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Author(s): Thomas K. Ricento and Nancy H. Hornberger

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Unpeeling the Onion: Language Planning and Policy and the ELT Professional

THOMAS K. RICENTO

University of Texas at San Antonio

NANCY H. HORNBERGER

University of Pennsylvania

The field of language planning and policy (LPP) provides a rich array of research opportunities for applied linguists and social scientists. However, as a multidisciplinary field that seeks to understand, among other things, why some languages thrive whereas others are marginalized, LPP may appear quite theoretical and far removed from the lives of many English language teaching (ELT) practitioners. This is unfortunate, because ELT professionals—be they teachers, program developers, materials and textbook writers, administrators, consultants, or academics—are involved in one way or another in the processes of LPP. The purpose of this article is to unravel those processes and the role of ELT professionals in them for both theoretical and practical reasons: theoretical, because we believe there are principled ways to account for why particular events affect the status and vibrancy of languages and speech communities, and practical, because we believe there are ways to influence the outcome of social processes. In general, we find that the principle of linguistic self-determinism—the right to choose (within limits) what languages one will use and be educated in—is not only viable but desirable for LPP decision making because it both promotes social equity and fosters diversity. In this article, we examine how ELT professionals are already actively engaged in deciding language policies, how they promote policies reaffirming or opposing hierarchies of power that reflect entrenched historical and institutional beliefs (see Phillipson & Skutnabb-Kangas, this issue), and how they might affect changes in their local contexts.

The field of language planning and policy (LPP) has witnessed significant growth over the past 25 years. Scholars from a variety of disciplines, including linguistics, education, political science, history, policy studies, law, demography, and sociology, have continually broadened

and deepened the scope of inquiry while contributing new insights into the processes, politics, and goals of language policies, whether planned or unplanned, overt or covert. Although there is currently no prospect for a unified theory of LPP (even assuming such a theory is desirable), several frameworks have been elaborated to describe and explain how and why policies have certain effects in particular contexts (e.g., Cooper, 1989; Fishman, 1974; Kloss, 1977; Leibowitz, 1969, 1971; Phillipson, 1992; Ruiz, 1984; Tollefson, 1991).

In this article, we briefly describe frameworks and approaches from the LPP literature. Following that, we provide a schema characterizing various components in which policy decisions and practices are realized. We argue that these components—variously referred to in the language planning literature as language planning agents, levels, and processes—are layers that together compose the LPP whole (the “onion”) and that permeate and interact with each other in a variety of ways and to varying degrees. We cite case studies from the literature and from this issue of *TESOL Quarterly* to illustrate some of these interactions. In keeping with the theme of this issue, we focus primarily on case studies relating to the English language (many more LPP cases, of course, concern other languages worldwide). We suggest how English language teaching (ELT) professionals are involved in shaping language policy, whether consciously or unwittingly. We conclude with some thoughts on how practitioners at all levels might affect changes in their local contexts.

ANALYTICAL AND THEORETICAL APPROACHES TO LPP

Hornberger (1994) presents a framework integrating nearly three decades of language planning scholarship based on Ferguson (1968), Kloss (1968), Stewart (1968), Neustupny (1974), Haugen (1983), Nahir (1984), and Cooper (1989). The framework (see Figure 1) identifies two language planning approaches—policy planning (on form) and cultivation planning (on function)—and three types—status, acquisition, and corpus planning. The policy-planning approach attends to matters of society and nation at the macroscopic level and is mainly concerned with standard language, whereas the cultivation-planning approach deals with matters relating to language/literacy at the microscopic level and is mainly concerned with literary language. Status planning concerns uses of language, acquisition planning concerns users of language, and corpus planning deals with language itself. Building on Haugen’s (1972, 1983) model, which maps two binary distinctions (status/corpus and policy/cultivation) onto a fourfold matrix consisting of society/language

FIGURE 1
Language Planning Goals: An Integrative Framework

Approaches	Policy planning (on form)	Cultivation planning (on function)
Types	Goals	Goals
Status planning (about uses of language)	Standardization status Officialization Nationalization Proscription	Revival Maintenance Interlingual communication International Intranational Spread
Acquisition planning (about users of language)	Group Education/school Literature Religion Mass media Work	Reacquisition Maintenance Foreign language/second language Shift
Corpus planning (about language)	Standardization Corpus Auxiliary code Graphization	Modernization Lexical Stylistic Renovation Purification Reform Stylistic simplification Terminology unification

Note. From “Literacy and Language Planning,” by N. H. Hornberger, 1994, *Language and Education*, 8, p. 78. Reprinted with the permission of Multilingual Matters Publishers, Frankfurt Lodge, Clevedon Hall, Victoria Road, Clevedon, Avon BS21 7SJ, UK.

and form/function axes, Hornberger (1994) sketches a six-dimensional framework.

Although its parameters are based on types and approaches, the framework is, as Hornberger (1994) notes, neutral with regard to political direction; rather, it is the language planning goals assigned to LPP activities that determine the direction of change envisioned. Referring to the literature cited above, Hornberger then identifies some 30 goals within the parameters of the two approaches and three types (e.g., under status/cultivation planning are revival, maintenance, interlingual communication, and spread; under status/policy planning are standardization status, officialization, nationalization, and proscription). Finally, Hornberger notes that language planning—specifically, in this case, literacy planning—never occurs in a vacuum. For example, the fact that learners acquire literacy in one language means that they may not acquire literacy in another language, at least in a school setting. Hornberger then turns to another concept in language planning, Ruiz’s

(1984) orientations model, as a means of accounting for the role played by attitudes (often unconscious) “toward language and its role, and toward languages and their role in society” (Ruiz, 1984, cited in Hornberger, 1994, p. 83). Hornberger characterizes these orientations as follows:

