An Introduction to
Language Policy

Language and Social Change

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The series explores the relationships between language, society and social change, and encompasses both theoretical and applied aspects of language use. Books in the series draw on naturally occurring language data from a wide variety of social contexts. The series takes a broad view of the relationship between language and social change. It includes work on groups that are socially marginalized and that were previously neglected by sociolinguists. It also includes books that focus primarily on wider social issues concerning language, such as language ecology. The series takes a critical approach to sociolinguistics. It challenges current orthodoxies not only by dealing with familiar topics in new and radical ways, but also by making use of the results of empirical research which alter our current understanding of the relationship between language and social change. Above all, language will be viewed as constitutive of, as well as reflective of, cultures and societies.

An Introduction to

Language Policy

Theory and Method

Edited by **Thomas Ricento**

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Preface

This book is designed to provide the reader with a thorough introduction to the principal theories and methods which are used in current research in language policy. The book aims to be accessible to non-specialists from a variety of fields in the social sciences, and to position language policy as an area of research within sociolinguistics and, more broadly, within the social sciences and humanities. The common element to all of the chapters in this book is language and its role in social life. If there is any "argument" that I wish to put forward it is that in order to understand how and why language is imbricated in all aspects of social life, we need to avail ourselves of a variety of perspectives from core social science disciplines: ethnography, geography, historiography, linguistics, political science, psychology, and sociology. The theories and methods described in this book provide frames (or lenses) through which we can examine the role(s) of language in social life; readers will be able to ascertain the relative usefulness of these theories and methods for their own research interests in language policy.

A logical question at this point is: what topics fall within the purview of language policy? Some examples are provided in part III, "Topical Areas in Language Policy"; these were chosen because they have been the focus of research in recent years, because they can be studied in diverse contexts, and because they have tended to generate controversies (and social science research often gravitates toward controversy). As with any academic field, a complex set of factors is involved in choices about what is studied and how it is studied. This is especially true in the social sciences, in which major developments have often been motivated in large measure by the desire to change the social system, to validate existing social policies and practices, or to counteract hegemonic beliefs about human nature. For example, in

recent years research in language policy has been motivated, at least in part, by concerns about the accelerating loss of languages worldwide. This has led to theorizing about how language policies are connected to economic, political, and social structures and processes, and to examination of the effects of ideologies about language and society on language behavior and policies. Policies (and policy approaches) are then proposed and/or evaluated on the basis of their relevance in slowing or even reversing language loss and shift (see chapters 14, 15, 17, and 19 for some examples). This desire to effect social change is what drives the research agenda, rather than theory-building for its own sake. Theories and models have heuristic value as tools to advance our understanding of language behavior in diverse contexts. This interplay between theory and practice is what provides language policy research with a certain vitality, unpredictability, and attractiveness as an area of research for persons who wish to combine theoretical/methodological rigor with social advocacy. This book provides a starting point for those who wish to begin these sorts of investigations.

Any book of this scope and ambition is a collaborative effort. I first want to extend my sincere gratitude to the contributors who have made this volume possible. I feel fortunate that such eminent scholars from a range of academic disciplines were committed from the start to producing authoritative, yet accessible, essays in their areas of expertise. All of the essays were written expressly for this volume and for the purpose of engaging the interest of persons wishing to investigate how and why language matters so much in human society. Each of the chapter authors has compiled an annotated bibliography of major works in their area of expertise; these are followed by discussion questions, which can be used by instructors or individuals interested in applying the ideas presented in the chapter to real-world problems or to hypothetical situations. All of the contributors were genuinely interested in learning what their colleagues were covering in their chapters so that they could avoid duplication while also referring to each other's work.

My thinking on language policy has been influenced by literally hundreds of scholars in the social sciences and humanities, especially from critical theory, linguistics, philosophy, political science, and sociology. Certainly, the work of the contributors to this book has had a large impact on my development over the years. Also influential has been the work of pioneers in the field, including Charles Ferguson, Einar Haugen, Heinz Kloss, and Joan Rubin, among many others too

numerous to mention. Bernard Spolsky, Robert Kaplan, and Richard Baldauf have written authoritative books on language policy in recent years, and have also founded and edit the journals *Language Policy* and *Current Issues in Language Planning*, respectively. Sue Wright has also made a significant contribution to the field, especially with regard to Europe. The work of these and many other scholars has helped put language policy on the map as a serious scholarly endeavor.

I would like to thank Blackwell Publishing for inviting me to do this book in the first place. It has been a pleasure to work, first, with Tami Kaplan and, later, with Sarah Coleman; they have been supportive and accessible from the beginning of this project. I would also like to thank Jennifer Coates, Jenny Cheshire, and Euan Reid for developing the Language and Social Change series in which this book appears.

