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THE SOCIOLOGICAL CONTEXT

OF

LITERACY PROGRAMS:

A Review of Non-Formal Adult Literacy Programs in AID

by

Susan J. Hoben

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The views and interpretations in this publication are those of the author and should not be attributed to the Agency for International Development.

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I. INTRODUCTION

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to help USAID design and implement effective nonformal literacy programs suited to the needs and language use of adult illiterates by identifying the sociolinguistic factors that affect the motivation of prospective beneficiaries, the policy makers' choice of language, and the appropriateness of the instruction offered. I will examine AID's efforts in selected nonformal adult literacy projects in relation to their sociolinguistic context in order to illustrate the impact of sociolinguistic factors on the outcome of projects. I will then suggest ways of taking account of those factors in planning projects fine-tuned to local needs and conditions.

The report is based on three months' review of:

- relevant sociolinguistic literature on language use and language planning in emerging nations with particular focus on those nations in which AID has supported projects;
- project and evaluation documents held by DIU and identified by a computer search yielding a list of twenty relevant projects in seventeen countries;
- supplementary AID-sponsored studies available through the AID Resource Center.

I have attempted to identify variables that affect the motivation of prospective beneficiaries, the choice of language for literacy, and the results of literacy projects from sociolinguistic studies and analyses. In addition I looked for studies that provide sociolinguistic background information on areas in which AID has sponsored literacy projects. In reviewing AID project papers and evaluations, I considered both the type of questions they raise about the sociolinguistic context of projects and the implicit assumptions they make about the context in which projects were implemented. Since sociolinguistic information in AID documents is uneven or nonexistent, it is often impossible to trace the direct effects of sociolinguistic factors on literacy programs. Instead, I have been forced to interpret the effects of these factors by comparing AID's records with background information from outside studies.

The field of sociolinguistics is concerned with the use of languages in their social context. It deals with the geographic distribution of languages, the roles different languages play within a speech community, aspects of language planning and development, and social patterns of language choice.

On the basis of sociolinguistic and AID materials I selected projects in seven countries for more intensive study. I chose cases that would enable me to:

- observe the effects of contrastive sociolinguistic backgrounds on similar projects;
- compare literacy programs with different types of AID input in similar sociolinguistic environments;

- examine criteria of language choice in literacy projects;
- compare geographically proximate and geographically distant programs.

The following projects, all of which have a nonformal adult literacy component, were chosen:

- Adult Education, Liberia, 1961-3;
- Non-formal Education, Ecuador, 1971-1975;
- Non-formal Education, Peru, 1971-1978; and Educational Service Centers, Peru, 1979-1982;
- Rural Education I, Bolivia, 1976-1980;
- Integrated Non-formal Education: Hill tribes, Thailand, 1975-present
- Integrated Family Life Education, Ethiopia, 1973-1980.

For purposes of comparison, in Part III, I have also examined:

- AID support for formal education in Liberia, reviewed by HIID;
- Bilingual Education, Paraguay, 1978-1982.

Whenever possible, I gathered additional information on the cases through interviews with area experts and with AID personnel who were involved with the projects. In the interviews with AID personnel, I learned more about whether and how context factors entered into the planning and operation of the projects.

The selected cases are used as examples throughout the discussion that follows. I will describe the projects in Part III and examine them in their sociolinguistic context in Part IV.

Organization of the report

Part II of this report provides an overview of donor experience with literacy programs over the past three decades. Part III is concerned with what AID has done to increase literacy and introduces the cases as examples of AID's efforts. Part IV discusses sociolinguistic factors that affect the success of literacy programs and examines the impact of these factors on the cases discussed. Part V recommends a strategy for integrating sociolinguistic information into AID policy, planning, and program design.

II. BACKGROUND

In the early 1950s UNESCO, as well as other donors and developing nations, launched a major multilateral effort to eradicate illiteracy by 1980. The effort has been partially successful. Over the past three decades the absolute number of literates has increased and literacy rates have risen worldwide from 55.7% to 64%. Instead of dwindling, however, the estimated number of illiterates has grown by over 100 million from approximately 700 million in 1950 to 814 million or more in 1980 (Bhola 1980). The problem of eliminating illiteracy has proved more complex and intractable than anticipated.

The kinds of programs UNESCO has advocated can best be understood in terms of assumptions about the causes of illiteracy on which each rests. At mid-century the problem of access was considered the major impediment to universal literacy. UNESCO's strong support of literacy in vernacular languages (UNESCO 1953, 1966). Its encouragement of nonformal adult education, educational support for rural areas, and national literacy campaigns can all be seen as attempts to put literacy programs in local languages within the reach of nonurban populations. But by 1960, evidence was mounting that literacy programs in vernacular languages and mass campaigns were not reducing the pool of illiterates.

The first decade of literacy efforts was plagued by underenrollment, high dropout rates, and relapse into illiteracy. Motivation of the intended beneficiaries appeared to be the major stumbling block. To confront these problems UNESCO initiated an Experimental World Literacy Program (EWLP) in the mid-1960s which linked literacy training to economic incentives in pilot projects in eleven countries. UNESCO's evaluation of the outcome (UNESCO/UNDP 1976), however, indicates that the problems have persisted; at the same time, the number of illiterates continues to grow.

Since the end of the EWLP in the early 1970s, UNESCO experts have been less clear about the direction literacy projects should take. Underlying the apparent confusion of directions is a growing awareness that incentives to becoming literate are more complicated than they at first appeared. Work-Oriented Literacy Programs (WOLP) emphasize economic incentives by offering skills training along with literacy. Some experts suggest that the development of post-literacy materials is needed to reinforce the reading skills of neoliterates (UNESCO 1977). Others advocate a return to mass campaigns, but with a strong participatory bias, modelled on those of the revolutionary governments in Cuba, Somalia, and Nicaragua (Bhola 1980). There is also growing interest in the possible uses of the electronic media--satellite transmission, TV, tape cassettes, and rural radio--either to enhance adult literacy training or to circumvent it.

While literacy is a prime concern for UNESCO, literacy projects play only a minor role in AID programs. Consequently, AID has usually followed the lead of UNESCO experts in planning literacy programs. In the next section I will describe types of AID projects that have resulted from this strategy.

III. AID'S LITERACY EFFORTS

Despite AID's mandate to sponsor literacy among its programs benefiting the rural poor and disadvantaged minorities (Foreign Assistance Act, Sects. 103a, 105, 1973), AID has done relatively little in this field. This, in part, reflects the awareness of AID program planners that even UNESCO has not yet been able to establish a reliable model for adult literacy programs or to achieve consistent positive results. It also reflects an awareness that United States educators have limited experience in coping with the kinds of problems that arise in developing countries. Since problems of residual illiteracy in the United States are very different in kind from those of widespread illiteracy in developing countries, U.S. experts do not have the same advantages of broad experience and interest in the development of teaching methods for third world literacy programs that they have in dealing with formal school systems and curricula.

Nevertheless, AID has supported efforts to reduce illiteracy in developing countries in several ways. In some instances AID has participated in bilateral or multilateral nonformal adult literacy projects by supplying buildings and commodities while a co-sponsor provides the training and teaching component. In a few cases it has undertaken training and teaching, too. Some of AID's assistance to formal education systems has also been

directed toward increasing literacy. While this report focuses primarily on nonformal education it is useful to see how the various types of educational support programs contribute to literacy efforts.

This section will briefly review and illustrate the types of support AID has provided for literacy education, including:

- support through formal education, particularly elementary education
- support for nonformal education, both material assistance and training.

Although these types of programs can play a role in helping the spread of literacy, their contribution is often limited. The sociolinguistic factors that affect their success will be the topic of Part IV.

