

of commonly employed qualitative and quantitative procedures that researchers need to understand. Readers will not be disappointed with this text.

## References

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**Thomas Ricento (ed.), 2006, *An Introduction to Language Policy: Theory and Method*. Malden, MA: Blackwell, xii + 371 pages, ISBN 1-4051-1498-3 (paperback)**

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Language policy (LP), in its tremendous breadth and depth as a field of inquiry, not only extends beyond clear-cut definitions but even goes as far as defying any delineated theoretical structure that could be called *a theory* of LP. It is perhaps this very challenging nature of the field that makes Thomas Ricento present a domain review rather than a theoretical overview in the introductory chapter of *An Introduction to Language Policy: Theory and Method*. He therefore suggests a simple but significant question as a useful approach to understanding what LP is about: 'what is it that scholars who specialize in LP study?' (p. 12). Extensively addressing this question, the nineteen chapters of this edited volume are organized in three major parts dealing with theoretical perspectives, methodological perspectives, and topical areas in LP.

Part I starts with Ricento's own chapter, in which he introduces LP as a domain of inquiry in terms of its three historical periods of development as a distinct field: the 1950s and 1960s, characterized by the language planning practices of developing grammars, dictionaries, and writing systems for indigenous languages by Western linguists; the 1970s–1990s, when the emergence of critical approaches raised concerns for the ideological and political dimensions of LP; and the period starting from the 1990s. Pointing out that, unlike the theoretical aspect of LP, actual planning and specific policymaking practices have not been much discussed, the author highlights four major challenges that LP researchers must confront: 'a clearly articulated view about the nature of language . . . ; an understanding of how power is represented and reflected in various language policies . . . ; a position on the

role of the researcher as an “interested” participant in research; and . . . adhering to high standards of research’ (p. 19).

Ricento clearly states at the beginning of his introductory chapter that an ‘important claim of this book is that there is no overarching theory of LP and planning’ (p. 10). Nonetheless, in Chapter 2, Nancy Hornberger attempts to put previously proposed language policy and planning (LPP) types, approaches, and goals together into an integrative framework of LPP. Although the idea of such a framework is an intriguing one, the actual amalgam sketched in this chapter is hardly acceptable as a well-sculpted framework. In Chapter 3, James Tollefson discusses critical theory in LP. Referring to different meanings of the term ‘critical’ in LP research, he touches upon the concepts of power, struggle, colonization, hegemony, ideology, and resistance as the key concepts in critical theory, and elaborates on the historical-structural approach and governmentality views as major examples of critical approaches to LP research. Tollefson’s chapter successfully illustrates conceptual challenges of critical social theories to more traditionally oriented LPP approaches, although his suggested areas of current critical LP debates do not seem to thoroughly reflect the potential contribution of critical theory to LP research.

Further along the path of such challenges to traditional understandings of LPP, Alastair Pennycook explores postmodernism in LP in his profoundly challenging Chapter 4. Based on the anti-essentialist approaches of postmodernism, he attempts to problematize the grand-narrative conceptions of almost all central themes of LPP including policy, power, gender, ethnicity, identity, and, most fundamentally, language. He raises four issues as the major concerns for LPP from a postmodernist standpoint: governmentality through language; the ontological view of language as a colonial modernist construct; ideologies of imperialism and language rights; and contextual understandings of language and LPs. Pennycook’s problematization of language ontologies is a potentially revolutionary challenge, especially in suggesting that ‘the very notion of language, as a product, or invention, of colonial/modernist state, is something that requires critical examination’ (p. 66). This challenge, along with his notion of performativity (Pennycook 2004) – emphasizing the agentic nature of language use as reconstruction rather than reproduction of meanings – is greatly contributive not only to LP studies but also to the broader field of applied linguistics on almost all its fronts.

The final three chapters in Part I, apparently confined by the space limitations of an edited volume, may not be considered comprehensive accounts of their respective topics, but they do illustrate brief images of the vast landscape of LP. Francois Grin explores economic considerations in LP as concerns that may be added to the traditional legal, culturalist, and educational approaches. In his discussions of the main lines of inquiry in language economics, Grin adopts a broad working definition of the economics of language as the application of economic concepts in the study

of issues that involve linguistic variables. Ronald Schmidt, in his chapter on political theory and LP, deals with issues of social construction of identities, questions of shaping meanings, and the problem of social equity as central LP topics for which, in his view, political theory has a lot to offer. Harold Schiffman, in the final chapter of the first part of the volume, focuses on the potentially groundbreaking notion of linguistic culture. Schiffman's central argument is that LP is to be viewed as not only 'the explicit, written, overt, *de jure*, official and "top-down" decision-making about language, but also the implicit, unwritten, covert, *de facto*, grass-roots, and unofficial ideas and assumptions, which can influence the *outcomes* of policy-making' (p. 112). A consideration of such a concern in LP explorations may bring about fundamental transformations in mainstream approaches to LPP.

The composition of Part I is among the several major strengths of the book. On the one hand, historical trends of the development of LP as a distinct field and the traditional understandings of it are extensively illustrated. On the other hand, alternative views of LP, specifically as raised by critical and postmodernist perspectives, are given equally elaborate consideration. This multi-perspective presentation of the theoretical considerations in LP successfully depicts the field as a dynamic area of inquiry with emerging challenges rather than as a static body of knowledge. Moreover, the inclusion of chapters specifically dealing with the economic, political, and cultural dimensions of LP reflects its interdisciplinary nature and situates it within a larger theoretical context of social sciences. Although the chapters are not equally strong in their structure and arguments, the overall conceptualizations presented in this first part of the volume illustrate theoretical images that foreground the presentation of diverse methodological and topical themes in the rest of the book.

