Overview

It was September 12, 1974. An old man stood on the steps of his palace. "You can't be serious!" he protested to the soldiers accompanying him, when he saw the green Volkswagen which had been sent to fetch him. "I'm supposed to go like this?" But this was his only protest. The King of Kings, the Elect of God, the ruler of Ethiopia for more than fifty years bent forward and stepped into the back of the car. It took him to a small building where he was to spend the remaining months of his life under house arrest. On the way, he waved to his former subjects (Kapuscinski 1983: 162).

Along the route traversed by the green Volkswagen, an observer could see some arresting juxtapositions: barefoot youngsters leading sheep and goats past tall office buildings, homespun-clad arrivals from the countryside terrified by the traffic, and women carrying on their heads black clay jugs of water drawn from municipal spigots. These contrasts were a reminder of the empire's ongoing modernization and urbanization, changes which the emperor helped to introduce, which he tried to control, and which in the end overwhelmed him.

Haile Sillase's downfall marks the beginning not only of a fascinating story in the annals of language planning but also of a new act in the drama of social change in which the old man had been a significant player. One of the aims of this book is to demonstrate that an understanding of language planning demands an understanding of the social changes which promote it. This book, then, is about language planning and the changing social context in which it is embedded.

The first chapter presents four cases of language planning: the establishment of the Académie française, the revitalization of Hebrew in Palestine, the American feminist campaign for nonsexist language usage, and the Ethiopian mass literacy campaign which followed the emperor's house arrest. These four cases illustrate the broad range of goals to which language planning is directed and they also serve as a test of a definition of language

planning. An adequate definition should encompass them. Evaluating a definition without prior examples is a bit like trying to imagine how new clothes will look on you when you first see them on a shelf. Thus this book reverses the usual procedure whereby examples follow the definition, and the definition of language planning is reserved for chapter 2. The third chapter argues that descriptive frameworks can enhance our understanding of language planning, and the fourth chapter offers four such frameworks drawn from the study of the diffusion of innovation, marketing, power, and decision-making. The fifth through the seventh chapters deal respectively with the three major types of language planning: status planning, corpus planning, and acquisition planning. The eighth chapter discusses language planning in terms of various theories of social change, and the ninth chapter offers some concluding observations.

1

Four examples in search of a definition

This chapter provides four defining examples of language planning, found at different times, in different places, and addressed to different problems, both overt and covert. The selection of the four defining examples has undoubtedly been influenced by my own prejudices and personal interests. Nonetheless, these cases form a heterogeneous set which any satisfactory definition of language planning must encompass.

Founding the Académie française[1]

Inasmuch as the work of language academies offers a conspicuous instance of language planning, it is appropriate that one of my defining examples concerns the most eminent of the language academies, the Académie française.[2] The Académie française is not the oldest language academy in the world, nor is it the first to be founded even in France. But of the world's language academies it is the best known and the most consistently respected. Election to membership in this august body, limited to forty at any one time, has long been the supreme tribute to a French writer or scholar. Since its inception in 1634, most of the greatest French writers, with some egregious exceptions such as Molière, have been elected.

The founding of the Academy provides an excellent illustration of the principle that language planning cannot be understood without reference to its social context. When Armand-Jean du Plessis, Cardinal de Richelieu, came to power as first minister to Louis XIII in 1624, France was in danger of disintegration. The country was surrounded by the empires of two Habsburg sovereigns, cousins related to one another many times over through royal intermarriages, who between them dominated Europe. The Holy Roman Emperor ruled Austria and Hungary and controlled more loosely all the German states. His cousin ruled Spain, Portugal, the Netherlands, Franche-Compte, Milan, and the kingdom of the two Sicilies, as well as immense territories in the New World, and he dominated most

of Italy, including the papal states. Habsburg hegemony posed a formidable threat to the integrity of France.

