also, both orientations are heavily weighted in the macro
sphere and language is clearly their main object of study.

Another type of sociolinguistics called social linguistics is that promulgated by Hymes (1974) in his
Foundations in Sociolinguistics: An Ethnographic Approach. His is a cultural and communication rather
than a primarily language–oriented approach. “It is rather that it is not linguistics, but ethnography,
not language, but communication, which must provide the frame of reference within which the place of
language in culture and society is to be assessed” (p. 4). Hymes sets out three goals of sociolinguistics,
as follows:

1 The social as well as the linguistic. This covers social problems and language use, akin to
Fishman’s sociology of language approach.

2 Socially realistic linguistics. This is a Labovian approach involving “data from the speech
community.”
3 Socially constituted linguistics. This is specifically Hymes's approach and involves an infusion of linguistic form into social function. It is “social function that gives form to the ways in which linguistic features are encountered in actual life.” But, according to Hymes, it is social function, through context, which not only gives form but also meaning to linguistic features, through the selection and grouping of linguistic elements. An additional modicum of meaning is added from the larger environment. “A ‘socially constituted’linguistics is concerned with contextual as well as referential meaning, and with language as part of communicative conduct and social action” (pp. 195–7). Hymes's approach is vast, seeming to cover both the macro and micro spheres, and includes both contextual and referential meaning. Language for him is only a part of a larger universe of communication and both are embedded in an even broader social and cultural background from which ultimate meaning is to be sought.

Hymes's ethnography of communication approach was also adopted by others such as J. J. Gumperz (1972) in Directions in Sociolinguistics and later in M. Saville-Troike (1982) in The Ethnography of Communication. According to the latter author the ethnography of communication has two foci: “the description and understanding of communicative behavior in specific cultural settings” and the “formulation of concepts and theories upon which to build a global metatheory of human communication” (p. 2). Whether Hymes and his successors were successful in accomplishing these two aims remains a judgment of history. In the meantime communication theory has exploded well beyond the frontiers of language, which suggests that Hymes and others may well have been precursors of a broader sociocultural view of communication. From the viewpoint of sociolinguistics on a global scale, what is still lacking is a structured “language form–social function” model, supported by a global metatheory capable of hypothesizing language forms through social functions and the reverse. But even if this were accomplished, it would not nearly satisfy Hymes's ambitious plan for a larger general theory of communication and meaning well beyond the confines of language.

### 3 Global Scale Sociolinguistics and Language Planning

This section examines the definitions of language planning and shows how they vary in orientation depending on whether the focus is on language, society, or politics.

We have already mentioned above the link between global scale sociolinguistics and language planning. Language planning can be viewed or defined from several points of view even on a global scale, i.e., as being linguistically oriented, socially oriented, or politically oriented. These different orientations are interdependent; all are invariably linked to change and development, but the emphasis, from a definitional and objective point of view, can be distinct. If language planning represents change and development, it can also be seen as overcoming language, social, and political problems that impede desired change and development.

Below are examples of three definitions, each with its own orientation: (i) linguistic, (ii) social, and (iii) political:

(i) The linguistically oriented definition is that of Kloss (1967): “The term Ausbausprache may be defined as ‘language by development’. Languages belonging to this category are recognized as such because of having been shaped or reshaped, molded or remolded – as the case may be – in order to become a standard tool of literary expression (p. 29).

(ii) The socially oriented definition is that of Fishman (1987): “For me, language planning remains the authoritative allocation of resources to the attainment of language status and language corpus goals, whether in connection with new functions that are aspired to, or in connection with old functions that need to be discharged more adequately” (p. 409).

(iii) The politically oriented definition is that of Abou (1987): “The object of any planned linguistic change is to reduce competition between languages or language varieties and to rationally structure their coexistence within a society” (p. 11).

