


<i>An Introduction to Language Policy: Theory and Method</i>		
Author:	Thomas Ricento, Ed. (2006)	
Publisher:	Oxford: Blackwell	
Pages	ISBN	Price
Pp. xii + 371	1-4051-1498-3 (paper)	£19.99 GBP



With the global spread of English and its many ramifications, TESL/TEFL scholars and practitioners cannot afford to be ignorant about the status of English as a global language, its relationship to other languages, and language policies in different contexts, which often, directly or indirectly, involve English. Although this book does not focus on English and only marginally discusses language learning and teaching, TESL/TEFL professionals can benefit from reading this comprehensive volume by gaining an understanding of language policy issues and reflecting on their profession in light of the issues discussed.

Language policy (LP) is a growing area of scholarship and practice. Since the 1990s, the number of publications in this field has significantly risen: to name but two by authors familiar to the ELT world, Kaplan & Baldauf (1997) and Spolsky (2004). Journals specializing in LP, such as *Current Issues in Language Planning* and *Language Policy*, have also been established. Closer to the field of TEFL, a special volume of *TESOL Quarterly* dedicated to LP in a TESOL context was guest edited by Hornberger and Ricento in 1996.

What this volume adds to the existing body of literature on LP is a thorough and timely overview of the field from a range of angles. More precisely, the book reviews a variety of approaches within social sciences and humanities that inform or have the potential to inform LP research. The aim of the book, according to the editor, is "to position LP as an area of research within sociolinguistics and, more broadly, within the social sciences and humanities" (p. x). The book is primarily addressed to social scientists who are not necessarily specialists in LP but may have an interest in issues covered by it. The book is

also suitable as course material: each article is followed by questions for discussion and an annotated bibliography of major books for further reading.

The volume features 19 articles specially commissioned for this volume, written by leading experts in a variety of LP related fields ranging from the economics of language to critical discourse analysis. The book is divided into three parts covering theoretical perspectives, methodological perspectives and topical areas in LP. Each part starts with the editor's introduction. An overview of the book's contents can be seen in the following table:

Part: chapter	Title / Author	Comments
Part I	Theoretical perspectives in language policy	Since, as Ricento points out, there is no "overarching theory of LP and planning" (p. 10), this part presents a range of theoretical approaches that have had an important influence on LP research: seven informative chapters that paint LP as a truly multidisciplinary field.
1	Language policy: theory and practice - an introduction Thomas Ricento, University of Texas at San Antonio, USA	
2	Frameworks and models in language policy and planning Nancy H. Hornberger, University of Pennsylvania, USA	
3	Critical theory in language policy James W. Tollefson, International Christian University, Japan	
4	Postmodernism in language policy Alastair Pennycook, University of Technology, Australia	
5	Economic considerations in language policy François Grin, University of Geneva, Switzerland	
6	Political theory and language policy Ronald Schmidt, Sr., California State University, USA	
7	Language policy and linguistic culture Harold Schiffman, University of Pennsylvania, USA	
Part 2	Methodological perspectives in LP	This part shows the diversity of methodological approaches in LP research. The five chapters discuss the potential for LP research of methodological approaches from a range of disciplines, focusing in

		particular on their theoretical bases and the rationale for their use in LP.
8	The lessons of historical investigation: implications for the study of language policy and planning Terrence G. Wiley, Arizona State University, USA	
9	Ethnographic methods in language policy Suresh Canagarajah, Baruch College of the City University of New York, USA	
10	Linguistic analyses in language policies Ruth Wodak, Lancaster University, UK	
11	Geolinguistic analysis in language policy Don Cartwright, University of Western Ontario, Canada	
12	Psycho-sociological analysis in language policy Colin Baker, University of Wales, UK	
Part 3	Topical areas in language policy	A selection of current issues in language policy. Here the reader will find discussions of the relationship between LP and issues and perspectives at the center of ongoing debates in the social sciences. As Ricento points out in the introduction to this part, these issues are all related to social identity and social change. To my mind this part of the book is the most engaging.
13	Language policy and national identity Jan Blommaert, Ghent University, Belgium	
14	Language policy and minority rights Stephen May, University of Waikato, New Zealand	
15	Language policy and linguistic human rights Tove Skutnabb-Kangas, Roskilde University, Denmark	
16	Language policies and the education of linguistic minorities Christina Bratt Paulston and Kai Heidemann, University of Pittsburgh, USA	
17	Language policy and language shift Joshua A. Fishman, Yeshiva University, USA	
18	Language policy and sign languages Timothy Reagan, Roger Williams University, USA	

As a whole, the volume illustrates the diversity of theoretical and methodological approaches as well as topical issues in LP. Despite this heterogeneity, the chapters work as a network, with many cross-references among them. Predictably, the voices represented in this volume do not speak in unison: Pennycook, for example, reviews postmodernist critiques of grand narratives such as linguistic human rights and linguistic imperialism advocated by other contributors to this volume; Fishman critiques Phillipson's thesis on linguistic imperialism. Having such pro and con positions on LP within one collection creates a stimulating conversation in the reader's mind.

A research area influenced by such a variety of theoretical and methodological approaches promises to be dynamic, albeit possibly also confusing as the authors may speak in the different tongues of their respective disciplines. Such sometimes off-putting discourse, however, is not in evidence here: all the chapters are written in accessible language and in total provide numerous illustrative case studies from all over the globe, including discussions of the language policy conflict between the assimilationists and pluralists in the US (Schmidt), myths about French language policy (Schiffman), diglossia in Tamil (Schiffman), and the status of Welsh and Flemish (Cartwright).

Although wide in scope, the volume nevertheless lacks an important perspective: that of gender studies/feminism, a perspective that has significantly contributed to many areas in the social sciences and humanities and may offer important insights to LP research as well. That said, the volume does leave the reader with a sense of exciting possibilities when the fields included in this volume and possibly others all contribute their knowledge and perspective to the further development of LP.

References

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