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**Tove Skutnabb-Kangas. *Linguistic Genocide in Education - or Worldwide Diversity and Human Rights?* London: Erlbaum. 2000. xxxiii+785 pp.**

Tove Skutnabb-Kangas' contribution to the survival of minority languages in the world in three decades has been truly unique. There are few if any who can match her commitment and passion, dedication and utter humanity in writing about language minorities. To be so pioneering and original attracts doubts particularly from those who wish to disassociate academic activity from political action. Tove Skutnabb-Kangas' deep, heart-felt commitment to language rights for dominated and repressed minorities is unchallengeable.

Few who read Tove Skutnabb-Kangas can fail to be moved by her desire to gain justice for the marginalized and disenfranchised, the neglected and rejected. This is not just born out of political passion or righteous indignation. There is a remarkable breadth of scholarship, a range of reading across continents providing novel insights that makes the call for social justice powerful and compelling.

From her early work in the 1970s to this challenging and powerful book, Tove Skutnabb-Kangas has made a formidable contribution to international awareness-raising of the plight of language minorities. Tove Skutnabb-Kangas has been a staunch advocate particularly for language minority peoples wherever they exist. She has consistently demonstrated how politics and education reproduce the precarious status of such minorities. Few can justly claim to have made such an impact or been so influential in language struggles. Prolific as a writer, her lecturing campaigns and activity in many minority organisations have provided a powerful advocate for language minority peoples wherever they exist.

In a short review it is impossible to do justice to the interdisciplinary width or scholarship of the book. Totalling 785 pages, this *magnum opus* provides a synthesis of Tove Skutnabb-Kangas' three decades of writing, but also in itself has new and provocative ideas. Who else in the world could so successfully combine language theory and research with human rights, biodiversity, language ecology, linguistic imperialism, bilingual and multilingual education, anti-racism, cultural diversity, ethnicity and politics? The book is unique.

Probably everyone who reads this book will disagree with something Tove Skutnabb-Kangas says. But anybody with a millimetre of open-mindedness will be challenged by her passionate prose. She has the ability to stir us all from our favourite viewpoints and vantage points. She appeals to rationality and logic, but also to conscience and deep-rooted instincts about equity and social justice. Reading the book is an uncomfortable experience, irrespective of whether we are students or civil servants, privileged scholars or politicians. There is argument and analysis, data and evidence, but also a compassionate plea not just to save the multitude of dying languages in the world, but moreover to save the people whose very being is created and encultured, enriched and anchored by such precious languages. This is an uncomfortable call to arms, a trumpet to muster support for the struggle to halt linguistic genocide.

In nine chapters plus a substantial Introduction, Tove Skutnabb-Kangas amasses her three decades of gifted contribution. One particular feature of the Introduction is that it doesn't just provide a linguistic consideration of language genocide. Tove Skutnabb-Kangas also brings in the individual human nature of linguistic genocide by indicating that, when a child is psychologically and structurally prohibited from speaking a language, for example in language submersion education, language death occurs. The Introduction provides guidance on terminology, but also on the ideological stances that oppose language minority vitality.

Chapter one considers the number, condition and future of languages in the world. There is clarity in considering the problems in identifying what is a language, the insufficiency of our knowledge about language and languages in the world, the reliability of information about the number of languages in the world and where they are sited, and the difficulty of knowing exactly how many speakers of minority languages remain. The evidence base used for this chapter is impressively international and informed.

The whole book is aided by the addition of various text boxes. There is a most valuable use of boxes to provide definitions, World Wide Web address (and other address), activities, further information and exemplification. These boxes provide a wealth of ideas, information and interesting insights. This ploy works engagingly well in Chapter one where much exemplification portrays the desperate plight of languages in the world.

The second chapter is central to the argument of the book. Tove Skutnabb-Kangas provides much persuasive detail about threatened languages as well as threatened species. Connections are established between biodiversity and linguistic and cultural diversity. There is broad agreement with the stance taken by Daniel Nettle and Suzanne Romaine (2000) in their hauntingly entitled book *Vanishing Voices: The Extinction of the World's Languages* and by David Crystal (2000) with his stark title of *Language Death*. These authors argue that ecological diversity is essential for long-term planetary survival. All living organisms, plants, animals, bacteria and humans survive and prosper through a network of complex and delicate relationships. Damaging one of the elements in the ecosystem will result in unforeseen consequences for the whole of the system. Evolution has been aided by genetic diversity, with species genetically adapting in order to survive in different environments. Diversity contains the potential for adaptation. Uniformity can endanger a species by providing inflexibility and unadaptability. Linguistic diversity and biological diversity are seen as inseparable. The range of cross fertilisation becomes less as languages and cultures die and the testimony of human intellectual achievement is lessened.

In the language of ecology, the strongest ecosystems are those that are the most diverse. That is, diversity is directly related to stability; variety is important for long-term survival. Our success on this planet has been due to an ability to adapt to different kinds of environment over thousands of years (atmospheric as well as cultural). Such ability is born out of diversity. Thus language and cultural diversity maximises chances of human success and adaptability.