The Kloss definition emphasizes language corpus goals and sees language in terms of its standardization, particularly as a written tool of modern society. Language planning is goal oriented in terms of language form (standard), which should also be a reflection of language function. In the
Fishman definition there is mention of both status and corpus goals and these in relation to specific social functions. Abou's definition involves problem-solving on the political level and emphasizes a functional allocation of whole languages or varieties of languages within a sociopolitical order.

Language planning as a process has been widely described in the literature by Haugen (1966), Fishman (1974), Rubin and Jernudd (1971), and others. Haugen on a number of occasions (1966, 1983, 1987) proposed his "fourfold model" of language planning with its (1) selection, (2) codification, (3) elaboration, and (4) implementation. Figure 21.1 gives a modified cyclical version of LP, which is inspired by Haugen's earlier model. The cyclical model by its form intends to be dynamic in structure, distinguishing corpus (form) and status (function) phases of LP, including intermediary (form/function) phases. Central to the four peripheral steps is a fifth centrally situated policy step, which acts as a point of reference for the other steps. This contains a strategy and monitoring process, which amounts to a feed–back and evaluation operation for each step in the cyclical process.

![Figure 21.1A cyclical model of language planning.](http://www.blackwellreference.com/subscriber/uid=532/tocnode?id=g9780631211938... 28.12.2007)

4 Global Scale Sociolinguistics and the Descriptive Tradition

In trying to answer the question of what specific methodology or methodologies to apply to global scale sociolinguistics, we come up with the answer that both descriptive-comparative and descriptive-analytical approaches are available. It is the first or descriptive-comparative approach that will be discussed first in this section.

In the early development stages of the sociology of language much purely descriptive and historical case–study material became available. This was understandable and necessary, because there was much to cover and descriptive material of this nature was not widely known or was completely original in those first heady years of the 1960s, when sociolinguistics came into its own as a discipline. Few linguists had previously bothered to describe the functional roles of languages either within or between communities on a regional basis, or within or between states on a sociopolitical basis. In the meantime linguists had moved from a structuralist and systemic to a social and functional stance, in which variation in language form was axiomatic of social function. Idiosyncratic forms were no longer seen as extraneous but as part of social function. A change in function or the grouping of functions could lead to change in linguistic form and also to subtle changes in meaning.

Two types of material are available in this descriptive tradition: (i) anecdotal, historical, case-study and portrait-type material that "tells a story" and reveals facts unknown before and (ii) more structured typological material, either nominal or statistical, that can lead to relationships of a comparative and
contrastive nature with regard to languages and their social functions. Typological research was a part of the sociology of language from the beginning and includes such names as Kloss (1968), Ferguson (1966), Stewart (1962), and Rustow (1968). The earliest efforts concentrated on typologizing countries and languages, the latter usually from a functional perspective. These efforts were useful in categorizing descriptive data in the vast social sphere, but were also useful adjuncts to the quantitative tradition, as we will see in section 5.

This descriptive–comparative tradition covers the first part of the Sociology of language mentioned by Fishman, i.e., the descriptive sociology of language, which, to paraphrase him, aims at describing the social norm of language usage in a speech community. But the sociology of language goes beyond social norm to include individual behavior, for it also seeks to answer Fishman's now famous question: "Who speaks (or writes) what language (or what language variety) to whom and when and to what end?" Now the "who speaks to whom" part of the question is particularly interesting to analyze, because in singling out individual verbal exchanges between individuals, Fishman is in the micro sphere of face-to-face contacts. The "when" and "what end" parts of the question refer in the first instance to "frequency (how often)" or by inference "location," and in the second instance to "purpose," which can be linked to behavior and attitudes or to "locale or situation" by inference. Indeed, as worded, the question has an individual speaker micro-orientation rather than a functional social norm macro-orientation. The micro-orientation can be quite useful for a sample survey of smaller social networks and communities, which is probably what Fishman had in mind, but it is unlikely to be applicable to a full-blown macro survey.