1. a language as problem orientation which would tend to see local languages as problems standing in the way of the incorporation of cultural and linguistic minority groups in society, and to link language issues with the social problems characteristic of such groups—poverty, handicap, low educational achievement, and little or no social mobility;
2. a language as right orientation which would tend to see local languages as a basic human and civil right for their speakers, and to seek the affirmation of those rights, often leading to confrontation, since a claim to something is also a claim against something else;
3. a language as resource orientation which would tend to see local languages as resources not only for their speakers, but for society as a whole, and to seek their cultivation and development as resources, in recognition of the fact that they are exhaustible not by use, but by lack of use. (p. 83)

Mindful of the complexities of implementing language change, Hornberger (1994), citing Fishman (1979), reminds us that “status and corpus planning ‘are usually (and most effectively) engaged in jointly’” (p. 2). Other scholars have pointed out that corpus and status planning are interconnected activities (for example, Wiley & Lukes, this issue, argue that “standard language policies tend to be submerged within corpus planning but also to involve status planning between varieties”).

The framework provided by Hornberger (1994), in conjunction with Ruiz’s (1984) orientations model, is useful in analyzing LPP activities in terms of a range of LPP goals. However, as has long been recognized in the LPP field, when governments or states decide to intervene in areas involving language, they usually have primarily nonlinguistic agendas; furthermore, language change often has many causes, only one of which may be planning (Rubin, 1983); the same is true for language policy, which can result just as well from the absence as from the presence of planning (see Sayers’s brief report, this issue, on Utah’s accidental language policy on ESL and bilingual teacher endorsement). When planning does occur, unintended outcomes may result, implementation may be incomplete or inappropriate, and evaluation may be sketchy or nonexistent (and whether the results are “good” or “bad” depends on who is evaluating them and for what purpose). As with all types of social planning, the goals, means, and ends of language planning are contentious and subject to ongoing reanalysis and renegotiation. In the LPP

field, continuing awareness of this complexity has resulted in the ongoing development of LPP perspectives and approaches.

First, recognizing that many variables influence processes of language change, scholars in recent years have investigated specific language policies in specific contexts to provide richer descriptions and explanations of why particular languages are maintained or die, why one language (or variety) is acquired and another is not, and why and how “language is built into the economic and social structure of society” (Tollefson, 1991, p. 2). Second, whereas much of the earlier work in LPP was concerned with issues related to nation building and modernization in postcolonial Third World countries, recent research has often dealt with language rights globally, the ways language policies perpetuate structural socioeconomic inequalities (e.g., Luke, McHoul, & Mey, 1990; Phillipson, 1988, 1992; Skutnabb-Kangas & Phillipson, 1994; Tollefson, 1991, 1995), and bottom-up efforts to revitalize threatened and nondominant languages (e.g., Fishman, 1991; Hornberger, *in press*). Third (and related to the second change), a number of scholars (e.g., Auerbach, 1993; Pennycook, 1989, 1995; Tollefson, 1991) have problematized research approaches and analytical frameworks used in applied linguistics research, arguing that research methods and goals may reflect values that tend to justify existing social structures and favor the interests of dominant elites. Pennycook (1989) argues that social science researchers have appropriated positivist (or scientist) orientations from the physical sciences, which seek objective results “through the development of standardized quantitative techniques of analysis” (p. 594). This orientation is seen in some approaches to research in language teaching, acquisition, and use. Such approaches divorce the political nature of teaching and research from what is perceived as the objective, ideologically neutral description and analysis of language issues. (Tollefson, 1991, characterizes this type of research as constituting the neoclassical approach to language planning, a somewhat troubling characterization in that the research he refers to was never intended to address language planning at all. Tollefson therefore seems to be setting up a straw figure as a contrast to the historical-structural approach he advocates; compare Hornberger, 1992; Paulston, 1992.)

An example of a positivist orientation used in LPP, adopted from various social planning fields (e.g., city and government planning, including resource planning), is the rational model. In this framework, multilingualism is often seen as a problem that states have to solve. Reflecting this problem/solution framework, Rubin (1971) defined language planning as the pursuit of “solutions to language problems through decisions about alternative goals, means, and outcomes to solve these problems” (p. 218). The rational model assumes that the nation or government is the sole agent making choices and that it chooses from

available alternatives ranked according to their value or usefulness in achieving specified objectives (Rubin, 1986). The agent commonly evaluates competing language plans within the framework of cost/benefit analysis; maximizing national economic growth while maintaining political stability and control is usually the goal. Thus, the rational model views complex sociocultural phenomena involving language as manageable problems, amenable to study and solution within the parameters of normative science. It has become clear over the past 20 years that the rational model in and of itself is inadequate to account for how policy is developed and why it succeeds or fails.¹

In contrast and largely in reaction to the positivist approach that underlies the rational model and as a reflection of recent postmodernist trends, often lumped together as *critical theory* in the literature, a number of scholars from various academic disciplines and specialties (see Pennycook, 1989, for a representative listing) have proposed theoretical and analytic approaches that take into account broader historical and economic forces influencing, if not determining, social policy, of which LPP is one element. (See Pennycook, 1995, for a critique of the positivist influence in the ELT profession.) Many of these approaches tend to problematize language as a mechanism of social control by dominant elites; they stress that all language policies are ideological, although the ideology may not be apparent or acknowledged by practitioners or theorists. An example of “invisible” ideology in language policy is given by Tollefson (1991):

The policy of requiring everyone to learn a single dominant language is widely seen as a common-sense solution to the communication problems of multilingual societies. The appeal of this assumption is such that monolingualism is seen as a solution to linguistic inequality. If linguistic minorities learn the dominant language, so the argument goes, then they will not suffer economic and social inequality. The assumption is an example of an ideology, which refers to normally unconscious assumptions that come to be seen as common sense . . . such assumptions justify exclusionary policies and sustain inequality. (p. 10)