Support for literacy through formal education

Over the past century most of the permanent increase in literacy rates has come through institutionalized expansion of formal education. AID has a long record of assistance to the formal educational systems of developing countries, some of it directed toward increasing literacy in rural areas. Even though projects of this type do not generally reach adult illiterates they should not be underrated as literacy projects. These efforts have a mixed record in reaching and helping illiterate populations. Since this type of program is channelled through existing institutions and generally bound by their policies

concerning curriculum and language choice it is often impossible to respond to local conditions in isolated areas. Programs in Liberia and in Paraguay illustrate some of the weaknesses and strengths of formal education projects in spreading literacy. Liberian education programs have had very little impact on illiteracy in that country. In Paraguay, on the other hand, AID's current bilingual elementary education program seems to be a well-designed attempt to extend literacy to the rural poor within the formal education system.

Liberia. Liberia's literacy rate is about 10%, among the lowest in the world. A quarter-century of AID assistance to its education system has not moved Liberia very far along the path toward literacy. Prior to the recent coup in April 1980, government-sponsored education was controlled by the Americo-Liberian elite, whose policy was to use only English for education in a country with a population of some eight major ethnic-linguistic groups as well as a number of minor ones. While most of AID's support has been for secondary and higher educational institutions, particularly technical and teacher training schools, it also helped support a rural elementary education project and a review of Liberia's educational system. The Booker T. Washington Institute, established largely by AID, has experienced various difficulties since AID funding was terminated, leading to its temporary closure in 1974. Of three planned teacher training institutes, the two that were established in the mid-1960s were still turning out a total of under 150 teachers per year for rural areas a decade later. A well-received effort

to expand the elementary education system in three rural provinces in Liberia in the early 1960s enrolled nearly a third of school-age children during the period of its support, but quickly withered when funding ended in 1967 (HIID Report, 1976).

An effort was made to use local languages as a medium of instruction in the rural elementary education program; aside from that attempt, instruction and literacy has been taught exclusively in English. In 1976 an AID-sponsored HIID survey of education in Liberia recommended increased emphasis on elementary education and the use of local languages. AID seems to have been able to follow only the first of these recommendations.

Paraguay. In Paraguay, as in Liberia, formal education in the national language, in this case Spanish, has not been very successful in reaching rural populations who speak an indigenous language, Guaraní. In Paraguay, however, AID recently agreed to help support a bilingual program for rural elementary education that will teach initial literacy in Guaraní and make the transition to Spanish easier both by the choice of orthography for Guaraní and by introducing Spanish at first as a foreign language. Project planning has benefited from a report done for AID by Joan Rubin (the American sociolinguist who has studied bilingualism in Paraguay). It is still too early to judge the outcome of the project, but from a sociolinguistic perspective it seems to be well-designed to reach monolingual groups who have been unable to progress through the traditional curriculum in Spanish.

Nonformal education

The main objective of using a nonformal approach to teaching literacy, rather than relying on the school system, is to reach adults or isolated groups for whom traditional education is inaccessible or inappropriate. AID has supported nonformal literacy programs with various approaches and has provided different kinds of support--from providing materials to planning, training staff, and implementing the programs. AID's own evaluations often focus narrowly on whether its contributions were made on time and as planned. This section will examine the impact of AID's programs in broader perspective.

In projects undertaken jointly with other donors or with host country institutions AID has typically preferred to supply material elements: buildings, books and teaching supplies, housing, or vehicles. It contributed to a UNESCO training project in Ghana in 1976-1978, for instance, by providing vehicles and materials. AID's contributions to nonformal education in Peru and Bolivia have been more extensive but still of this kind.

Bolivia and Peru. In a rural education project in Bolivia and, to some extent, in a nonformal education project in Peru in the 1970s, AID helped to construct rural community education centers, nucleus, while the host countries designed the curriculum and provided teaching staff. Project documents justify this division of responsibility on the grounds that the host country personnel had greater experience in the pedagogical aspects of the program. AID's evaluation documents emphasize

whether building materials and books arrived and were in place on time; they tend to equate logistic failures and successes with the attainment of project goals. Yet it appears, from suggestions for follow-on projects, that the nucleos, once constructed, were notably under-utilized. One such suggestion is that perhaps vehicles would be better suited to reach isolated campesinos (country-dwellers). It is quite possible, however, that the problems of drawing intended beneficiaries have nothing to do with the adequacy of physical facilities or their location. Part IV will suggest other factors that may outweigh material considerations in affecting the ultimate success of these literacy projects.

From a sociolinguistic perspective, evidence of how projects are adapted to their context is easier to trace in documents from projects in which AID was involved in planning and implementation, rather than just as an outside supplier of goods. The last four cases, Adult Education in Liberia, Non-formal Education in Ecuador, Integrated Family Life Education in Ethiopia, and Integrated Non-formal Education in Thailand, are cases of this type. The projects in Ecuador and Ethiopia seem to have been highly successful, the other two considerably less so. This section will show that success has not been directly related to AID's explicit concerns in designing them. Part IV will identify sociolinguistic factors that help to explain their outcomes.

The principles according to which AID nonformal adult literacy programs were designed generally follow UNESCO's views

at the time of their inception. The adult education project in Liberia in 1961-1963 was an early, rather unsophisticated, attempt to make literacy classes available in the countryside in hopes that students would seek them out. The 1971-1975 Ecuador project also took adult literacy training into hitherto under-served rural areas but based it on principles of community self-help and consciousness-raising as promulgated by Freire and his followers. The more recent projects in Ethiopia and Thailand are both designed to provide specific incentives by offering literacy skills as part of a curriculum teaching better health and nutrition practices and economic skills.

Adult education in Liberia: 1961-1963. As a part of the broader rural education project in Liberia in the early 1960s, AID sponsored an adult literacy program in conjunction with the Peace Corps and IVS, using English as the language of literacy. The program was intended to bring literacy training to areas previously beyond the reach of schools. AID's role was primarily institution-building; it provided training for rural teachers. Although the program had a more rural focus than AID's other Liberian education projects, its greatest impact was still near towns and along roads where English is used as a trade language.

Although the program was conceived as a means of bringing literacy within reach of rural adults, it did so mainly in a geographic sense. Many of the students were not competent enough in English to profit from the instruction, particularly in areas away from roads and commercial towns; the dropout rate was a

problem. The AID officials in charge of the program note in their end-of-tour reports that Liberian students had unrealistic expectations about how easy it would be to learn English and that teaching English was more difficult when students were illiterate in their native tongue (Neufeld 1963, Smith 1963).

There is no suggestion in the AID materials that any language other than English might be considered for literacy in Liberia. The possibility of promoting literacy in indigenous languages in that country, however, is not without precedent; it is merely without official sanction. I will return to this topic in Part IV.

Nonformal education in Ecuador, 1971-1975. Nonformal education in Ecuador, like adult education in Liberia, conformed to the principles of UNESCO's World Literacy Campaign in attempting to provide educational opportunities in previously neglected rural areas. Its target population of Quechua campesinos was not unlike the population the Peruvian and Bolivian nucleos were to serve. Moreover, the Ecuadorian project was an unusual attempt to mingle American and host country team members in carrying out a rural training program in the countryside, while in Peru and Bolivia AID undertook the part of the project most in line with its previous experience--the provision of buildings and materials. Yet in comparison with the Liberian, Peruvian, and Bolivian projects, the Ecuadorian one was dramatically successful.

The project was, in many ways, an attempt to put Freire's philosophy about the value of literacy as a tool for

consciousness-raising into action. The project was implemented by a University of Massachusetts team committed to a participatory approach. Working side by side with Ecuadorian counterparts in Indian communities, they seem to have aroused considerable grass roots enthusiasm.

As in the Liberian adult literacy project, however, the language of literacy teaching was primarily the European language of the country, not the indigenous language of the target population. Part of the AID team's task was to develop simple, appealing, appropriate teaching materials. Most of these were in Spanish. Literate Indian teaching assistants were baffled by one game translated into Quechua--they had never seen their language written before. Although the team tested and suggested types of post-project literacy materials acceptable to the people they worked with, these materials could not be produced under the AID contract (University of Massachusetts 1976).