Hence a question in the macro sphere would have to be worded quite differently, with specific reference not to the individual speaker but rather to the functional norm of a language in terms of its frequency of use in a specific context. The type of macro-oriented question could be as follows: "What language (or language variety) is used (spoken/written) where and with what frequency?" Here "frequency" refers to a scale of intensity of usage, e.g., all or most of the time, and "where" refers to some context, which in the first instance would be part of an institutional construct or domain and in the second instance a specific locale involving agents and an activity, e.g., someone on the telephone in the office. This question, which also implies a macro construct, is required for large-scale macro studies so that some order can be brought to such a vast universe as the social one. Fishman (1972) heavily emphasized domain not just for its own intrinsic value, but as a construct capable of both distinguishing and linking individual behavior with social norm behavior.

Thus, domain is a sociocultural construct abstracted from topics of communication, relationships between communicators, and locales of communication, in accord with the institutions of a society and the spheres of activity of a speech community, in such a way that individual behavior and social patterns can be distinguished from each other and yet related to each other.

(p. 442)

The sociology of language tradition is solidly anchored in both the macro and micro spheres and for that reason is a good basis on which to construct a global scale sociolinguistics. This sociolinguistics will require a firm descriptive foundation, and should be able to build on that already established, particularly with regard to typologies. It should also be capable of linking the macro and micro spheres, using appropriate models and questionnaire instruments. And it should, through the quantitative tradition, be able to capture better what Fishman termed the dynamic sociology of languages. Let us now examine the quantitative tradition.

5 Global Scale Sociolinguistics and the Quantitative Tradition

In this section we will discuss the second or descriptive–analytical approach, particularly with regard to the macro tradition.

In the 1960s, with the rapid evolution in language sciences, the quantitative tradition began to loom large in importance, so large that it cut across many linguistic schools and traditions. This tradition was particularly strong for what Hymes termed "socially realistic linguistics" (see above), i.e., the
Labovian tradition, where social criteria were closely matched to purely linguistic characteristics, such as phonetic variations and their relationship to class structure. As a result of this tradition, certain kinds of linguistic variation became closely identified with class and other types of "vertical" social variables, particularly regarding urban areas. Historically this constituted a breakthrough, first in the link between linguistic and social variables per se, and secondly in the link between linguistic variation and vertical stratification. The link between linguistic variation and horizontal (spatial) variables had long been established in dialectology, but since the advent of sociolinguistics new demographic variables were being hypothesized almost daily. Once a conceptual and statistical link had been established between language and social variation, undoubtedly because of a strong influence from neighboring sciences such as sociology and psychology, the doors were open wide for incoming influences regarding the quantitative tradition. Hence new types of metalinguistics suddenly appeared, such as sociolinguistics, psycholinguistics, demolinguistics, and geolinguistics. The quantitative traditions of the parent disciplines were usually based on laboratory experimentation and small group testing for psychology, on social group and class sample surveys for sociology, and on appropriate data banks for demography and geography. Psycholinguistics continued this laboratory tradition through testing in the classroom and became focused on language learning, as well as measuring the influence of attitudes in language maintenance and spread. Sociolinguistics, which finally became a generic term for a number of traditions, continued the quantitative sociological tradition, through the use of social class criteria, particularly in the social linguistics tradition and a combination of the sociology and psychology traditions in the sociology of language tradition.

Both the social linguistics tradition of Hymes, Gumperz, Saville-Troike, and others and the sociology of language tradition of Fishman, Kloss, Ferguson, and others became heavily influenced by the quantitative-analytical tradition. The social linguistics school was always close to the face-to-face tradition of language discourse, conversation, code-switching and specifically addresses itself to Fishman's earlier question, "Who speaks what to whom?" The second or sociology of language school, as we noted, had the broadest outlook in that it attempted to deal both with face-to-face relationships and with language norms through the use of broader-based, more abstract constructs such as domain. Fishman should be credited with being one of the very few who attempted, through the use of the domain construct and the macro and micro spheres, to account for and explain language function and behavior in regard to language. Conceptually and methodologically, the key question was and is, how best to account for language and societal congruency, interdependency, and change?