Chapter three considers mother tongues, cultural diversity, ethnicity, identity, multiple identities, language for control and domination, resistance and self determination. It is remarkable feat that this chapter is so logically organised as it contains such a broad range of material. A discussion about the definition of mother tongues is linked creatively with diversity, and the politics of assimilation and integration are connected thoughtfully to ethnicity and identity. The examples are taken from around the world providing an over-long chapter of over a hundred pages. The climax of the chapter is the last section that analyses how language connects with equal power relationships through glorification of the dominant group, stigmatisation and devaluation of language minorities and how this is superficially rationalised. However, the chapter ends by briefly arguing that language can also be used for resistance and for affirmative action.

The fourth chapter examines linguistic diversity, its origins in mythology, the evolution of languages, the role of missionaries in language life and not least the debate with David Crystal and other scholars about the role of English in the world. The section on myths about monolingualism is particularly insightful, as is the following section on arguments for and against linguistic diversity.

The relationship between State policies and language genocide forms the substance of chapter five. It is here that Tove Skutnabb-Kangas reveals the destructive side of politics that creates language shift and language death. There is strong language, passion, plenty of facts and contextualization (e.g. the Kurds in Turkey), and moral indignation. There are a harrowingly large number of individual cases presented of being punished for speaking a minority language. This is no soft academic treatise but *J'accuse*, an outraged crusader exposing humiliating scandals. Yet there is a theoretical dimension comparing linguistic imperialism and linguistic genocide on the one side and language death and liberalist modernisation on the other side. It is a pity that, for example, Alan Davies' (1996) review of linguistic imperialism isn't considered in more detail to reveal that there are alternative views. Instead, the critics of Tove Skutnabb-Kangas and husband, Robert Phillipson, are summarily dismissed in footnote style. While the chapter is moving and graphic, it could have been stronger by reporting the viewpoints of opposing academics.

Chapter six examines globalisation, power and control as it relates particularly to language minority education. Unequal power divisions and relationships are shown to be reproduced by poor quality language minority education, and that such education is a tool of control of such minority groups. Emotional and intellectual colonisation are seen as the outcomes of minority language education. Classism, sexism, racism and imperialism are all seen to interact to create marginalized language groups. Tove Skutnabb-Kangas' solution is to avoid a 'free market' scenario in favour of interventions, positive discrimination and particularly human rights. The style of argument is black and white, A team and B team, right and wrong, sinner and saint. This is effectively challenging, but tends to miss those situations where there are complex colours, and recent decades of change and slow development from black to grey. We are asked to fill in the gaps in a text box to reveal if we belong to the A or B team. The A team is White with formal education, middle class, male and majority language. The B team is non-White, less educated, working class, female and minority language. Again, the chapter is dense with powerful and expressive exemplification and argument, and with remarkable width of

topic. Modern politics, economics, demographics, education, social policy and history are woven into a imaginative, provocative synthesis that many will not fully agree with, but from which everyone will learn.

Chapter seven concerns linguistic human rights, a topic that Tove Skutnabb-Kangas and her husband have written on extensively and studied in detail. Her understanding of human rights and particularly language rights has much depth and width. The international understanding of linguistic human rights is exceptional and there are few other writings that can compare with the scope of this chapter. The central argument is that linguistic human rights are a necessary corrective to a free market approach, and also that linguistic rights must be a connected part of general human rights. There is also value-addedness in this chapter with, for example, a useful page of World Wide Web addresses, and a discussion of a universal covenant on linguistic human rights.

The theme of language rights is extended in Chapter 8 that considers how education can best deliver such basic language rights. The chapter considers the kind of bilingualism that bilingual education programs should pursue to this end. The strength of this chapter includes showing how different forms of bilingual education relate to human rights in varied ways, the consideration of Deaf children and signing, and a relatively original consideration of the principles for different bilingual education models to engage linguistic human rights more thoroughly. This chapter is a worthy addition to the study of minority language education and bilingual education.

The final chapter considers alternatives to language death and language genocide. It engages themes of ethnic identity, language as a resource as well as a right, linguistic tolerance, the importance of linguistic and cultural diversity, plus addressing balances of power that are a prime cause of language shift.

To conclude: the book is a *tour de force*, an encyclopedic consideration of minority languages, well informed, geographically and intellectually global in understanding. Few scholars produce works of such substance and scope. The book is not presented in standard academic prose. It is passionate and vigorous, sometimes emotive and polemic. This is a tome of commitment. It advocates and affirms with intensity and ardour. This is not a gentle and neutral text but an agitated uncovering of inequity and injustice. It is uncomfortable and provocative such that it threatens warm and well-accepted wisdom.

"Only connect" wrote E.M. Foster "the passion and the prose, and both will be exalted". The book has both. Both are exalted. But it is the struggle for linguistic diversity and linguistic human rights that are the most exalted.

## REFERENCES

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