The dominant critical model in LPP over the past 20 years or so has been the historical-structural approach. According to Tollefson (1991), within this framework “the major goal of policy research is to examine the historical basis of policies and to make explicit the mechanisms by which policy decisions serve or undermine particular political and economic interests” (p. 32). This approach “rejects the neoclassical

¹ Rubin (1986) reviews the criticisms leveled against the rational model as it has been applied to social planning. She concludes by suggesting that although it contains legitimate problems, the model does have a certain value as a heuristic device.

assumption that the rational calculus of individuals is the proper focus of research, and instead seeks the . . . social, political, and economic factors that constrain or impel changes in language structure and language use” (p. 31). The historical-structural approach assumes

1. that all language plans and policies represent and reflect the sociopolitical and economic interests of majoritarian or dominant interests;
2. that these interests are often implicit and are enmeshed in hegemonic ideologies that serve to maintain the socioeconomic interests of ruling elites;
3. that such ideologies are reflected at all levels of society and in all institutions, whether government agencies, planning bodies, legislative or judicial bodies, school boards, or other entities;
4. that individuals are not free to choose the language(s) that they will be educated in or be able to use in specified domains, as all choices are constrained by systems that reinforce and reproduce the existing social order, which of course favor particular languages in particular contexts for particular sociopolitical ends favored by interested parties, usually dominant elites (or counter elites).

Although some have criticized this approach as deterministic, or even circular, leaving little room for human creativity, innovation, or choice (Abu-Lughod, 1975), proponents argue that “the historical-structural approach . . . encourages a broad range of evaluation” (Tollefson, 1991, p. 35). Further, proponents argue that individual and collective resistance to majoritarian domination and exploitation is possible, as ideologies are contestable and there is always the potential for change. Proponents of the historical-structural approach believe language policy should be guided by “a will to respect linguistic diversity and the linguistic human rights of all, at both the individual and the collective levels” (Phillipson & Skutnabb Kangas, this issue).

In addition to Tollefson, other scholars adopting an explicitly critical approach include Cummins (1988), Leibowitz (1969, 1971), Macías (1992), Moore (this issue), Pennycook (1989), Phillipson (1992), Phillipson and Skutnabb-Kangas (this issue), Ricento (1995, in press-b), Skutnabb-Kangas (1988), Skutnabb-Kangas and Phillipson (1994), Sonntag (1995), Street (1984), Wiley (in press), and Wiley and Lukes (this issue), among others.

A common characteristic of all analytical and theoretical approaches to LPP thus far is that none offers a model that can predict the consequences of a particular policy or show a clear cause/effect relationship between particular policy types or configurations and observed

(often undesirable, from the perspective of critical theorists) outcomes.² In other words, although some of the critical theory approaches may claim to have greater explanatory power than the rational model approaches, they do not provide falsifiable hypotheses or economic models sufficiently robust to predict behavioral outcomes in any but the most narrowly defined contexts any more than the older ones, based on the rational model, did. However, by locating the LPP enterprise within broader theories of sociology, economics, and culture, critical approaches uncover implicit ideologies (such as state capitalism, with its various forms of cultural and economic imperialism) that provide, at least, richer descriptions of how language functions within broader sociocultural contexts and why particular policies may help to maintain the status quo, with its attendant structural social inequalities (see Wiley & Lukes, this issue, on ideologies underlying LPP in the U.S.).

THE LAYERS OF PLANNING AND POLICY

Within the context of the theoretical and analytical approaches outlined above, and in an effort to more clearly situate the ELT profession and professional in relation to LPP, we present below a schema of agents, levels, and processes of LPP in terms of layers that together make up the LPP whole and that affect and interact with each other to varying degrees. For every layer we include examples intended to show not only how the ELT professional—whether teacher, program developer, materials and textbook writer, administrator, consultant, or academic—is involved at that layer but also how that layer permeates and is permeated by the others.

² Rubin (1986), in critiquing the rational model used in policy analysis in the 1970s, cites the work of Rittel and Weber (1973), who divide planning problems into two types: “tame” problems and “wicked” problems. According to Rittel and Weber, the problems social scientists deal with are of the wicked variety: Wicked problems “have no stopping rule . . . there are no ends to the causal chains that link interacting open systems . . . solutions to wicked problems are not true or false, but good or bad . . . depending on who does the judging” (as cited in Rubin, pp. 109–110). Rubin argues that language problems are somewhat wicked and somewhat tame. For example, she claims that ascertaining the number of native speakers of different languages is a tame problem requiring technical expertise. On the other hand, she cites bilingual education in the U.S. as an example of a wicked problem because it is difficult, if not impossible, to determine the links between poverty (because the targeted population in the Bilingual Education Act of 1968 was persons in families below the national poverty level) and its various possible causes, such as general economic issues, deficiencies in cognitive and academic skills, patterns of migration, and personal problems. In other words, it is difficult to discern whether school performance is related more to language ability, self-image, class image, personality, or to other, more global causes, such as the role of education in society.

Legislation and Political Processes

In terms of LPP processes,³ at the outer layers of the onion are the broad language policy objectives articulated in legislation or high court rulings at the national level, which may then be operationalized in regulations and guidelines; these guidelines are then interpreted and implemented in institutional settings, which are composed of diverse, situated contexts (e.g., schools, businesses, government offices); in each of these contexts, individuals from diverse backgrounds, experiences, and communities interact. At each layer (national, institutional, interpersonal), characteristic patterns of discourse, reflecting goals, values, and institutional or personal identities, obtain. Freeman (this issue) explains that “schools, like other institutions in society, are largely discursively constituted That is, . . . [they] are made up of people who talk and write about who they are and about what they say, do, believe, and value in patterned ways Abstract, underlying institutional discourses are never neutral. They are always structured by ideologies.” Within each layer, competing discourses create tensions and ambiguities in policy formation (for example, in the U.S. one political party, which opposes official English legislation, might control the executive branch of the government while another party, which supports official English legislation, might control the legislative branch, as is currently the case).