Very special thanks are owed to Kelly Lynne Graham, a (now former) graduate assistant in the Division of Bicultural-Bilingual Studies at the University of Texas, San Antonio. Without her tireless and meticulous attention to detail, including keeping track of changes, attending to consistency in documentation, contacting authors, looking up facts and references, and countless other chores, this book would not have been possible. These tasks were handled flawlessly and without complaint for the better part of a year; thanks for all of your great work, Kelly!

Finally, I want to thank the University of Texas, San Antonio, for support I received through a mini-grant from the College of Education and Human Development, and a Faculty Development Leave, 2004, to complete writing of the overview essays and introductory chapter. I would also like to thank the doctoral students who participated in my advanced topics in language policy seminar, fall, 2002, for their spirited engagement, probing questions, and commitment to scholarly inquiry.

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Theoretical Perspectives in Language Policy

Theoretical Perspectives in Language Policy: An Overview

Thomas Ricento

To begin, the word "theory," as Ronald Schmidt informs us in his chapter, traces it roots to the Greek philosophers of the classical era, especially Plato and Aristotle. It comes from the Greek word *theoria*, which means "seeing," as in "a place for seeing" or being a "spectator." A theory, then, is a statement, or series of statements, proposed by an individual or group of individuals, about a position on an under-standing of the world (where "world" encompasses the material and non-material), or some aspect of it. Theories can be focused on a particular domain of human experience or ability (for example, the theory that the capacity for human language is an innate and highly specified faculty localized in the brain; cf. Chomsky), or it can be more abstract and general (for example, the theory that truth is constructed and reproduced in the discourses of the powerful; cf. Foucault). These examples suggest something of the range of theories about language (e.g., what it is, where it is "located," its role in social life) that inform research in the field of language policy and planning (LPP). Let us briefly rehearse some of these theories of, or about, language as reflected in the chapters in this part of the book and consider the implications for policy.

The assumption underlying most of the theoretical work described in these chapters is that a language is a code with various forms (written, spoken, standard, non-standard, etc.), functions (usually expressed in terms of domains and relative status within a polity), and value (as a medium of exchange, with particular material and non-material qualities). Postmodern characterizations of language problematize the idea that a language is a fixed code. Linguist Paul Hopper (1998) (cited by Alastair Pennycook in chapter 4), argues "there is no natural fixed structure to language. Rather, speakers borrow heavily from their previous experiences of communication in similar

circumstances, on similar topics, and with similar interlocutors. Systematicity, in this view, is an illusion produced by the partial settling or *sedimentation* of frequently used forms into temporary subsystems" (pp. 157–8). This theory of language – namely that it is not *languages* that exist so much as *discourses*, which may be shared by various overlapping communities of speakers – has important consequences for research in LPP. One effect of this theory is that grand narratives, for example, about the role of "big" languages – such as English – in killing other languages (a position identified with linguistic imperialism; see Robert Phillipson, chapter 19, and Thomas Ricento, chapter 1), based on conceptions of English as a discrete code shared by millions of individuals and speech communities, are viewed as simplistic and deterministic. Rather than "English," under this view (or theory) of language, it is more appropriate (and accurate) to discuss "Englishes" as hybrids reflecting complex processes of borrowing, mixing, and styling with other language varieties (or discourses). Relatedly, "English" serves a variety of symbolic and practical functions in the diverse settings where it is used; it does not adhere to any particular cultural or socioeconomic perspective. Therefore, within this theory of language – that is, as having multiple and numerous discourses, functions, and statuses – it is not possible to assume or predict a particular, or even necessary, relation between a given language (or language variety) and the role(s) it might play in a given setting, whether local or national/supranational. Thus, while evidence does exist that speakers of local languages (and especially minority languages) may shift to a majority language, and that subsequent generations may no longer speak the original (local) language, or may use it only in certain domains as a result of the promotion of former colonial languages, for example, in Africa, it is also the case that a former colonial language, English, was adopted by the African National Congress (ANC) in the successful struggle against apartheid in South Africa. The evaluation of these two possible outcomes of language contact (i.e., language shift, leading to domain loss, and language adoption/adaptation in the service of social change) as relatively "good/desirable" or "bad/undesirable" will be based largely on extra-linguistic factors related to theories of what constitutes the social "good," including minimal criteria necessary to facilitate socioeconomic equality and fairness (discussed later in this overview; see also James Tollefson, chapter 3). Furthermore, language change is an inevitable consequence of prolonged language contact, seen for example in the thousands of English words from hip-hop, technology, and advertising

that have found their way into the discourses of hundreds of language varieties world-wide, just as English varieties have incorporated tens of thousands of words from French, German, Spanish, Portuguese, Greek, Latin, Italian, and many other languages over the centuries.