In contrast to the Liberian program which quickly withered when AID withdrew, in the last five years the Ecuador program has grown to at least double its size in 1975 despite the termination of AID's support, the disappearance of the prepared teaching materials, and uncertain funding from Ecuador's central government (Hoxeng 1980). Not all of the differences in outcome in these programs can be attributed to sociolinguistic factors. Some successes and difficulties of coordination with host country officials and counterparts are beyond the scope of this report. But there are also sociolinguistic

differences between Ecuador and its neighbors to the south, as well as between Ecuador and Liberia, that can play a part in community response to the educational opportunities offered. Part IV will address these issues.

* * * * *

The last two case studies deal with projects in Ethiopia and Thailand that offer economic skills and training to improve health and nutrition along with literacy, in keeping with UNESCO's concern for motivation in its Experimental World Literacy Program in the late 1960s. Both projects were implemented by the same contractor, World Education Incorporated (WEI). In consequence, teaching materials and methods were similar; WEI uses course materials prepared in loose-leaf format that can be modified and reorganized to suit local needs and interests in classes in which participatory discussion is encouraged. Despite these similarities, the Ethiopian program seems much more successful in drawing and holding students than the Thai hill project.

Integrated Family Life Education in Ethiopia, 1975-1980.

The Integrated Family Life Education project (IFLE) undertaken by WEI in Ethiopia was designed to teach literacy primarily to rural women. Since women rarely have access to traditional literacy training in the priest schools of the Ethiopian Coptic church and are often not reached by government schools, they are an appropriate target group for a literacy project. The materials for literacy were prepared in the national language,

Amharic, an indigenous language which is the mother tongue of nearly a third of the population and is spoken fluently by over half.

WEI enlisted the support, as host country co-sponsor, of the Ethiopian Women's Welfare Association (EWWA), an organization of well-educated, well-connected women which has been in existence since the 1930s. Classes were established in three roadside towns in different provinces and were well attended. Participants' rate of success in learning to read was excellent at 80 to 100%. Moreover, the program demonstrated its vitality in surviving the political upheavals after the Ethiopian revolution of 1974, the year after IFLE's inception, and the radical changes in personnel and policy, including language policy, introduced by the military junta that emerged at the political helm after several years of unrest. Observers and evaluators speak of the program with enthusiasm (Corinaldi, Bonners 1980; Pettit 1976).

In recent years the revolutionary government has launched a nationwide literacy campaign of its own. In its need for literacy teaching materials it has tapped the IFLE as well as other sources and has used the materials outside the context for which they were intended. In the future it may be hard to distinguish the impact of the IFLE program from the results of the less thorough but expanded government literacy program.

Integrated Non-formal Education: Hill Tribes, Thailand: 1975-1979. The clear sense of direction evident in the Ethiopian IFLE project seems to be missing from WEI's Thai Hill tribes

project. WEI first began work in Thailand entirely under the aegis of the Royal Thai Government (RTG) in a rural northern ethnic Thai area in the early 1970s. Although literacy rates in the area were lower than the national average of close to 80%, receptivity to literacy in the area was good, and the project succeeded in reducing dropout rates for adult literacy classes. Although most published material in Thailand is printed in a southern Thai dialect, the modifications needed to adapt literacy materials to the northern dialect seem to have posed no great problem.

But transferring this program to a hill area in 1976, with AID support, met with problems that were vexing though not unanticipated. The hill region is non-Thai and ethnically mixed. For the RTG it presents two problems: first, that of assimilating minority groups into the Thai polity; and second, that of finding an acceptable substitute for the traditional unsettled slash-and-burn agriculture, with opium as the main cash crop. The government viewed literacy as a steppingstone to both national integration and economic change.

Upon moving into this multiethnic area, WEI decided to set up classes initially for only one group, the Meo (Hmong), and prepared literacy materials using Thai script and orthography to teach mother tongue literacy as a transition to Thai. After the first sixteen lessons, the program switched to a bilingual approach, teaching literacy in Thai. The program was to be extended to a second ethnic group in the second year and was to add a third in the final year.

The program encountered problems in recruiting its initial fifteen qualified instructors and further difficulties in training them to use the participatory approach and bilingual methods envisaged. Although enrollment by the end of the initial year was not far below the projected goal, the instructors seemed to be having trouble using the proposed methods, and there was a general feeling that the project was not responding well to the students' needs (Tate 1978).

* * * * *

Comparing and contrasting the literacy programs AID has sponsored in Liberia, Latin America, Ethiopia, and Thailand raises a number of questions. Among them are:

1. Both the Liberian project and the project in Ecuador offered community-oriented literacy training to rural populations who spoke an indigenous language, rather than the European language of literacy. Why was language an impediment to recruitment in one project and not in the other?
2. What accounts for greater enthusiasm for literacy in Ecuador than in Peru and Bolivia?
3. Both the Ethiopian and Thai (Meo) projects taught literacy in an indigenous national language to rural populations using similar methods and materials developed by the same AID contractor. Why is one project working better than the other?
4. Are there any commonalities between the Ethiopian and Ecuadorian sociolinguistic setting that can

help account for the success of these two programs
in contrast to the others?

Part IV will analyze what sociolinguistic information can contribute to resolving questions like these arising from examination of the outcomes of nonformal adult literacy programs in different parts of the world.

IV. HOW SOCIOLINGUISTIC FACTORS AFFECT LITERACY PROJECTS

In the earlier parts of this report I have suggested that sociolinguistic factors can account for significant variations in the outcome of development projects, particularly literacy projects. In this part of the report I shall discuss the kinds of information sociolinguistic studies can provide for development planners and indicate how this information is relevant to the planning and operation of literacy programs. I will also suggest ways in which sociolinguistic factors identified in this discussion bear on the results of the literacy projects described in Part III.

The sociolinguistic factors discussed in this part of the report are:

- the geographic distribution of languages and proportions of their speakers within a given area;
- the communicative functions of each language used within a speech community in a given area;
- traditional modes of language use;
- the aspects of language planning and development, such as standardization and modernization, that adapt a language for new uses;
- the patterns of language choice and language use characteristic of different social groups within an area.

Sociolinguistic studies draw on analyses of language structure and comparative studies of language variation, as well as on sociological data from censuses, surveys, and in-depth micro-studies. Their findings are useful for development planners because they indicate how the language situation structures the socioeconomic opportunities for advancement of various social groups. For literacy objects they can provide insights about how intended beneficiaries assess the usefulness of the training offered them. In this way, sociolinguistic studies illuminate important aspects of the motivation of a target population.

In the following sections I will discuss the effects of different sociolinguistic variables on literacy programs and identify relevant factors as well as some of the common patterns and variations each reveals. I will conclude with an analysis of the usefulness of literacy for different economic activities and a reexamination of the four programs described in Part III.

National patterns of multilingualism

Developing countries exhibit great variety in the number, importance, and geographic distribution of languages. Information about language distribution can help development planners anticipate what part of the population they can reach with a literacy program using a particular language, how far the program can be expected to spread, and what limitations language distribution places on its replicability in other regions of the country. For any nation in which literacy programs are being

envisaged it is important to know how many languages are spoken, in what area each is used, how closely related the languages are, and how many speakers there are of each. This information is generally available if language surveys have been made or if census data has included questions on the native language of the population.

The numbers of languages and proportions of speakers

A few of the developing nations are linguistically unified. In Somalia, Rwanda, and Burundi, for example, well over 90% of the population speak the vernacular language as their mother tongue. In Latin America, Paraguay is the rare example of a similar country using a non-western language; about 90% of its citizens speak a single American Indian language, Guaraní.

Other third world nations have a predominant language as well as important linguistic minorities. In Latin America Ecuador and Peru, with their sizeable Quechua-speaking Indian populations in addition to the Spanish-speaking majority, exemplify this pattern; as do Thailand and Vietnam in Southeast Asia, with their hill tribe minority groups. In Africa, Senegal, with its Wolof-speaking majority, and Ethiopia, with politically predominant Amharic speakers, are further examples. Most of the rest of Africa, as well as a number of Asian states, such as India or the Philippines, face the problem of creating a unified and literate nation in the face of considerable ethnic and linguistic pluralism with no dominant language.

The problem of spreading literacy throughout a developing nation or of replicating a successful program can be

exacerbated by linguistic diversity. The Thai hill project, modeled on the more successful project for the lowland Thai is a case in point.