As it moves from one layer to the next, the legislation, judicial decree, or policy guideline is interpreted and modified. Legislation at one or another governmental level may not be funded (see Simich-Dudgeon & Boals, this issue); it may even be unenforceable. For example, in 1986 the voters of the state of California enacted Proposition 63, which declared English the official language, by a margin of 73% to 27%. Yet, the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals, in a case in which municipal court employees in Huntington Park, California, were sued for speaking Spanish on the job (*Gutierrez v. Municipal Court*, 1988), found the official English statute to be “primarily a symbolic statement” (p. 10) and irrelevant in deciding the case. In another case decided in 1990 (*Yniguez v. Mofford*), Arizona’s official English amendment was found to be in violation of the guarantee of free speech in the U.S. Constitution’s First Amendment by U.S. District Judge Paul Rosenblatt (Draper & Jimenez, 1992). Thus, in the U.S., one branch of the federal government, the judiciary, has often been unwilling to validate official language policy enacted at the state level (see Miner, in press, for discussion of some recent court cases dealing with language issues).

³ LPP processes are generally recognized to encompass policy formulation, implementation, and evaluation; see Fishman, 1979; Haugen, 1966; Hornberger, 1990; Karam, 1974; Rubin, 1971.

In other instances, guidelines proposed in one administration may not be enforced by those that follow. This happened in the U.S. with regard to the so-called Lau Remedies, which outlined the responsibilities of school districts to ensure limited or non-English-speaking children had access to the curriculum).⁴ School districts were nine times less likely to be monitored for compliance with the Remedies by the Office of Civil Rights (OCR) under the Reagan administration than under the Ford or Carter administration (Lyons, 1990). During the Reagan administration, 58% of the reviews found districts to be in violation of the provisions of the Lau Remedies, but follow-ups were rare (Crawford, 1986). In fact, given all the potential competing interests, variable discourses, and modifications in policy from layer to layer, it is not surprising that what passes for bilingual education in the U.S. varies enormously (Ricento, in press-b), even though the original enabling federal legislation for bilingual education—the Bilingual Education Act of 1968 and subsequent reauthorizations—is still in force. In some schools, the mere presence of non-English speakers in a classroom with an aide (who may or may not speak the students' native language) is considered bilingual education, whereas in other schools mainstream English-only classrooms with a pull-out ESL component are often labeled bilingual education by principals and other administrators. Such practices no doubt reflect competing ideologies and interests; but beyond this is the issue of accountability (or lack thereof), uneven implementation, and sporadic evaluation of programs to ensure stated policies are actually followed.

Of course, it is not only ELT planning and policy that may be affected by such modifications and reinterpretations across LPP layers and over time. The LPP literature is replete with examples of similar gaps between policy goals and their implementation. In Peru, the 1975 officialization of the Quechua language called for the obligatory teaching of Quechua at all levels of education and to all students across the nation beginning in 1976. This law opened the way for innovative and far-reaching bilingual education initiatives in the highland, Quechua-speaking areas of the country, which continue to have an impact to the present day. On the other hand, there was never any real follow-through on the teaching of Quechua to, for example, monolingual Spanish-speaking students in the capital city, Lima; no provision was made for either funding or

⁴ Following the Supreme Court decision in *Lau v. Nichols* (1974), school districts around the country serving a population composed of more than 5% minority group children and receiving any federal funding were required to provide bilingual education (or some other remedy) for language minority students who needed language assistance. The Office of Civil Rights, an agency of the Department of Education, was charged with ensuring that school districts complied with federal policy.

enforcement of such efforts. Subsequent government administrations further diluted the force of the officialization by modifying the constitution to state that Quechua was only “in official use in the zones and form that the law establishes” (Hornberger, 1988, p. 30).

Politics affects LPP processes at all levels of analysis. For example, a number of studies of the U.S. English-Only movement have used attitudinal and demographic data to determine the relationship between political affiliation or philosophy and support of particular language policies (e.g., Dyste, 1990; Huddy & Sears, 1990; MacKaye, 1990; Zentella, 1990) whereas other studies have offered frameworks from political science theory to account for why particular policies are promoted (e.g., Donahue, 1995; Sonntag, 1995). Crawford (1989, 1992) shows how politics has informed the debate over bilingual education in the U.S., as do Lyons (1990), Cummins (1994a), Secada (1990), and many others. Ricento (1995) describes the role of grass-roots organizations in language policy development during the Americanization Campaign, 1895–1924. Politics is inseparable from any discussion of something so central to human society as language. All the articles and reports in this issue of *TESOL Quarterly* reflect the political dimension to one degree or another.

An issue in current research in LPP is how to analyze political processes in ways that go beyond mere description or speculation. A similar concern arises with regard to assessing the role of ideology—especially as it interacts with political processes—in language policy formulation and implementation (see Barkhuizen & Gough, this issue; Wiley & Lukes, this issue, on ideology as it affects LPP in South Africa and the U.S., respectively). Although many frameworks have been offered for analyzing why certain policies are developed (see, for example, Moore, this issue, and Phillipson & Skutnabb-Kangas, this issue), for elucidating the levels and processes of policy development (see, for example, Barkhuizen & Gough, this issue), and for describing the range of possible policy types and goals (see, for example, Hornberger, 1994, mentioned above), the field of LPP research still lacks sufficient explanatory and predictive analytical tools that can be applied to diverse settings. Phillipson and Skutnabb-Kangas (this issue) call for “comparative language policy analysis . . . that goes beyond consideration of language in a few domains and permits valid comparison of fundamentally different sociopolitical units.”