But French integrity was threatened from within as well. A succession of religious civil wars in the second half of the sixteenth century had left a well-organized Protestant minority in control of 150 armed strongholds, virtually a state within a state, which challenged the authority of the king. Furthermore, the great nobles acted as satraps in their own territories, levying taxes, raising armies, carrying on private feuds, and intriguing against the king. France was riven not only by religious dissension and by an unruly nobility but also by peasant riots and revolts. Crushed by taxation and rising wheat and cereal prices, reduced to misery, peasants would arm themselves, march to the nearest town, and attack the government tax officers. Scarcely a year went by without an agrarian revolt which had to be forcibly repressed. "Laid waste, sunk from the rank of a continental power, reeling from plague to plague, from famine to famine, [France] was torn into factions .... Complete anarchy, confusion, and exhaustion prevailed everywhere" (Burckhardt 1940: 9–10).

To make matters even worse, the king was very young, chronically ill, moody, unhappy, withdrawn, incapable of sustained concentration on affairs of state, and susceptible to the influence of his mother, who was both pro-Spain and stupid. But Louis XIII was far more capable than his mother. He was intelligent, he was conscious of his royal authority, and he wanted to be a great king. Had there not been a brilliant and strong minister to guide him, France might well have been dismembered. But such a minister did arise and Louis had the acuity to realize that with Richelieu's help he could be great and his kingdom glorious.

For eighteen years, until his death in 1642, Richelieu, with the king's support, dominated France. He fought the Protestants and disarmed them. He subdued the great nobles. He united France under the absolute monarchy which he created. For the first time, royal authority extended throughout the realm. Once he had consolidated the king's power at home, he proceeded against France's adversaries abroad, "by diplomacy, by conspiracy, by bribes, by subsidies, and finally by outright war" (Auchincloss 1972: 11). At his death, Richelieu could rightly tell the king that everywhere, at home and abroad, the enemies of France were in full retreat. France became the arbiter of Europe, with Richelieu the architect of her greatness. He created the modern French state.

All his life, Richelieu battled against disorder, "dérèglement," the enemy not only of the state but of God as well. Richelieu believed that God had specially chosen Louis XIII to rule France and that God had chosen Richelieu to guide the king. Since disorder threatened the realm, disorder was the enemy of Richelieu, the king, and God. Disorder was heresy, order a superior moral end. In his struggle to impose order on

an anarchic world, Richelieu used every resource at his command. He believed that acts which would be immoral if carried out by private persons for private ends, might be justified when carried out by the state for the benefit of the state. His security apparatus identified dissidents and he pursued them pitilessly. He manipulated state trials. He was prepared to see a few innocents condemned if by so doing he could preserve order. He exercised power relentlessly and ruthlessly. He believed that the state must be strong in order to restrain individuals from folly, from irrational behavior, from disorder.

In his obsession with order and in his view of the state as an instrument of power for the creation and maintenance of order, Richelieu was a product of his times. After eight religious and civil wars, there was a growing body of opinion in France that disorder was dangerous. During these wars, moreover, a number of people began to think of the state as "a distinct apparatus of power" (Elliott 1984: 43), which Richelieu believed should be used to defend the common good against selfish private interests. He shared with contemporary philosophers the belief in humanity's ability to apprehend what is consistent with natural reason. At the same time, he shared the contemporary pessimism about humanity's ability to act according to this knowledge. Thus people must be ruled so that they might not act in defiance of reason or contrary to God, the author of reason. Accordingly, both rationalism and faith justified state supervision of private behavior.

Just as Richelieu valued order in government, he valued order in art. He viewed art not as a peripheral activity but as an essential part of life. As such, art, like everything else, must be controlled, directed, and regulated by the state for the benefit of the state. Like his royal master, Richelieu was conscious that rulers and statesmen are often remembered more for the art that they commissioned than for the political and military victories that they won. While his lavish patronage of artists contributed to his own glory, he was convinced that his own glory was inseparable from that of the state. "Even when he bought a picture, he was doing it for France" (Auchincloss 1972: 204). He wanted the reign of Louis XIII to be comparable in artistic and literary brilliance to the great reigns of antiquity. Richelieu viewed a glorious art and literature not simply as the product and trappings of power but as an essential adjunct of power. The beauty, dignity, and magnificence of art could contribute to the might and grandeur of France.