Most micros have been testing specific locales only in a very few domains and most macros have not only shied away from detailed functional analyses but have simply ignored cognitive studies. Any progress that can be made toward dovetailing the two approaches, so that methodologically we become more effective and instrumentally more capable and powerful, will undoubtedly help sociolinguists to answer many more questions than they have hitherto been able to do. Unfortunately, very few seem concerned with developing and exploiting this macro–micro dichotomy either conceptually or pragmatically in terms of methodological integration or questionnaire preparation. The micros have involved themselves more and more in corpus/text analysis, particularly with regard to its interaction with computer technology involving automatic correction and translation. The macro thrust has either played itself out, or has remained at the descriptive and multivariate analysis levels, all the time using a very skimpy database as a basis of operation and analysis. Macro when compared to micro studies were, of course, always at a disadvantage regarding the database, due to its immensity, complexity, and to practical concerns such as data–gathering costs. This, together with the general paucity of national and international functional language data (other than in the school domain), has caused macro studies to become stuck in their own tracks.

Here we are beginning to operate within the second part of Fishman's sociology of language, which he called the "dynamic sociology of languages" (see above). But this stage cannot be realized in any definitive way without engaging in a full–scale data–gathering effort that is conceptually and methodologically structured. This, in turn, implies vast international surveys, which would require funding far beyond the present capacities of most international and national funding organizations. Unfortunately, the timing is poor as the present research focus is no longer on language studies. They are now considered developmentally irrelevant and not technically oriented enough to be worthy of scarce research and development funds. In terms of development issues both language and culture are now deemed to be either too explosive politically or too irrelevant developmentally to be worthy of more than the conventional lip service.
6 Global Scale Sociolinguistics: A New Conceptual Framework

In the earlier sections we presented a historical and analytical overview of the composition and directional thrust of what we have been calling sociolinguistics, that is, the study of language in a social milieu. We then briefly described its corollary, language planning, with particular focus on status planning, given its orientation to role and hence functional presence/usage. From there, we demonstrated empirically how functional presence/usage could be used as both a descriptive and a quantitative tool for both the descriptive and quantitative traditions.

In this section we will try to determine what kind of research thrust in global scale sociolinguistics can be mounted, so that the present stalemate in socio-linguistics and more particularly the sociology of language can be overcome, so that the macro-micro connection can be further developed, and so that disparate schools of thought in sociolinguistics can perhaps be brought closer together. In order that this should not be done in an ad hoc fashion, some kind of conceptual reference framework must be proposed, so that these various tendencies and concepts can find their legitimate places.