States and Supranational Agencies

We have argued that LPP processes (and the politics that affects them) interact across layers—national, institutional, interpersonal; the next three sections look more closely at those layers. Much of the extant

literature in LPP concerns the role of states⁵ in the development and implementation of language policy. Area as well as national studies have been conducted on virtually all independent states, protectorates, commonwealths, and other entities. We will not indulge in cataloguing them here (although, as a starting point, for area and national studies see Cobarrubias & Fishman, 1983; Fishman, 1993; Fishman, Ferguson, & Das Gupta, 1968; Haugen, 1972; Marshall, 1991; Rubin & Jernudd, 1971; Wolfson & Manes, 1985; see Hornberger, 1988, for an example of an in-depth empirical study in one country, Peru).

In neo-Marxist approaches to the role of education in capitalist societies, “the State is regarded not as an institution but as a relation by means of which the class structure is reproduced” (Carnoy, 1982, as cited in Phillipson, 1992, p. 67). “Education,” according to Carnoy, “serves the State by fulfilling three functions . . . economic-reproductive (a process of qualification for work in the economy), ideological (the inculcation of attitudes and values), and repressive (the imposition of sanctions for not complying with the demands of school” (as cited in Phillipson, p. 68). According to this view, education serves the sociopolitical and economic interests of the state so that the state can perpetuate and enhance its power. The values and norms of dominant groups within the state are generally not forcibly imposed in capitalist systems; rather, they are transmitted through hegemonic processes, which, though always dominant, are never either total or exclusive (Williams, 1977, as cited in Phillipson).

States have both supported and benefited from the explosion of the ELT profession over the past 25 years. The principal English-dominant powers, the U.S. and Great Britain, together have aggressively promoted the English language and Western culture in all areas of the world. Great Britain has benefited from its colonial legacy in Africa and Asia, and the U.S. has leveraged its economic and geopolitical clout since World War II to gain cultural and economic footholds in areas previously under British control as well as in newly created states in Africa, the Middle East, and Asia. The utility (i.e., economic value) of English in international commerce and in access to technology and development has hastened its spread and the displacement of hundreds of indigenous regional languages, many of which had historically served as regional *lingua francas*. Of course, the spread of English has led to nativized varieties that are often delinked from colonial progenitors; in some regions, for example, India, English has served as a *lingua franca* transcending to a significant degree the sociopolitical baggage associ-

⁵Following Tollefson (1991), the term *state* is distinguished from *government* as “an independent source of power with an interest in retaining and expanding its dominance” (p. 10). Here we use *state* interchangeably with *nation*.

ated with British colonial domination. In other cases, such as in Kenya, English has continued to serve as “the vehicle and the magic formula to colonial elitedom” (Ngũgĩ, 1985, as cited in Phillipson, 1992, p. 115).

Clearly, the ELT profession has benefited economically from the apparently unstoppable spread (some consider it an invasion) of English worldwide.⁶ Again, one need not accept all the premises and conclusions of neo-Marxist frameworks to agree that the growing importance of English throughout the world has had particular, often negative, consequences for other—especially smaller—languages. Multinational corporations often adopt English as the lingua franca of the workplace; international organizations, such as the United Nations (UN), rely on English to a disproportionate degree given the number of countries in the General Assembly in which English is the national language (see Phillipson & Skutnabb-Kangas, this issue).

To what degree do states actively engage in LPP development? States may have global, abstract, or symbolic aims with regard to language policy. It is unusual for high-level state actors to be directly involved in language policy.⁷ Case studies (see, for example, Simich-Dudgeon & Boals, this issue) have shown, however, that what the various branches of federal governments do in terms of policy pronouncements, guidelines, legislation, and high court rulings always has an impact on policy development at provincial, state, and local governmental levels. Kaplan (1990) argues that language planning has often been relegated to the educational structures of government, which tend “to exclude some languages from consideration, to minimize the effectiveness of language dissemination by underfunding language teaching operations, and to support the notion of the identity between the nation and some single language” (p. 5). Although Kaplan (1990) and Phillipson (1992) come at the issues from different directions, the results they describe are the same: The survival and spread of one language is supported (by the state) to the detriment, even death, of another language.

States have the resources to engage in language planning that are not available in other sectors of society as well as the ability to operationalize language policies through legislation, executive orders, and so on. However, with few exceptions, states are most likely to engage in planning and policy activities in those areas (for example, education)

⁶ An estimated 315 million speak English as a native language, and as many as 1.5 billion speak it as a second or foreign language. No language in recorded history has been spoken by more people in both relative and absolute numbers (Crystal, 1985, cited in Phillipson, 1992).

⁷ There are many notable exceptions, however. For example, responding to decades of policy that failed to make Puerto Rico a bilingual society, President Franklin D. Roosevelt in 1937 intervened directly in the education policy of Puerto Rico, the only time a U.S. president has involved himself directly in Puerto Rico’s language affairs, according to Resnick (1993) (see Pousada, this issue).

where their interests seem clearly apparent and where structures already exist to disseminate policy (e.g., state boards of education, commissioners of education). When necessary to preserve power (or to counter perceived threats to that power), states use more overtly repressive tactics to neutralize “state enemies” or economic competitors (e.g., the repression of Kurdish in Turkey, discussed in Skutnabb-Kangas & Bucak, 1994; and of Catalan in Spain, discussed in Woolard, 1985). Most states (most of the time) tend to become involved in language matters when they are intertwined with political issues (e.g., the development of the Lau Remedies by the OCR in response to the *Lau v. Nichols*, 1974, Supreme Court ruling; also see Pousada, this issue, on the influence of the U.S. Americanization plan and of Puerto Rico’s own party politics on the status of English in the education system of Puerto Rico) but otherwise show little sustained interest in or commitment to language issues per se.