Degree of relationship between languages

The degree of relationship between the languages spoken within a country affects the chances of reaching agreement on a language of inter-ethnic communication in a multilingual nation. Tanzania has been able to promote Swahili as the national language, despite the fact that nearly a hundred languages and dialects are spoken by its citizens, because over 90% of them speak related Bantu tongues and find little difficulty in learning Swahili. Kenya, with larger, linguistically and politically more cohesive language groups, not all of them Bantu, has never been able to effectively superimpose Swahili on all of them.

Multilingualism in Ecuador, Peru, and Bolivia

The number and distribution of languages in Ecuador, Peru, and Bolivia has not been addressed in planning documents, but may affect the reception given Spanish language literacy programs in these nations. All three countries are typical of Latin America in that Spanish is clearly the language of national participation. All three also have significant numbers of speakers of American Indian languages, particularly Quechua dialects. The proportion of Indian language speakers rises from north to south, from a low in Ecuador of around 30% to at least 60% in Bolivia,¹ where written Quechua is used for some poetry in urban centers.

¹This comprises over 34% Quechua, and about 25% Aymara (CAL 1978).

Peru, the country in the center of the Quechua area, has the most divergent forms of Quechua spoken within its borders. In fact, scholars argue that the two major varieties may well constitute different languages; the degree of difference between the dialects spoken by isolated mountain communities renders many mutually unintelligible. Quechua dialects are virtually unstudied in Ecuador, but appear to be variants of one major type of Quechua. In Bolivia the Quechua of Orura and of Cochabamba is gaining status as an urban, written standard.

The number of Spanish speakers in the three countries also drops from north to south. In Ecuador, which has held to a policy of exclusive use of Spanish for official purposes, even rural Quechua speakers use a pidgin Spanish for public occasions, Peru reports that 65% of its population speak Spanish as their mother tongue and another 6% as a second language. In Bolivia under 40% speak Spanish as their first language, and Indian bilinguals bring the proportion of Spanish speakers to a little over half the population; on the other hand, over a third of the native Spanish speakers also speak an Indian language. Because Spanish is the main language of urban centers, the amount of Spanish in use in rural areas varies even more than these figures would indicate.

The reliability of the statistics also varies. The revolutionary government that came to power in Peru in 1969 instituted a sociolinguistic survey and systematic data collection on the Indian languages spoken by a third of Peru's population. Bolivia has had no such official survey but data is

available from scholars' studies. Ecuador has made no attempt to survey its minority languages; estimates of Quechua speakers there vary from 10 to 50%.

AID project documents make almost no reference to the language used to teach literacy in rural areas in these countries, except for a passing reference to trying a Quechua version of a game in Ecuador. The omission implies that Spanish was the language used, yet it is clear that to some extent in Peru and certainly in Bolivia teaching literacy in Spanish in rural areas would shut out many of the people for whom the project was intended. In Peru a decision to use Quechua instead would raise the problem of which variety of Quechua to use. These problems may help to explain why attracting people to the nucleos AID helped to build proved so difficult.

Communicative functions of languages in multilingual nations

Within a multilingual nation certain of the languages used become the vehicles for particular types of communication beyond the level of the local community. Prospective students assess the usefulness of literacy in a given language by considering how its communicative functions match their needs or uses for literacy. Selecting the language for literacy in terms of these functions is a way of providing incentives to learn. Some of the major communicative functions which specific languages fulfill are:

- inter-ethnic communication, especially for trade or economic interaction;
- official operation of national and regional government;

- education;
- publication, the press, and literature.

Of course, one language often serves more than one of these functions.

Information on language choice for these purposes may be available in national surveys or studies of language planning. Some of it can also be gathered from ministries or other government agencies concerned with education or the media.

Trade languages for inter-ethnic communication. In areas where speakers of different languages meet and interact, certain languages come to be recognized as lingua francas, or trade languages, appropriate for inter-ethnic communication. Many have a long history of use for this purpose; some are now being recognized as official regional or even national languages. In linguistically mixed areas, if there is a lingua franca in common use, it can be the best vehicle for reaching most of the people, although those most geographically or socially removed may not know it.

A lingua franca may be the language of the most numerous or of the most prestigious, politically dominant group in the area. Sometimes, since it is often the language of the marketplace or of trade, it may be a simplified form of a language no one speaks as a first language in the area--that is, a pidgin or creole version of a language spoken elsewhere, imported by traders along routes of commerce. These simplified languages can be relatively easy to learn. The history and spread of Swahili into areas of eastern Zaire, or of Lingala and forms

of Hausa in parts of West Africa reflect this type of use and development.

In practice, a lingua franca often serves many functions as discussed below. Amharic, in addition to being the official national language of Ethiopia, serves as the lingua franca in other ethnic areas of the country. The success of the IFLE project and its chances of spreading are partly due to widespread knowledge of Amharic even in non-Amhara parts of the country.

Government language policy. National and often regional or local governments must determine which language or languages will be used for administrative and legal affairs and government records. Some governments have firm policies; others only a patchwork of official directives about language use in particular areas and ad hoc, pragmatic choices of which language to use in other government activities. On the one hand, the language policy of a host country government often dictates or constrains the choice of language to use in a literacy program. On the other hand, many illiterates want to learn to read in order to participate more directly in government activities or to be able to handle their personal affairs with government agencies and representatives themselves--to read and write the language of contracts, receipts, petitions, registrations, and official announcements.

Where an official language policy exists, it may be binding or honored only in the breach. In imperial Ethiopia the policy favoring Amharic throughout the empire was iron-clad.

All education had to be given in Amharic, and even foreign teachers in missionary-run schools in non-Amhara areas had to become proficient in Amharic before they were allowed to teach speakers of other languages. Under this policy, Amharic effectively became the language of national unity, the second language of anyone with political or educational ambition, and the first language of many children of ethnically mixed marriages. Spoken natively by about a third of the population, it is now used as a second language by a third of the rest.

The revolutionary government, many of whose leaders are non-Amhara, is attempting to modify the imperial language policy; to introduce mother tongue literacy in at least five and eventually more than a dozen languages. Over the last five years the Ethiopian Language Academy has been working on orthographies and primers for Oromo (Galla) and other previously unwritten languages, using the somewhat unwieldy Ethiopic syllabary rather than the Roman alphabet. At the same time, the revolutionary government is mounting a literacy campaign, establishing non-formal literacy classes and tutoring programs in towns and cities as well as in the countryside--in Amharic, since that is the only language for which materials already exist. Public reaction to the new language policy is also rather schizophrenic; Oromo elders objected to the first version of a writing system for their language on the ground that, since it used fewer characters than Amharic, it was denigrating their language. And many speakers of other Ethiopian languages still prefer to learn to read Amharic for its obvious usefulness as the present language

of government and of wider communication (Bender et al. 1976; Bender p.c.; Tsehay 1979).

Kenya's official language policy is even less effective than the policy of Ethiopia's revolutionary government. Although Swahili is, on paper, Kenya's national language, it has not succeeded in supplanting English even in the legislature over the past decade and a half.

Not all official languages are widely used by a nation's peoples. In Liberia the official national language, English, is the mother tongue of only a small minority of the people and is not well-known in rural areas away from roads. Under these circumstances, literacy programs taught in English will not tap large numbers of rural residents, even though literacy in English is manifestly useful, unless they also teach English as a foreign language for speakers of West African languages. Unfortunately AID reached this conclusion at the stage of post-project evaluation, rather than at the planning stage.

The language of education. Multilingual nations or new nations with an indigenous national language not normally used for modern research or technology must often decide which language or languages to use at different levels in their school system. These decisions balance the desirability of mother tongue education against the expense and effort of developing teaching materials in uncommon languages. As a result, the language of secondary and post-secondary education is frequently a world language.