One such effort at structuring came from the psycholinguistic school, where an attempt was being made to evaluate group behavior in terms of perceived strength, i.e., how group members perceived their own strength and that of neighboring groups. It was argued that perceived in-group/out-group strength had an effect on group cohesion and, in extremis, long-term group survival. This perceived strength was called ethnolinguistic vitality, which was a subjective vitality of own/other group cohesiveness, distinctiveness, and activity. The article in question, "Towards a theory of language in ethnic group relations," co-authored by Giles, Bourhis, and Taylor, appeared in Language, Ethnicity and Intergroup Relations (1977), edited by Giles. The article enquires as to what structural variables would most likely influence ethnolinguistic vitality and the answer is found in what is termed a "taxonomy of structural variables," which the authors place under three main headings: (1) status, (2) demography, and (3) institutional support (see Figure 21.2). What is of interest here is that Giles and others have proposed a construct that includes both group and language, that the subjective or cognitive evaluation of vitality is supported by three types of structural variables, and that the third or institutional support variable is based on representation in the case of a group and on functional usage in the case of a language. Giles and others did not actually propose a quantified measurement of vitality but proposed nominal – high, low, medium – variables, or a "vitality configuration" by ethnic group for each of the three variables. But what was really innovative from a sociolinguistic point of view was this juxtaposing of group and language in terms of presence and usage, as well as the "three–factored view" of reality construct, which proposed an objective set of situational and structural variables in what was basically a cognitive approach. With these combinations of structured pieces of reality, some more cognitive and micro–oriented and others more structural and macro–oriented, a model of ethnolinguistic vitality was produced, which at least pointed the way to further theoretical developments in the same direction. If Fishman's phase of the "dynamic sociology of languages" is to be completely realized, or any metatheory of language and social structures created, such models are not only necessary but indispensable.
McConnell (1991), in *A Macro-Sociolinguistic Analysis of Language Vitality*, used the above taxonomy as an initial inspiration for two theoretical constructs, namely (1) “an illustrated model of language development” (see figure 21.3), where the macro structural analysis of language in society was proposed. This is conceived as three axes – according to degree of subtlety – with the outermost axis representing time and geographical space, the second axis that of social domain and its levels, and the innermost axis involving functions/products and their frequencies. The database lending support to this structure is to be found in the collection *The Written Languages of the World: A Survey of the Degree and Modes of Use*, edited by Kloss and McConnell. The combination of the above model and database has allowed us to quantitatively measure the vitality rate of any language in the world for which we have data, through the use of the standard questionnaire used in the written languages project. A detailed description of vitality rate calculations is available in McConnell and Gendron (1988), *Dimensions et mesure de la vitalité linguistique*.
The second theoretical construct is called (2) "a general power model of contextual and vital forces and their resolution" (see figure 21.4). This too is a macro structural model, but more specifically a contextual model of language contact, in which the institutional support structure in the Giles model, containing domains and functions, is resolved into an "internal" language vitality rate. This rate in turn can be mitigated by "external" pressures or sociocultural forces, which directly and indirectly influence the functional utility of any language, i.e., directly through the functional pressures of other languages and indirectly through various environmental influences. In the Giles model some of these environmental forces have already been included, namely demographic ones, but there are also status ones. These seem to refer to an evaluational status based on cognitive criteria. However, the point to be made here is that, in working on and developing contextual models for several regions and countries of the world, various external criteria can be tested regarding their influence on vitality to see if they are universally important, i.e., reoccurring in many heterogeneous contexts, or only incidentally important, i.e., relevant to certain types of contact configurations.

What can be further mentioned regarding the new research thrust in global scale sociolinguistics? First, in order to be successful it has to be hardnosed and applicable. Hence, there is the newly developed concept of vitality rates and their calculations. This can of course be further refined and other types of vitality rates prepared, such as those based on products alone, e.g., the number of books or the hours of broadcasting. Further, a cartography of language functions has now been developed that is quantified as vitality rates, most notably in the McConnell and Gendron International Atlas of Language Vitality (1993–95) series. A variation of this cartography based on the demographics of specific language functions (languages taught or used in the schools around the world) but geared to language spread in public and geographical space has also been published (see McConnell and Roberge, 1994).

Second, further research must be done on language contact situations around the world, testing various language contact scenarios with various configurations of variables. A cartography of contact configurations is also feasible as a result of this work but has not yet been developed. Finally, further
modular work is required so that the conceptual frame of reference for global scale sociolinguistics can be expanded in order to include both macro and micro dimensions but also language and ethnic group orientations. Four questionnaires were recently developed by McConnell, Giles, and Harwood, which included a synthesis for (i) language in terms of functions, (ii) ethnic group in terms of representation/control, (iii) cognitive evaluations of language regarding functions, and (iv) cognitive evaluations of groups regarding representation/control. This inductive approach could be the first step leading to a metatheory of language and group regarding their sustenance and survival.

1 Translated from: “L'objectif de tout changement linguistique planifié étant de réduire la concurrence entre les langues ou les variantes d'une langue et d'ordonner rationnellement leur coexistence au sein de la société.”

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