Suprastatal agencies involved in language policy issues have a formidable challenge: They must seek consensus among nations that may have fought wars with one another and may have little or no desire to give up national identity markers, such as language, in accepting another nation’s language as an official language. For the 15 member states of the European Union, “explicit language policy formulations are relatively rare, which does not mean that there is no language policy” (Phillipson & Skutnabb-Kangas, this issue). In addition, states that ratify international laws and various human rights charters and covenants are supposed to implement the policies stipulated in these documents in their national law (Skutnabb-Kangas & Phillipson, 1994). An example of a supranational policy statement is the Council of Europe’s proposed *European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages* (1988), significant because it “assumes a multilingual context and expressly states that support for minority languages in no way represents a threat to official languages” (Phillipson, 1992, p. 95). Within the UN, the *Draft Universal Declaration on Indigenous Rights* (as cited in Phillipson, 1992) establishes as fundamental human rights that indigenous peoples have

the right to develop and promote their own languages, including a literary language, and to use them, for administrative, judicial, cultural, and other purposes. The right to all forms of education, including in particular the right of children to have access to education in their own languages, and to establish, structure, conduct, and control their own educational systems and institutions. (p. 96)

The wide-ranging implications of such declarations for the ELT profession have been taken up by Phillipson (1992) and others (see Ricento, 1994, for discussion and additional references).

To summarize, the state plays a very important—although sometimes indirect—role, whether one adopts a neo-Marxist perspective or a liberal

view, in deciding which language(s) will receive support (usually through the education system), which will be repressed, and (often) which language(s) will be ignored. Because states (through their legislatures or proxies) have the power to levy taxes,⁸ regulate commerce, protect the national interest, and in countless ways regulate behavior through laws, edicts, executive orders, and so on, their role in LPP development should not be underestimated. National political leaders can sometimes do more to affect attitudes by supporting one or another language or policy than dozens of scholarly books or articles can. However, as recent events in eastern Europe, the Soviet Union, and countries in Asia and Africa show, states can dissolve and governments can change with astonishing speed. Even within stable polities, power relations among competing elites (and counter elites) are continually being negotiated, often resulting in major realignments in relatively short periods and with implications for changes in language policies (see Ricento, in press-b; Sonntag, 1995).

Institutions

By institutions, we mean relatively permanent socially constituted systems by which and through which individuals and communities gain identity, transmit cultural values, and attend to primary social needs. Examples are schools, organized religion, the media, civic and other private and publicly subsidized organizations (e.g., libraries, musical organizations), and the business community.

Because language is involved, in one way or another, in virtually all human activities, planning language is not much different from planning society. In this sense, all institutions are implicated when states or institutions within states make language planning decisions. As Kaplan (1990) notes, institutions other than government often have a large impact on language policy development. Kaplan cites the work of Masagara (n.d.) on the role played by missionaries in East Africa, in which he argues that the missionaries “interacted with the population to understand their needs and behaviors . . . They de-constructed the existing environment by providing attractive alternatives to existing practices and beliefs . . . [and] third, they set in motion a dialectic process designed to adjust the new model to the evolving situation” (as

⁸ Bilingualism is not without costs. For example, according to one researcher (Esman, 1985, as cited in Coulmas, 1992), the cost of official bilingualism in Canada was 1% of the federal budget in fiscal 1978–1979, or about C\$503 million. The LINGUA Program, designed to promote the study of foreign languages in the European Community, was funded at a level of 200 million ECU in 1990 (Coulmas, 1992). Federal appropriations for bilingual education approved by the U.S. Congress under Title VII of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act for fiscal 1993 were nearly \$200 million (Ricento, in press-a).

cited in Kaplan, p. 10). Governments, Kaplan notes, are rarely this systematic in their planning and implementation processes, which explains in part why governmental attempts to plan and implement policies, especially those involving status issues, have mixed results and often unintended consequences (see Tarnopolsky's brief report, this issue, on how commercial ELT programs in the Ukraine are effectively implementing the government's policy goals with respect to increased EFL learning more than state-controlled schools are; see also McGuire's brief report, this issue, which contrasts the driving forces for English LPP in Central America's public and private schools as *command* and *demand*, respectively).

Institutions other than religious ones, such as book and magazine publishers, broadcast media, and schools and universities, also play important roles as policymakers, arbiters, watchdogs, opinion leaders, gatekeepers, and most usually reproducers of the existing social reality. One need not subscribe to theories of cultural and linguistic hegemony to believe that attitudes toward languages and their speakers are deeply embedded in institutional structures and practices. The preeminent status of English in the U.S., Canada, England, New Zealand, and Australia, for example, is apparent because it is embedded in every aspect of virtually every important public—and private—institution, whether or not English is designated the national language.

Attempts by governments to change language policies—especially those with long histories—in any institutional domain without the consent of the affected parties or without broad-based input will always be problematic, especially in democratic societies (see, e.g., Eggington, 1994; Moore, this issue, for a critique of Australia's national language policies). The fact that societies unquestioningly embrace covert policies and practices but often ignore or resist explicit ones—even if well intentioned and carefully implemented—can be explained in a number of ways. Ricento (in press-b), in a discussion of national language policy in the U.S., argues that “language policies evolve out of more general social policies, which reflect . . . ‘deep’ values [that] represent an accretion of national experiences, influenced by certain intellectual traditions, which together create underlying . . . frameworks within which policies evolve and are evaluated.” For example, bilingual education has often been opposed in the U.S. because, among other reasons, Americans have been socialized to believe that the unity and cultural integrity of the U.S. cannot abide cultural, including linguistic, pluralism. The precise details of that socialization process are complex and span decades of lived experience. Consequently, unless and until social attitudes change—an equally long and complex process—resistance to bilingual education will continue regardless of official national policy or research demonstrating its effectiveness in educating language minority

and majority children (see Cummins, 1994a, for additional explanations of why bilingual education is opposed in the U.S.). In a similar vein, Schiffman (1996) refers to the powerful role played by “linguistic culture” (p. 246) in the development of covert policy in any polity.

In short, language policy must be evaluated not only by official policy statements or laws on the books but by language behavior and attitudes in situated, especially institutional, contexts.