Part II comprises five chapters that focus on methodological concerns in LP research approaches. Although these methodological considerations are illustrative of potential procedural options in the practice of research on actual LP problems, the discussions in this part may occasionally appear to be too theoretically oriented. At some points the authors seem to be giving an overview of some general research approach (discourse analysis or psycho-sociological methods, for instance) with only marginal reference to LP research concerns and questions. A more practically contextualized treatment of research issues based on actual LP problems could have proven more fruitful. Terrence Wiley, in Chapter 8, deals with historical investigations and their implications for LP studies. Challenges to conventional understandings of history and the constructed nature of history are the major topics discussed by the author. While the presentation of an alternative research model is beyond the expectations from such a very brief chapter, the author does attempt to question mainstream views of investigating LPP. Similarly questioning grand-narrative approaches to inquiry, in Chapter 9 Suresh Canagarajah discusses ethnographic LP research. Revisiting the prevalent positivist and rationalist traditions as

shaping a crisis in LPP studies, he argues that 'the methodological crisis in LPP itself motivates an appreciation of ethnography in policy-making' (p. 154). Canagarajah reviews different types of ethnography, and argues that ethnographic research can contribute to various aspects of LPP inquiry. He does mention, though, that the marriage between ethnographic methods and policy studies has not been without controversies.

Discourse-analytic research methods are dealt with by Ruth Wodak in Chapter 10. Although her discussions introduce multidimensional discourse studies as potentially fertile research procedures, she does not go beyond a brief sketch of the issue. Her discussion on the relevant genre types and the proposed steps in LP investigations could have been more specifically situated within LPP inquiry. In Chapter 11, Don Cartwright explores geolinguistic analysis that, in his own words, 'involves the investigation of historical processes that have contributed to the development of current patterns of human contact . . . [and] shifts in regional ethnic composition' (p. 194). The author discusses status, demographic, and institutional variables influential in assessing ethnolinguistic vitality, and illustrates the application and relevance of geolinguistics research to LP studies through two examples: the Welsh in the United Kingdom and the Flemish and Walloons in Belgium. Colin Baker, in Chapter 12, presents psycho-sociological analysis as a viable research approach in LP and briefly examines the four constructs of language attitudes, ethnolinguistic vitality, language use across various domains, and language testing. Specific styles in psycho-sociological inquiry applicable to LP research, as well as criticisms of psycho-sociological approaches, are reviewed in this chapter.

The seven chapters in Part III illustrate a broad image of topical areas of inquiry in LP research. Jan Blommaert focuses on the points of relationship between LP and national identity in Chapter 13, and highlights the concepts of nation, state, linguistic community, speech community, ethnolinguistic ideology, and identity. In Chapter 14, Stephen May probes issues of minority rights in LP. Problematizing traditional apolitical, neutral, and technicist views of LP, he refers to the concept of linguistic human rights to argue for rethinking 'nation-states in more linguistically plural and inclusive ways' (p. 267). More elaborate discussions on linguistic human rights are presented by Tove Skutnabb-Kangas in Chapter 15, where various types of language-related human rights are discussed and the recognition of diversity is called for. Related to this is the concern for the education of linguistic minorities, which is explored in Chapter 16 by Christina Bratt Paulston and Kai Heidemann. They centrally deal with the problems of language maintenance and shift, language choice, and standardization. Their concern for language shift is more specifically addressed in Chapter 17 by Joshua Fishman, who elaborates on the overt and covert forces that influence such shifts. In Chapter 18, Timothy Reagan revisits issues of status planning and corpus planning, as recurring themes in Part III, to address developments in the area of LP for sign languages. In Reagan's view, both of these types of 'language-planning

activities involving sign languages offer examples of group empowerment as well as of continued domination and oppression' (p. 339). Finally, in Chapter 19, Robert Phillipson presents his own well-known perspective on linguistic imperialism (Phillipson 1992) in relation to LP. Focusing on LP concerns in the European Union, he attempts to highlight 'inequality, absence of a level linguistic playing-field, unfair privileging of the use of one language . . . , [and] the uncritical acceptance of English having a "natural" right to be the default language' (p. 357).

Part III covers a wide range of topics that may be explored in LP research. Specifically, the emerging concerns for identity, language rights, and the politics of LPP are well illustrated in this part. The chapters admirably reflect actual areas of challenge created by alternative LP theoretical standpoints that were introduced in the first part of the volume. Having said that, one might tend to think that the focus on such fashionable topics as minority rights and linguistic human rights has led to a lack of concentration on some other crucial concerns in LP. Issues such as language in media, literacy education, and gendered language use are obviously very important topical areas in LP that are not prioritized in the book, at least as chapter titles. This may be well justified, however, on the grounds that these issues have been dealt with at various points throughout the book, and also because a single volume may not exhaustively include all the relevant topics in its table of contents.

Ricento's edited volume, while understandably not free of shortcomings, does make an important contribution to the broad field of applied studies of language in society. It is hard to imagine any linguistic or social context where the discussions of this book would not be relevant, although it is a drawback that apparently all the contributors are themselves from Western contexts. The editor's section overviews, annotated bibliographies, and discussion questions presented at the end of each chapter make it an appropriate – though at some points demanding – textbook for various courses in studies on language and society at both undergraduate and graduate levels. Moreover, beyond the classroom context, the readers of *An Introduction to Language Policy* will find well served the stated purpose of providing 'a thorough introduction to the principal theories and methods which are used in current research in language policy'.

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