Nonformal education is, at times, a means to circumvent deficiencies in a formal educational system not yet able to reach

and serve the entire population of a developing nation. If training in adult classes opens opportunities like those attained through formal schooling or permits students to transfer into the schools, these new opportunities are often incentives to the target population. If the language of formal and non-formal education is the same, smoothing the transfer from one to the other is easier. The languages of education, in addition to the prestige accorded them by their place in the formal curriculum, are also most likely to have words and expressions for modern political, economic, and technical concepts and to have some published reading materials and texts available for neoliterates who want to pursue their education on their own.

Since, however, the language of education may be a European language like English, French, or Spanish, spoken only by people who have had schooling already, it is not necessarily the reasonable choice for nonformal adult educational programs. An alternative, tried in Paraguay and the Thai hill tribes project, is to use an orthography for the local language that conforms in its spelling conventions to those of the national language and language of education. These transitional orthographies are meant to ease the transition to the main language of education.

Languages of publication. In designing literacy programs it is important to consider what is already published in a proposed language of literacy and, conversely, what languages are used for various sorts of publications. If pamphlets, magazines, newspapers, novels, posters, contracts, receipts, and manuals are already in circulation in or near the area of

a project, students will have a clear idea of what they want to read when they enroll, and will most probably retain their literacy after they complete the course. The literature on literacy programs is studded with testimonials from neoliterates who have become voracious readers, making up for lost time. Learning to read Swahili in Tanzania, for example, is rewarding in this way.

In Mali, however, although UNESCO and the Mali government have put study and effort into teaching literacy in indigenous languages since 1966, there is only one weekly newspaper in Bambara; it is of good quality but limited in circulation. Recidivism into illiteracy is high. One form of literacy project to consider may be to develop and circulate published materials in previously unpublished languages, even before moving into an area with classes in literacy. Since the start-up costs to a government of developing materials and setting up printing equipment can be higher than the costs of classes, this is often a neglected area.

Literacy in local languages

Literacy in a language that paves the way to wider opportunities and increased participation in the political and economic life of a nation clearly appeals to students with aspirations that reach beyond their local community. In certain areas though, there is a stable tradition of literacy in local languages. The motivations for literacy revealed by traditional uses of literacy can form the basis for nonformal projects.

Most writing systems are religious in origin, and many in traditional areas retain that character more overtly than western literacy. Thus in Thailand and Ethiopia Buddhist wats and Coptic priests' schools are repositories of literature and sources of literacy training in rural areas. In Liberia Christian missionaries in the 19th century developed writing systems and translated parts of the Bible into local languages such as Kpelle, while converts to Islam were exposed to Koranic schools teaching literacy in Arabic script but not comprehension of the language until an advanced stage of study.

The secular uses to which literacy in local languages is put are of interest for development planners, since these applications of literacy supplement and complete the roster of reasons why illiterates choose to learn to read and write. They also suggest forms of low-cost, "appropriate technology" post-literacy materials. The uses of literacy among the Amhara of Ethiopia and among the Vai of Liberia illustrate some of the functions of literacy in a local language.

Traditional literacy among the Ethiopian Amhara. Since the Amhara of Ethiopia have enjoyed political predominance for centuries and have political institutions that reached from the Emperor to rural peasant communities, much of the traditional use of writing has served local government and administration. Although church schools were the main source of literacy training, many boys and young men with no thought of entering the priesthood attended just long enough to learn their letters. Written materials of some importance to local residents are to be found

throughout the Amhara highlands. Every neighborhood justice of the peace has a box of files on divorce cases and land disputes, written by hand in Amharic on foolscap. Peasant landowners hold tax receipts made out in Amharic. Contracts are written in Amharic even for agreements between peasants who may have to sign with a thumbprint, and copies are kept by the parties involved. Virtually every household in the countryside has a few important papers. In addition, a literate peasant may note down a commemorative poem for a feast or own a Bible.

None of these are official documents, yet they provide opportunity and a strong reason to read.

Vai literacy in Liberia. The Vai, a predominantly Moslem ethnic group in Liberia developed an indigenous syllabary writing system which has been in existence for at least a century and a half. Their use of writing is in many ways similar to the use of written Amharic, although it cannot be used for official government and administrative documents, since it is not officially sanctioned by the Liberian government.

The existence of this form of writing is a source of ethnic pride among the Vai. It is regularly used for business and trade accounts, records of local community affairs and organizations, personal journals, and extensive letter-writing--all uses that generate their own reading materials. Vai spelling is somewhat variable, but in the absence of printing or widespread circulation of written materials this lack of standardization causes no serious problems.

Literacy among the Vai is taught entirely outside the formal education system. Approximately a third of the men are literate (Scribner and Cole, 1978).

In a country struggling to maintain 10% literacy in a western language, it is noteworthy that this form of literacy in an indigenous tongue continues to flourish without government approval or support.

Traditional literacy and literacy statistics. It is difficult to know to what extent Vai literacy or literacy in any other indigenous language is reflected in national statistics. In Liberia, as long as English remains the only official language of the country, indigenous literacy is likely to be discounted and under-reported. In Ethiopia literacy statistics are derived from statistics for attendance in the fourth grade of government school and, in consequence, show some of the lowest rates of literacy in provinces where church schools have been teaching Amhara to read and write for a millenium. In Thailand, on the other hand, literacy rates are higher than the proportion of the population with sufficient formal schooling to be considered literate and thus must reflect to some degree literacy learned through traditional institutions.

Standardization of writing and modernization of languages

Languages differ in the extent to which there is a single accepted standard of spelling and in the degree of correspondence between written symbol and spoken sound. They also differ in the degree to which their lexicon includes words and expressions for modern political, economic, scientific, and technical concepts.

The degree of correspondence between the written language and speech has a bearing on the difficulty of learning to read;

it can also suggest which methods will be most effective in teaching reading. The degree to which the vocabulary has been modernized is a general index of the usefulness of the language for neoliterates interested in moving beyond the traditional sector. The standardization and modernization of languages, and the correspondence between speech and writing is either the result of how the language has been used historically or the product of conscious planning for its present and future uses.

Languages with a long tradition of writing or with non-alphabetic scripts may be encumbered with traditional orthographies or writing systems that cannot be derived in any very predictable way from the spoken language. The nature of these writing systems probably requires teaching methods that emphasize whole word recognition and rote memory. It will take people longer to learn to read them. A writing system, especially if it has a long history, can preserve a special formal dialect increasingly divergent from spoken forms over time. Arabic, Greek, and German all have had classic or "high" forms in writing different enough from the spoken forms to require special instruction just to understand, let alone read, them. Learning to read a language of this type may, in fact, require some second language learning as well. Although this degree of divergence between spoken and written language is not common in developing countries, it is a persistent problem in the Arab world.

Recently devised orthographies for previously unwritten languages, on the other hand, tend to represent speech accurately

both in style and spelling, although some conventions may be adopted that are compromises between different spoken dialects. The most practical fit between sounds and symbols need not be absolute--native English speakers generally find, for example, that the use of the same symbol, "th", for the initial sounds of "thin" and "then" gives them no trouble in reading or spelling. If one writing system is to serve a number of dialects, it is probably even desirable to have some spelling conventions that keep the spelling the same for speakers who pronounce certain words differently. As long as the system is fairly unambiguous in its representation of speech sounds it is usually quite simple for native speakers to learn once the symbols and their correspondences are explained and drilled. Sounding out unfamiliar words is a productive approach with such a system, and the time needed for literacy training is relatively short.

In some cases there are competing written standards for a single language. Catholic and Protestant missions in Africa often promoted variant spelling systems for a single indigenous language and the suggestion that one be dropped and the other used in its stead has sometimes been perceived as an instance of religious discrimination. Battles over writing systems are often heated. In Somalia the dispute over an alphabet was so bitter that a government-commissioned report on the issue was considered too incendiary to release.