Classroom Practitioners

We place the classroom practitioner at the heart of language policy (at the center of the onion). In the ELT literature, the practitioner is often an afterthought who implements what “experts” in the government, board of education, or central school administration have already decided. The practitioner often needs to be “educated,” “studied,” “cajoled,” “tolerated,” even “replaced” by better prepared (even more pliant) teachers. In contrast, we claim that educational and social change and institutional transformation, especially in decentralized societies, often begin with the grass roots (see Burns’s brief report, this issue, on teachers as implementers and evaluators of curriculum change in English language education for migrants in Australia).

In countries with highly centralized state structures, as well as in countries with decentralized structures, several layers of intermediate actors (e.g., state boards of education, commissioners of education, program directors) may lie between the persons or bodies who promulgate and disseminate broad policy guidelines and those who actually implement a particular policy, for example, classroom teachers. Usually, policies change as they move down through administrative levels, either explicitly in new written documents or through interpretation of existing documents. Only the most authoritarian political structures leave little room for variation in the implementation of official language policy. Even in countries with decentralized political systems, however, teachers are often socialized to see themselves as simply carrying out policies that others have articulated. In fact, as Auerbach (1993) points out, teachers may implement policies (e.g., English only in the ESL classroom) that reflect broader social attitudes and not specific school policies without realizing it. They do so in many ways and on many levels; for example, teachers may internalize normative social attitudes toward speakers of nonofficial languages or nonstandard varieties of official languages, or they may believe that bilingual education programs disadvantage language minority students. Further, the discourse of schools, communities, and states helps reinforce unstated beliefs so that teachers come to believe not only that what they are doing reflects explicit policies but that the policies are generally in the best interest of students.

In contradistinction to the notion that the teacher is an unwitting reproducer of social reality, a number of researchers have described how teachers can transform classrooms, thereby promoting institutional change that can lead to political and, ultimately, broader social change. These researchers view teachers as primary language policymakers (see Freeman, this issue, on how teachers at one bilingual school implement a language policy that represents an alternative to mainstream societal discourse with respect to language minority participation in education). One way teachers can make policy is by becoming researchers in partnership with their students as a means of “mak[ing] changes in participants’ lives, either inside or outside a classroom” (Auerbach, 1994, p. 695). Auerbach advocates participatory action research, begun as a method for community development work, as appropriate in ESL classrooms in part because “it explicitly attempts to break down barriers between research, curriculum development, teaching, learning, and evaluation As such, [this] research is integral to the educational process itself” (p. 696). In this regard, in support of and in collaboration with students and their communities, teachers become catalysts for policymaking, thereby breaking from the traditional approach to research, “in which experts in universities collect data about other persons’ behavior, analyze that information and then tell people about themselves” (Fingeret, 1991, cited in Auerbach, p. 694). Research in which participants study themselves helps break down the researcher-versus-practitioner dichotomy, enabling teachers and students to articulate research agendas that are more likely to have an impact on their lives. If an important goal of language policy is to bring about social change, as Cooper (1989) and others have stated, then this approach has the potential to develop and implement language policies in several areas (e.g., curriculum, teaching techniques, approaches to program design, evaluation, certification of teachers, placement decisions).

Another example from the literature on critical pedagogy comes from Darder (1991), who, in describing the connections among cultural ideology, power, and pedagogy, argues that “teachers must understand the role schooling plays in uniting knowledge and power, and how this dynamic relates to the development of critically thinking and socially active individuals” (p. 77). Darder’s goal is to “develop a new language by which bicultural educators may gain the perspective to evaluate their current practices with bicultural students and to formulate new directions in the interest of linking education with a pedagogy of differences” (p. xv). Her work, heavily influenced by the work of Foucault (1977), Freire (1970, 1978, 1985), Freire and Macedo (1987), Giroux (1981, 1983, 1988), and Gramsci (1971), among others, is essentially a critique of contemporary education practices in the U.S. “In many schools [in the U.S.] bicultural students are not only discouraged but actively prevented

from speaking their native languages (e.g. Spanish, Japanese, Chinese, Ebonics, etc.)” (Darder, pp. 36–37). This is due to “hegemonic forces of class oppression and cultural invasion [that] strongly converge in the dynamics of language domination” (p. 37). Educators often justify English-only policies because they believe the use of the native language in schools will interfere with students’ intellectual and emotional development (Ramirez & Castaneda, 1974, as cited in Darder). The remedy, according to Darder, is to promote policies that will create the conditions for cultural democracy, which presupposes a “political commitment to a liberatory vision” (p. 127). In the last chapter of her book, Darder describes the graduate Bicultural Development Program at Pacific Oaks College in California as a model of critical and liberatory education. Students in this program take courses such as Racism and Human Development, Theory of Cultural Democracy, Implications of Parenting Bicultural Children, and Freire’s Model and Its Implications for Bicultural Educators. This institutional response to what is perceived as an undemocratic, indeed oppressive, educational system in the U.S. aims to give teachers a set of tools to work with in the classroom that is different from what more traditional programs provide. Teacher education, then, can be one avenue for introducing changes in the classroom that can indirectly affect processes of societal change, including those that affect language behavior.

Of course, what sort of teacher education is deemed appropriate depends on how program developers (i.e., government bureaucrats, professors) view social reality, the goals of the ELT profession, and their own role as educators. Obviously, the program Darder (1991) describes would be viewed with hostility in many contexts within many polities because it threatens the social order or because it seems unobjective or too political. Such a view, though, makes the point: A “neutral” curriculum is simply one in which the politics⁹ are subterranean.