But art could serve the state more directly by espousing themes which supported state policy. Painting Louis as Titus, with Richelieu in a toga at his side, portraying Richelieu in ecstasy, in communion with the spirit of monarchical France, depicting Louis with open arms offering asylum to oppressed Catalonia (Richelieu subsidized Catalonia's revolt against Phi-

lip IV), commemorating the great events of the reign, composing hymns of praise for the king and his first minister, and writing political discourses in support of the latter's foreign policy – artists and writers devoted themselves to the glorification of the regime and to the promotion of its policies.

Richelieu's patronage of the arts was more than a reflection of his taste for personal magnificence, his will to power and control, and his preoccupation with detail. He was a genuine enthusiast of all the arts. He loved music. He kept an eight-piece orchestra to play for him daily, even on military campaigns. He played the lute. He liked ballet. He was a discriminating collector of paintings and antique sculpture. He loved literature. He was a passionate collector of books. He wrote poetry and plays. His prose was outstanding for its clarity, elegance, and vigor. His collections, his commissions, as well as his own artistic productions reveal a highly sophisticated taste.

Although Richelieu interacted with artists of all kinds, it was with writers that he was on closest terms. He deliberately courted them as part of his campaign to influence public opinion in support of his policies. At one time he maintained as many as twenty-three writers. An artist with words, a skilled rhetorician, he had a keen appreciation for the power of language. Writers could be dangerous if arrayed against him. He intended to mobilize their support. His founding of the Académie française was one of his efforts to do so.

That Richelieu found it expedient to influence the world of letters and indeed found it possible to do so was the result of several developments. Perhaps the most important was the establishment of Paris as an aristocratic and cultural center. This was a relatively recent occurrence. The French court used to wander through the country from chateau to chateau. There was no single preeminent center of high culture. By and large, nobles remained on their estates. Similarly, writers and artists stayed in their own localities. All this began to change when Henri IV ascended the throne in the late sixteenth century. He made Paris his administrative center and the permanent home of his court, a policy continued by his son and successor Louis XIII. During both reigns, Paris enjoyed relative security and could thus function as a captial without interference. With the administration, the court, and royal patronage now centered in Paris, the feudal aristocracy began to leave their estates to live at or near the court. A scattered aristocracy was transformed into a single social world, "le monde." In the wake of the aristocracy came the artists and writers who served it or depended on it for patronage. The provinces were stripped of artistic and literary talent, which became concentrated in Paris. The court aristocracy and the artists and writers it attracted and supported, all together a social and artistic elite of a few thousand, produced the great high culture of seventeenth-century France. In this they were encour-

aged and supported by royal patronage and by the patronage of the kings' first ministers, particularly Richelieu.

The centralization of artistic and literary life in Paris, the relative security afforded by the capital, and patronage by king and court were probably necessary conditions for this flowering of artistic creativity. However, they are not sufficient to explain the direction and emphases of the art of this period, which must be understood if we are to comprehend the founding of the Académie française. Here four interrelated elements are of consequence.

First, the French elite, perhaps the best educated in Europe, had begun to be conditioned by classical authors and to become interested in matters of style. This was owing in part to a tradition of interest in intellectual attainments which began to be established among the aristocracy in the sixteenth century, the expansion of secondary education at the beginning of the seventeenth century, and the success of the Jesuits in employing humanist ideals and methods to satisfy the elite's demand for a superior education. The Jesuits emphasized the classic authors. They emphasized style. Students "would become accustomed to corporate discipline, steeped in the ideals and manners of Roman culture, conditioned to accept rule and regularity by the elaborate rules of their own community and the constant elevation of classical models .... They were trained to recognize good taste and harmony in their study of antiquity, and they learned that to innovate was to undermine .... They came out steeped in Latin, ready to become lawyers and diplomats, eager material for the expansion of the bureaucracy" (Treasure 1972: 242).