The vocabularies of world languages like English, French, and other European languages have grown and evolved slowly in response to advances in science and technology and new or changing

social, political, and economic concepts. Because they have undergone this development and because there is publication and global distribution of current research in all fields in these languages, developing countries sometimes choose to retain their use for higher education and technology. The world languages are the best windows onto the modern world, other things being equal. But languages undergoing planned development can also provide this type of incentive for learning to read. A number of emerging nations have forced their major languages to undergo this type of development in a matter of years in order to carry the communicative load planned for them. A common way to attempt to modernize national languages in an orderly fashion is to establish a Language Academy or a similar language-planning agency within the government. Turkey, Israel, Indonesia, Tanzania, Ethiopia, and Somalia are among the nations that have approached their language problems by setting up academies. Academies seem to be most effective in standardizing written grammar and spelling in stylebooks, supervising written style in government publications, and compiling dictionaries. Their attempts to create or develop new vocabulary to convey modern concepts more often lose out to competing, unplanned coinages. Accomplishments aside, the very existence of an academy is a sign of official concern for the development and use of a particular language.

Social patterns of language use

Within a multilingual nation, different ethnic groups often speak different languages. Even within a single ethnic group, people of different social standing may also speak

different languages or be bilingual or polyglot to a greater or lesser degree. If development projects are to reach the target populations, it is essential to know which social groups speak which languages.

Disadvantaged minority groups may have far less familiarity with languages officially used by the government than the governing elites realize or care to admit. And among minority groups those who are bilingual in their native tongue and an official language are most likely to be local leaders who act as spokesmen, or merchants whose livelihood ties them to a wider communication network. Choosing a language for development projects means balancing ethnic loyalties, language use and attitudes of the governing elite groups, and language knowledge and preferences of the beneficiaries--factors that can lead to different and even contradictory decisions.

Ethnic politics and language choice. Ethnic loyalty can be an obstacle to national unity; at the same time it can be a positive force for self-improvement through community advancement. Official language policies based on ethnic and political considerations may limit AID's choice of language in literacy programs. Favoring one indigenous language over another as a language of literacy or as a national language gives a natural advantage to speakers of that language--an advantage often considered unfair by members of other ethnic groups, who would prefer either their own language or, barring that, a neutral world language. In Ethiopia, Amhara political domination was mirrored in their linguistic predominance and alterations in language policy reflect changing ethnic political strengths.

In India, the adoption of Hindi as a national language was blocked to prevent its native speakers from gaining political advantage. Likewise, in Uganda in the late 1960s, the only certain feature of language policy was that the national language would not be Luganda, despite its development and widespread use in writing. Other ethnic groups felt keenly that the Ganda had enjoyed unfair privilege under the British and were not about to let them get the linguistic upper hand again. In much of West Africa, too, the colonial languages continue to flourish as the least divisive choices for national languages. If the use of English or French does not promote social equity, at least it does not upset the status quo in countries like Nigeria, Ghana, or Cameroon.

Many of the languages of competing ethnic groups in multiethnic nations are used for literacy and have been for a long time. Hausa in Nigeria or Twi in Ghana are acceptable choices for literacy programs. But literacy programs using ethnic languages may in one case be seen as fostering disunity at the national level, in another case they may be viewed by local people as palming off a form of literacy that has no wider usefulness, and in yet a third be acceptable to everyone involved.

The Meo literacy program may well encounter problems of ethnic identification among the beneficiaries that are at variance with the central government's concern for unity. The Royal Thai Government is eager to promote a sense of Thai nationality among hill tribes and eventually to teach them to

speak and read Thai. To this end, the script chosen for literacy in local languages is the Thai script with Thai spelling-conventions, in order to make the transition to Thai easier. But it is not at all clear that this form of instruction will appeal to the target populations. The Meo, or Hmong, are subsistence farmers marketing opium as a cash crop to Haw Chinese in the area. The traders bringing cash goods into the area are Thai peddlers from the lowlands. While under the economic control of the Haw and Thai, the peasant farmers, related ethnically to peoples of Laos and of the Burmese hills, were doing well enough for themselves in the early 1960s to be able to buy consumer goods like radios with their earnings. A 1962 Ministry of Interior survey indicated that the Meo preferred to listen to Laotian, not Thai, broadcasts. Under these circumstances it is questionable how much need they will feel to become literate in Thai.

Elites' language use and attitudes. Since educated officials in the national government generally belong to the modern elite and are the ones who initiate and support requests for assistance to donor agencies, their speech and their attitudes about language can influence planning decisions about whom and in what language to teach. This influence can be difficult to recognize, for it is not always overt.

Members of the government may well be from a different ethnic group than the intended beneficiaries of a literacy program in a multiethnic nation. If they do not have the advantage of being native speakers of the national language, they have

already made their personal investment in learning it, the language of education, and sometimes officially recognized regional languages as well. Elites from Haiti to Cameroon to Sri Lanka also make a practice of using the colonial language, French or English, among themselves, at home and with their children, to give their children the benefit of already knowing the language of education by the time they start school.

If no language surveys have been made, or if a government official has not been concerned about the findings, he may be ignorant of what languages are spoken in the hinterland or he may have a distorted notion of the proportion of the population that speaks the official language. Ethiopia is a typical country in this respect; most members of the elite were born and raised in the capital, Addis Ababa. Many have never set foot in the provincial area from which their ancestors came and have a romantic notion of rural life. In Addis the majority of the population speak Amharic, no matter what their geographic and ethnic origins are.

Elite attitudes and opinions about language may be at variance with official policy. In Kenya it is clear that, from the standpoint of modern educated members of the elite and of government employees, English, for all its colonial connotations, is nonetheless the preferred language for modern life and intertribal communication. Loyalty to tribal languages is high but is recognized to be potentially divisive; interest in Swahili, officially the national language, runs a poor third, particularly outside urban areas.

Host country government officials often value the political benefits of national linguistic unification. Host country development planners are often also acutely aware of the high start-up costs of developing a writing system for a previously unwritten language, producing new primers and teaching materials, codifying the grammar, and modernizing the vocabulary, as well as publishing pamphlets, newspapers, magazines, books, and school texts for those who become literate--particularly when all these are already available in an official language.

In certain countries with the legacy of a colonial language, on the other hand, elites fluent in French or English may benevolently advocate literacy programs in the vernacular languages of the country, yet may not consider such literacy a qualification for advancement. The language policy of South African apartheid is an example of this view carried to its logical extreme and Bantu reaction to it shows the resentment such a policy can engender.

At times there are factions among the privileged classes--each with its own opinion about language planning and language use. The Somali literacy campaign was delayed for thirteen years while conservative Moslem members of the elite wrangled with a more liberal and modern faction over whether to use Arabic or Latin script. The issue was settled in favor of a Latin script only after a revolution brought to power a dictator able to suppress opposition (Laitin, 1977).

In planning literacy programs, AID's general policy has been to rely on the host country government to make language

choices. It is their country, after all, so presumably they should know better than an outsider. This discussion indicates that there are limitations to what host country officials do know and, furthermore, that their advice may be skewed to match their interests and objectives. The Thai government's interests certainly seem to have affected the choice of script for the Meo. The same may well be true of the choice of language for education in Peru and Bolivia.

Local language knowledge and attitudes. Even within the target area for a nonformal adult literacy program, not all social groups in the population know and use the same number of languages. If AID is concerned with reaching the rural poor, landless tenants, or women, it needs to know whether these target populations speak the language proposed for training.

Often the argument is made that literacy need not be taught in the local language because people in the area are bilingual in it and an official language. But this does not mean everyone is bilingual. Community leaders often are; a fair number of young students are; and traders or other classes of people whose livelihood takes them away from the local area will learn whatever language is good for business. Studies in places as diverse as Paraguay, western Sudan, and Ethiopia consistently find that the women and the poorer, more isolated peasants are frequently monolingual, even when there is considerable bilingualism in the community as a whole (Rubin 1968, Jernudd 1968, Bender et al. 1976). Projects that expect to draw women must be sure that statistics about local language use are not aggregated for the sexes.

Local residents' perception of their position in the regional or national communication nexus and of how to improve it is an important consideration in planning literacy programs. Illiterates are hardly likely to take the time to learn to read to no purpose. So it is crucial to know what languages they consider useful or appropriate for business, public meetings, personal advancement, encounters with government agencies, recreational reading--and whether they know the appropriate language well enough to use it when they need it. There is no guarantee that people will prefer literacy in their own language. This can be a problem, particularly in bilingual programs in the elementary schools, where parents complain that they are not getting their money's worth if their children are educated in their native language, when they were sent to school to learn English or French, for example, so that they can get ahead.