CONCLUSION

We suggest that LPP is a multilayered construct, wherein essential LPP components—agents, levels, and processes of LPP—permeate and interact with each other in multiple and complex ways as they enact various types, approaches, and goals of LPP. We have hinted at the roles played by ideology, culture, and ethnicity. However, all three thoroughly infuse

⁹ *Political* here does not refer to sectarian ideologies, such as liberal or conservative; rather, as Pennycook (1989) notes, all relations within a society are political in that they involve notions of power between and within groups, often reflecting and reinforcing differences based on race, class, and gender.

the LPP layers, goals, approaches, and types we have sketched. We suggest that, because human society is constituted of, by, and through language, all acts and actions mediated by language are opportunities for the implicit (or explicit) expression of language policies (i.e., opportunities for language planning, macro and micro, overt and covert, intended and unintended). An example of an explicit expression of language policy is a memorandum written by the manager of the styling room in a J. C. Penney store in San Antonio, Texas, dated October 8, 1995, reproduced in its entirety here:

Sunday Associates—if you are having lunch in the meeting room you *must* sign out for lunch. If you don't your luncheon will have to stop. ALSO this is AMERICA* We only speak ENGLISH* in our salon. NO SPANISH. Thx Jane

*only exception is if client does not speak English.

An example of an implicit policy is the use of English at professional meetings of TESOL affiliates in non-English-dominant countries, such as Japan. Although no official policy states that Japanese cannot be used in affiliate meetings, in practice the disproportionately high number of native English-speaking officers in the Japanese Association of Language Teachers (JALT) dictates that English will be used, even though 95% of the nonnative speakers of English who are JALT members are native speakers of Japanese (Oda, 1995). English-only policies that lead to a disproportionate percentage of native English speakers in leadership positions in the organization effectively discriminate against native Japanese speakers with limited English proficiency who may be interested in attending JALT conferences and benefiting from what the organization has to offer.¹⁰

Whenever communication occurs and individuals make decisions about the language variety they will speak, the form of address they will use, the posture or facial expression they will adopt, the content of their speech, their body language, and so on, the individuals express, work out, contest, interpret, and at some level analyze language policies (on this point, see Jernudd, 1991; Jernudd & Neustupny, 1991; see also Kuo & Jernudd, 1993, on the microlevel of language planning or language management at the level of individual discourse). ELT professionals are not different from anyone else in this regard. They are policy transmitters and can become policymakers if they so desire. Auerbach (1994, 1995) and Darder (1991) describe options available to teachers and teacher educators who are interested in promoting particular social agendas through education.

¹⁰ According to Oda (1995), in 1993, of 37 local chapter heads, each of whom has a vote at the national executive committee meetings, 28 were native speakers of English.

The most fundamental concerns of ESL/EFL teachers—that is, what will I teach? how will I teach? and why do I teach?—are all language policy issues. Auerbach (1995) argues that “the day-to-day decisions that practitioners make inside the classroom both shape and are shaped by the social order outside the classroom” (p. 9). In many settings, curricular guidelines are handed down to teachers, often with hidden agendas. In the case of adult ESL programs in the U.S., for example, the underlying assumption of curricula is that “learners should assimilate into preexisting structures and practices without questioning the power relations inherent in them” (p. 14). Rather than accept this broad goal, ESL teachers may, for example, opt for a participatory approach that centers on students’ rather than society’s needs. Although the topics in both externally driven and participatory approaches may be similar, the ways they are implemented in the classroom differ. Auerbach suggests three ways in which participatory approaches differ from externally driven ones: (a) Content draws from and validates what students already know and bring to learning rather than focusing on what they do not know; (b) content is presented descriptively rather than prescriptively, focusing on learners’ lived experience instead of on idealized projections of that experience; and (c) content is problematized (e.g., housing issues may be framed in terms of shortages or tenants’ rights rather than simply in terms of learning how to read advertisements for apartments in the classified section of the newspaper). This approach puts a heavy burden on practitioners who are already overworked and underpaid. Auerbach suggests that, to improve their situation, adult ESL teachers should apply to their own situation the same participatory approach recommended for curricular and materials development—critical awareness of power and social relations and collective action for change. In the meantime, teachers have daily opportunities to make small changes in their practices, from the topics they choose for discussion, to how they structure the classroom, to the interest they demonstrate in students’ problems. Teachers send implicit messages in other ways, too. As individuals, members of communities, and citizens of a country, ESL/EFL practitioners serve as role models, informants, and advisors on a daily basis. They may reinforce dominant cultural values (to one degree or another), or they may question and even oppose those values, thereby modeling possible alternative views of social reality often unavailable to students struggling to survive in a new culture or acquiring English for instrumental purposes.

At the microscopic level of the ELT classroom or teacher-student interaction, a relevant frame of reference is Vygotsky’s (1978) zone of proximal development as the site not only in which language is acquired but also where macroscopic language policies are instantiated daily (see Cummins, 1994b, for elaboration on this point). This language learning

site is both the place where learners acquire or do not acquire language and a place where external politics has influenced which language and which variety of that language learners will acquire, who will acquire it, and what the function of that variety will be in the learners' future life. Traditional approaches to language policy development see these issues as already decided before the ELT professional enters the classroom. This need not be the case, as a number of researchers have argued. Teachers, administrators, professors, and program developers can introduce change in their individual practices and through collective action in their institutions, communities, and professional organizations (for example, Daoud's brief report, this issue, places both the weight and the hope for improved ELT in Tunisia on the continuing development of ELT professionals through their professional associations). If we as ELT professionals defer at each level to others whose views we find antithetical to our missions as educators and citizens, we ratify existing policies through our silence. One way or another, all ELT professionals play a role in reaffirming or opposing language policies that affect not only our students' future lives but the lives of our communities and nations as well.

THE AUTHORS

Thomas K. Ricento is Associate Professor in the Division of Bicultural-Bilingual Studies, College of Social and Behavioral Sciences, the University of Texas at San Antonio. His research interests and publications are in the areas of language policy, including educational policy and comparative policy; history of language and politics issues, especially in North America; and written discourse analysis.

Nancy H. Hornberger is Goldie Anna Associate Professor at the Graduate School of Education, University of Pennsylvania. She specializes in sociolinguistics, language planning, and bilingual education, with special attention to educational policy and programs for language minority populations in Andean South America and the U.S.

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