Second, the yearning for peace and the role of law and order, which had grown during the anarchy of the sixteenth century, made the clarity, restraint, discipline, and order of classical models appealing.

Third, French was beginning to be used for functions formerly served by Latin. The vernacularization of Europe has been so complete that it comes as something of a surprise to a modern person to learn how long Latin was used as the language of learning. Schoolchildren were not taught to read in French until the beginning of the seventeenth century. The first major work of scholarship written in French, Descartes' *Discourse de la Méthode*, did not appear until 1637. Richelieu was himself the first French theologian to write in French. It was he who established the conventions of theological exposition in French. And the first treaty to be written in French rather than Latin was as late as 1714 (the Treaty of Rastatt). To equip French for new functions, its vocabulary had to be enlarged and the additions standardized.

Fourth, a movement for the "purification" of French developed under the leadership of the court poet François de Malherbe (1555–1628). Coarse in his personal habits, he was devoted to what he conceived of as the

purity of French, as can be seen from the following anecdote. On his deathbed, he chastised his nurse for an incorrect expression. Advised by his confessor to think henceforth only of his Savior, he replied that he intended "to uphold the purity of the French language till he died" (Boulenger 1963: 127).

The purification movement can be explained in part by the collision of the new classical sensibility with the efflorescence of French vocabulary. In the sixteenth century, French writers enlarged the literary vocabulary to meet the new demands being placed upon it. They borrowed from Greek and from Latin. But they also used local terms and idioms which reflected the writers' residence in the provinces. As a consequence, the literary language was "rich even to the point of incoherence" (Lough 1954: 244). With the elevation of classical authors as models, there arose an effort to prune this rich vocabulary of obscure terms, particularly archaic terms, terms from regional dialects, and technical terms. Malherbe wanted the literary language to be comprehensible to the common person, and indeed the reform he instituted did make the literary language comprehensible to a wider circle of readers.

But the purification movement also reflected an effort to establish "le monde," the narrow aristocratic society which had crystalized in Paris, as the supreme arbiter of language, a principle which began with Malherbe and which became accepted by the middle of the seventeenth century, although not without opposition. Good usage became defined as that of the elite, bad usage as that of the mass of the people. Accordingly, not only were obscure terms proscribed from the literary vocabulary but also terms which appeared coarse to refined taste, such as *vomir* (vomit) and *cracher* (spit), as well as terms considered indecent or capable of indecent associations. "For more than a century the language of the common people disappeared from all the higher forms of literature – from tragedy, and all serious types of poetry and prose – and the aristocratic, literary language ... reigned supreme" (Lough 1954: 246). Thus the elite from which France's rulers were drawn was able to invest its language with the aura of high culture and to clothe its authority in this language.

Finally, that characteristically French phenomenon, the *salon*, must be mentioned. Actually, in seventeenth-century France the term was not *salon* but *ruelle*, the space between the wall and the side of a bed, the space in which a lady's guests were seated. In those days, hostesses often sat or reclined on a day bed in their chamber when they received their guests. (There was then no separation of functions for the rooms of a house. The same room could be used for sleeping, dining, and receiving one's friends.) The most famous and influential *ruelle* of the day was that of the Hôtel de Rambouillet, presided over by Catherine de Vivonne, Marquise de Rambouillet (1588–1665).

The marquise, disgusted by the uncouth society at the court of Henri IV, left the court when her daughter Julie was born and retired to her townhouse, a few steps from the palace. Within a few years, the court was coming to her. From 1617 until at least 1648, she was at home to her friends every Thursday. Beautiful, cultivated, witty, and rich, she had a love of boisterous practical jokes, a gift for entertaining, and a talent for friendship. She attracted to her home a glittering crowd of aristocrats and the leading writers of the day. The Hôtel de Rambouillet brought amusing conversation into fashion. Its frequenters were expected to be witty and entertaining. Bravery and magnificence, the aristocratic ideals of the previous century, no longer sufficed to make a nobleman acceptable in this select society. He had to be able to amuse, charm, and please. If the Hôtel elevated conversation to an art, it also promoted among its *habitués* a taste for literature and an interest in matters of language and literary style.