On the other hand, adult speakers of languages that have no official status may be reluctant to invest years of their time learning a second language, particularly if it is very dissimilar to their own. They may also be unwilling to spend much time or effort learning to read and write their own language if there is nothing to read in it once they have become proficient. As Frank Method has pointed out, supporting a child through the formal education system may be a wiser alternative economically (Creative Associates 1980).

If the native language of the people in a project area is not a language of government, education, commerce, or publishing, then project designers may be faced with a triple

dilemma. Either they aid only those residents who also know a language of government and refrain from addressing themselves to the most disadvantaged people and women; or they plan a longer-term program that includes language teaching as well as literacy; or they teach literacy in the local language and focus on local applications of the skill at the cost of losing wider range communicative advantages.

Sociolinguistic factors affecting AID projects

Three sociolinguistic aspects of the AID projects discussed in Part III seem to have made a critical difference in their success: the climate of literacy in the target area; the match between the language chosen for literacy and the languages used by the intended beneficiaries; and the importance of accurately assessing local needs and uses for literacy.

The climate for literacy. The climate for literacy refers to the uses to which written languages are put in the nation as a whole and particularly in the area in which literacy training is to be offered. The climate for literacy is thus a function of the communicative roles of the languages in use in the area and of local traditions of literacy. In most of the examples given in Part III, literacy training was offered in the national language of literacy. It is important to note whether written materials in the national language are distributed to the target areas in such cases. The Ethiopian project shows further that in a country with a long tradition of writing, despite the present low reported rate of literacy, there is no dearth of written material, even in rural areas, that will be of interest

to neoliterates. The problems encountered in the Thai hill tribes project, on the other hand, are due in part to the fact that the local language used for literacy instruction is not generally used for written documents, receipts, notices, etc.

I do not mean to imply that literacy projects should not be initiated in areas in which the language of instruction has not been used as a written language. Instead, I want to raise the question of the form such a project can usefully take. Not all literacy projects need offer classes in literacy. Some can be aimed at developing the climate of literacy as a motivating precondition by preparing written materials and planning official use of a previously unwritten language before classes are planned.

Choice of language. If the mother tongue of the beneficiaries is similar to the national language or the language of writing, or barring that, if they are familiar with the language of instruction as a second language, teaching literacy is considerably easier. All the Ethiopian women who attended WEI classes were fluent in Amharic. The northern Thai were not far removed linguistically from the southern standard and also had some northern Thai written materials available in wat collections. The Ecuadorian campesinos had some knowledge of Spanish, sufficient for initial literacy. The less complete penetration of Spanish into rural Peru and Bolivia, the lack of knowledge of English in the Liberian hinterland, and the linguistic distance between the lowland Thai and the hill tribes all create problems of what to teach and where to start--with bilingual language instruction or with literacy programs.

Beneficiary participation. Lack of a common language between planners and beneficiaries can also hamper assessment of the needs and desires of the rural participants. This seems to have been a problem for the Thai hill tribes project. It is not clear that the issue even arose in Peru or Bolivia. The Non-formal Education in Ecuador project and the Ethiopian IFLE project, on the other hand, each had project staff who could speak the same language as the members of the target groups. These are the two projects that best addressed local concerns and aspirations and engaged local participation in designing the course of study. A sense of enthusiasm runs through project and evaluation documents of these programs and is evident in conversations with AID personnel who have been associated even peripherally with them. The impression one gets from graduates' testimonials as cited by evaluators is that, as a result of helping in the planning, participants had a clear sense of the usefulness of their training and the purpose to which they would apply it. The mass literacy campaign in Nicaragua seems to evoke similar feelings in neoliterates (Washington Post, May 24, 1980). The same excitement at widening opportunities is an undercurrent in accounts of mass literacy campaigns in Turkey, Cuba, and Somalia. The example of Ecuador seems to indicate that even in the absence of a popular revolution, attention to local social realities and needs fostered by including participants in the planning process can help create a positive atmosphere for nonformal education for literacy.

V. THE INTEGRATION OF SOCIOLINGUISTIC INFORMATION INTO AID
LITERACY PROGRAMS: RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

The sociolinguistic issues and findings presented in Part IV suggest reasons for difficulties encountered by some projects while similar projects in other areas are successful even in the face of unforeseen obstacles. This section of the report will make recommendations about the scope of literacy programs and projects and ways in which sociolinguistic information can be integrated into AID planning and project design in a timely fashion. There are four recommendations:

1. At the level of AID policy regarding literacy programs, broaden the scope of programs identified as literacy programs to include:
 - elementary education projects;
 - support for language planning;
 - support for publishing in previously unwritten languages.
2. In country planning, incorporate sociolinguistic information about language distribution, communicative functions of languages and social patterns of language use.
3. As part of project identification, assess:
 - the need for literacy in the economic development of the proposed target area;

- the language use of various social groups in the proposed area;
- the type of project that is appropriate, given the climate of literacy in the area.

4. In project design, consider:

- the language to use as the language of literacy;
- the stage of development of the writing system;
- the match between teaching methods and the type of writing system.

AID policy: broadening the scope of literacy programs

The scope of this report has been to examine nonformal adult literacy projects in AID. Although the short-term impact of such programs has made them attractive to donors, in the longer run expansion of elementary-level education, particularly bilingual education in rural areas may be equally effective in permanently reducing illiteracy. This is an approach AID has taken; it should be recognized as a contribution to literacy.

A less familiar approach is to consider helping the governments of multilingual countries in the third world plan the use of written materials in minority languages and to underwrite start-up costs of translations, printing, and distribution of written materials before moving to literacy classes. The goal of this approach would be to improve the climate for literacy for speakers of minority languages--to create interest and motivation to learn to read.

Country planning: including relevant sociolinguistic information

The language barrier affects not just literacy programs but many types of projects aimed at isolated rural minorities or at women. The purpose of including sociolinguistic information at the country planning level is to indicate which languages should be used to reach target populations effectively.

Appendix A is a suggested framework for a sociolinguistic country study which raises issues of language distribution, language functions, and social patterns of language use that would be appropriate for investigation in country planning and sector assessment. Since missions cannot be expected to mount a sociolinguistic study themselves it is important to recognize which of the issues raised can be answered with information at hand, which types of information can easily be systematically added to that which is readily available, and how best to operate within the constraints of limited time and information.

Where language surveys have been undertaken they provide invaluable information on the number and distribution of, and similarities or differences between, languages spoken within a country, as well as observations on the languages used by different social classes, disadvantaged ethnic groups, and women, and on the use of various languages for writing, for education and in the media. This information is readily available, for example, for anglophone West Africa, where country surveys were mounted in the early 1960s, and for eastern Africa from Ford Foundation-sponsored surveys made toward the end of the 1960s.

AID lent support to Peru's language survey in the early 1970s. In other countries, population censuses may contain relevant information, depending on the construction of the census questionnaire; scholarly studies may be the major source of data as they are in Paraguay and Bolivia; the work of missionary organizations may also provide background information. IBRD and AID have, on occasion, commissioned country profiles that draw on these sources.

While donors frequently use host country government officials as sources of information about language choice and language use, it is important to know how to evaluate this information. Government officials often have access to valuable information on official government language policy, on language use in national and regional administration, on the commonly written languages, on languages of education, and on the use of different languages in the media. In addition, their opinions about what languages should be taught must be taken into account as one (though not the only) variable to be considered in designing appropriate programs. But unless they have taken a personal or scholarly interest in language distribution and language use in rural areas, their statements concerning who speaks what language in the hinterland cannot be considered reliable and should be checked against other sources, particularly micro-studies of target areas.

After a survey of available data is made there are likely to be lacunae in the sociolinguistic information gathered. Filling the gaps is more efficient at the levels of project

identification and design, where the area focus is narrower. In country planning, inadequately studied issues should be noted for attention later in the planning process.