"Poetry and letters were handed about like so many dainties," (Boulenger 1963: 117), authors read aloud their works to an audience that eagerly discussed them, and grammatical and lexical issues were among the more serious topics of conversation. Should *muscadin* (dandy, fop) be spelled and pronounced *muscardin*? Should the conjunction *car* be banned? The Hôtel, supporting the purification movement, encouraged an excision of the coarse, the vulgar, and the plebian from polite speech and from serious literature and elevated polish, clarity, refinement, and discrimination as literary and linguistic ideals.

Among the frequenters of the Hôtel de Rambouillet was Valentin Conrart (1603–1675). A rich man and an enthusiastic book collector, he bought himself an appointment as counsellor-secretary to the king in 1627 and entered literary society. By about 1629, a number of men interested in language and literature had begun to meet at his house on the rue des Vieilles-Etuves on Saturday mornings to enjoy one another's company and conversation. If one of them had written anything, as was often the case, he would read it aloud and the others would offer him their comments. But they were not so much a literary salon as a club. The professional writers among them were glad to meet their colleagues in an atmosphere which was free of the condescension they felt at the Hôtel de Rambouillet. And no doubt all were glad to meet in an atmosphere of masculine solidarity.

There were nine original members of this club, which kept its meetings secret. But its membership increased and it began to be known. One guest, invited to discuss his book, was so stimulated by the discussion that he told one of Richelieu's protégés, who in turn informed his master.

Richelieu saw an opportunity to transform this private club into an institution that could serve the state. He could not have been pleased by Con-

rart's remark that the Hôtel de Rambouillet was "a select court, less crowded and more refined than that at the Louvre" inasmuch as the existence of a cultural center that was independent of his control must have been intolerable to him (Maland 1970: 96). He could not appropriate the Hôtel de Rambouillet, of which he himself was one of the most brilliant guests, but he could take over Conrart's club. Accordingly, he wrote to the members inviting them to form themselves into an official body under state sponsorship. They greeted his invitation with dismay. Gone for good would be their privacy, their informality, their freedom. But the Cardinal could scarcely be refused. Reluctantly they accepted his offer.

After debating several names, including the Académie des beaux esprits and the Académie de l'éloquence, they agreed to call themselves the Académie française, to limit their membership to 27 (later expanded to 40), and to meet on Mondays, with Conrart as secretary. Their first session was held on March 13, 1634.

At first the Paris Parlement opposed the Academy, suspecting any new institution controlled by Richelieu. But in 1635, they registered its edict of incorporation, after having limited the Academy's authority to the French language and to those books written in French which were submitted to it for its judgment.

It is true that Richelieu had a political purpose in transforming an unofficial club into an official language academy. He wanted to mobilize writers in support of his policies. Consistent with this aim, he exercised tight control over the academy's membership. (A contemporary engraving shows Richelieu as the sun surrounded by the academicians as his satellites.) Thus the political writers among them wrote polemical tracts in support of his war with Spain (begun in 1635); the poets among them wrote odes in his praise and in praise of the king; and he was not above asking individual members to review his speeches and writings. But Richelieu kept such work to a minimum. He intended the Academy's principal function to be the regulation of the French language. He wanted the Academy not only to purify the language but also to equip it for all domains in which an imperial language can serve, including science and scholarship. Richelieu wanted French to replace Latin, as Latin had replaced Greek as a language of high culture and power. The regulatory aims of the Academy were set forth in Article 24 of its statutes, which asserted that its principal function would be "to give explicit rules to our language and to render it pure, eloquent, and capable of treating the arts and sciences." This article also set forth in a few words the work which was to occupy the Académy for the next 300 years: the production of a rhetoric, a grammar, a poetics, and a dictionary.

Work on the poetics and the rhetoric never began in any serious fashion. The work on the grammar, begun soon after the formation of the Academy,