Project identification: assessing the need for literacy.

The issues that should be considered in project identification bear on who is likely to need literacy in the target area. To the degree that donor assessment of needs corresponds to the perceptions of the prospective beneficiaries about their needs, student motivation will be better. Issues to consider are:

1. Do people require literacy for current or planned economic activities?
2. How many people in the area need to learn to read?
3. What languages are used in the area and by whom?
4. What type of literacy project would be appropriate in the area?

The first issue is whether planned or ongoing development activities require that participants be literate and numerate. The underlying questions are: (1) what advantages does literacy confer that other communication channels do not, and (2) what proportion of the population needs literacy skills.

For dissemination of information, in the right circumstances, radio can surpass written materials in delivering messages on time at low cost in comprehensible language to a large number of dispersed recipients as in Latin America, for example, where there is an extensive net of stations and few minority languages. It is far more problematic in polyglot African nations with only a few stations.

Written materials, on the other hand, allow a reader to reread--to absorb and review a long or complicated message at appropriate intervals. In complex activities well-written instructions give linear or spatial order to sequential operations and preserve the exact order for ready reference as anyone who has successfully assembled a piece of knockdown furniture from directions or a cake or casserole from a recipe can attest.

Economic development projects that fare better if participants can write and can follow written instructions include small-scale industrial or intermediate technology agricultural projects that involve the use and care of mechanical equipment or the economical application of fertilizer or seed, or entrepreneurial projects for which record-keeping is useful, such as cottage industries or marketing cooperatives. An evaluation team in rural Mali observed that members of the marketing team in a Fulani village were particularly concerned that for dealings with the co-op some of their number should be literate (UNESCO 1977). In Laos a scarcity of literate/numerate participants hampered irrigation projects requiring the maintenance of pumping equipment and the regulation of water flow according to field area in response to local conditions over time (Couvert 1968, Mekong Committee n.d.). In addition, economic activities and projects that result in population movement--long- or short-term migration--and the dispersal of family or community members may sustain an interest in letter-writing, the least expensive means of long-distance contact for individuals.

Next, it is relevant to consider how many participants need to be literate. It may suffice if illiterate participants

in a development project have ready access to someone trustworthy who can read and write--a family member, even a child or a fellow community member. In rural Brazil, Fett (1971) found that even illiterate farmers reported using newspapers and magazines as sources of information. Thirty to fifty percent literacy is probably enough to reach this level.

Third, it is at the project identification stage that available sociolinguistic information should be supplemented with an investigation of language use in the proposed project area. This should be done by a social scientist familiar with the area through interviews with representatives of different social subgroups--local leaders, rural small farmers, youths, elders, men, and women. The interviews should be sufficiently informal and open-ended to elicit opinions and observations, rather than the "right" answers. The results should indicate whether different subgroups make use of more languages than just their mother tongue; which languages these are; and in what situations they are used (i.e., the market, government business, public events and meetings); which languages are known by poor or isolated groups or by women; who already knows how to read; and in what language literacy is considered worth learning and for what purposes. This kind of qualitative information can be gathered in a relatively short time using social micro-study methods. Although the results are often suggestive rather than conclusive, they can point to significant obstacles and constraints early in the planning process.

The last issue, that of deciding whether literacy projects should emphasize formal schooling, nonformal classes, or

enhancement of the climate for literacy has been discussed as a policy issue above. The decision about which type of program to undertake can be made on the basis of the general socio-linguistic information gathered in country planning or sector assessment, supplemented and modified by findings about local needs, language use, and attitudes about literacy gathered through investigation of the local proposed project area.

Project design: language choice and mode of implementation

Building on the information collected in the country planning and project identification stages, the design of a literacy project should include explicit decisions about the language choice and appropriate implementation methods. In fact, it is rare that these topics are addressed in AID planning documents; the main exception I encountered was in project documents pertaining to the bilingual education projects in Paraguay and Thailand where language choice and the issue of orthography were germane to the projects.

By and large the choice of language seems to be left to host country personnel. From AID's records it is often impossible to learn which language was used. Yet it should be clear from the discussion in Part IV that the choice of a language for a literacy program is a crucial intervening variable in determining the outcome. It is also by no means a simple choice. Planners must be aware of the trade-offs involved in using a rarely written language, but reaching women and disadvantaged social sectors against that of using a language in which reading materials already exist, at the price of overlooking the

population most cut off from the modern world. Planners can then consider whether to design a bilingual literacy program to teach disadvantaged monolinguals an official language; to concentrate on support of publications and government extension pamphlets in the local language to pave the way for literacy in the local language; or to gear their program to the more progressive elements of the local community who are better equipped linguistically to attain literacy in a language which is already used for writing.

The stage of development of the language chosen for a literacy program determines whether a teaching project can begin immediately using an accepted script and orthography or whether these will have to be designed. In practice, this has not been a serious problem for AID and has been raised where relevant. Lack of modernization and development of local languages, however, could also be addressed by projects supporting government planning of expanded use of these languages and institution-building in the publishing activities of a host country. I do not know of any instances in which AID offered this type of assistance, although it may have done so in areas I have not investigated.

Finally, in projects in which nonformal classes for adults are the mode of project implementation, it seems that a phonic teaching method would be particularly well-suited to those languages with recently devised writing systems that accurately reflect speech sounds in their script. An approach based on word-recognition seems more appropriate for languages

in which the script diverges from the spoken language by using either an arbitrary conventional orthography or symbols that do not correspond to sounds of words.

Conclusions

This review of sociolinguistic variables affecting literacy projects leads to five general conclusions:

1. Not all literacy projects have to be nonformal teaching projects. Assistance for language planning, expanded elementary education and minority language publication and development all contribute to increased literacy.
2. A wise choice of the language for a literacy program is crucial to the success of a project. Sub-optimal choices either bar disadvantaged target groups from participating or attempt to teach literacy in a language in which there is little or nothing to read. The motivation of intended beneficiaries, vital to the success and spread of projects, depends to a large degree on whether literacy is being taught in a language of use to them. The two criteria they seem to use to judge this are:
 - whether they know or can easily learn the language;
 - whether anything is written in the language that they can obtain and would want to read.
3. Host country officials' decisions about what languages to use for development projects may not be the optimal ones. They must be checked against

sociolinguistic information to see which people in the target area know and use the language suggested. Programs must then be planned within the parameters of official policy and local language use.

4. There is no simple formula for deciding which language to choose for development programs, particularly literacy programs, in a multilingual country. Factors must be evaluated on a case-by-case basis. In one area, the optimal choice could be the local language, while in the next project such a decision could prove impractical.
5. In order to make case-by-case assessments of the type of literacy project to undertake and of the language or languages to use, sociolinguistic information should be incorporated into country and project planning.

APPENDIX A

A SUGGESTED SOCIOLINGUISTIC COUNTRY STUDY FRAMEWORK

This report suggests that information about the following topics should be sought in country planning or sector assessment so that it will be available during project identification and design activities.

I. Language distribution:

1. Which languages are used in the country as a whole?
Where and by how many people are they used?
2. Are the languages in use related to each other? Are they mutually intelligible? How many major language families are there?

II. Communicative functions:

1. Which languages are in widespread use--learned as second languages so that speakers from different ethnic groups can communicate?
2. Which languages are used as official languages? Which are used for local, regional, national government?
3. Which languages are used in the educational system at the elementary, secondary, and post-secondary levels? Is knowing these languages a prerequisite for employment in the modern sector?
4. Which languages have a standard writing system? Which are used for government publications, trade, literary

and recreational reading materials, newspapers, letter-writing? (Or, which are worth learning to read and why?)

III. Socially patterned language use:

1. What is official government language policy? What is the governing elite's position on the teaching of minority languages?
2. Is there ethnic rivalry over language choice and use?
3. What languages are used by minority and disadvantaged groups such as ethnic minorities, the rural poor, and women? How common is bilingualism among various social groups? For what purposes does it develop?
4. What language do residents of a proposed project area consider good to learn: their own or another? What uses do they anticipate for literacy?

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