This view of language has implications for conceptualizations of language status. Status is widely understood within LPP as the perceived relative value of a named language, usually related to its social utility, which encompasses its so-called market value as a mode of communication, as well as more subjective features rooted in what Harold Schiffman (chapter 7) calls a society's linguistic culture. The value(s) attached to or associated with a language, therefore, do not depend exclusively, or even necessarily, on any official or legal status conferred by a state through its executive, legislative, or judicial branches. For example, as Schiffman (chapter 7) notes, French became the national language of France not because it was given any special legal or official status (such status, Schiffman points out, was at best minimal), but because of powerful mythologies about both the language and the policy. Schiffman's research reveals, for example, that the French populace and even some French scholars who have written on language policy believe that legal provisions regarding the use of French exist which in fact do not exist, and did not until certain laws, known collectively as *la loi Toubon*, were enacted in the 1990s (Schiffman, p. 117). Further, according to Schiffman, the tendency to control many details of life (*jacobinisme*) is part and parcel of French linguistic culture. From the time of the French Revolution, the idea has persisted that non-standard languages (*les patois*, *les idiomes*, *les jargons*) "were not just defective or inferior, but even worse, they contained undesirable qualities, even ideas or ideologies, that were a threat to the Revolution, and which had to be extirpated" (p. 120). Thus, mythology, aesthetics, and political ideology (among many other possibilities) are central elements in the ascription and achievement of language status; language-policy goals which seek to enhance or modify in some way the social role(s) and functions of language(s) cannot override the effects of what Schiffman calls a society's linguistic culture. Schiffman provides examples of the effects of linguistic culture in other contexts as well, including Tamil in India and German in the United States.

In addition to the role of ideology in the ascription and achievement of language status, as Nancy Hornberger (chapter 2) notes, language planning nearly always occurs in multilingual, multicultural settings in which planning for one language has repercussions on other languages and ethnolinguistic groups. Decisions about which languages

will be planned for what purposes ultimately reflect power relations among different groups and sociopolitical and economic interests. Therefore, although as Cooper notes "we have as yet no generally accepted language planning theory, if by theory we mean a set of logically interrelated, empirically testable propositions" (Cooper, 1989, p. 41), we do know that theoretically adequate models or approaches need to consider (as Hornberger notes) ideology, ecology, and agency in explaining how and why things are the way they are, and also to evaluate whose interests and whose values are being served when language plans and policies are proposed, implemented, or evaluated.

There are a number of important implications which follow from this focus on ideology, ecology, and agency in LPP. First, received categories, such as "nation-state," need to be (re)considered in light of history and current arrangements. The eighteenth-century European conception of the "nation-state," popularized by Herder, Fichte, and others, is inadequate to characterize today's world of multinational states, newly born (and newly configured) states, dysfunctional states (see Jan Blommaert, chapter 13, for a discussion of Tanzania), and divided states, among other possible types. Further, the state system itself has undergone changes, especially with regard to the degree and rate of change in the economic and cultural realms, so that the functions and roles of states are changing in important ways, especially in connection with religious, economic, or political ideologies that become tied to nationalist and pan-nationalist movements. In cases in which states have little control over their populations or territory, cross-border influences and penetrations may dictate language policies in the absence of state control. For example, in Somalia, a country which lacks a functioning government, the only functioning schooling is financed by Arabs, which means that Arabic has replaced Somali – the national language – in school curricula (Farah, 2004). The consequences of these geopolitical changes on theories of the role of the state in LPP are not insignificant. For example, theories of linguistic imperialism, which conceive of states as primary actors in the control of populations under their jurisdiction (whether as "imperial" agents or supporters of ["authentic"] nationalism), need to be modified in the face of dramatic changes in global geopolitics, in which the power of states to make decisions is highly influenced and constrained by both internal and external pressures related to economic and cultural forces, as well as transnational migration, both regionally and globally.

Theoretical work by political scientists has provided some useful tools to help us better understand what is at stake in conflicts involving

language. Ronald Schmidt (chapter 6) provides two examples of such work that have relevance for current controversies in language policy. The first deals with identity politics, which, Schmidt argues, lies at the core of most language-policy conflicts. Schmidt cites the work of Bonnie Honig (2001) on the role of immigrants "in maintaining and resurrecting central myths that sustain Americans' understanding of themselves as a nation" (p. 100), thereby helping to explain the existence of both xenophilia and xenophobia in contemporary attitudes toward ethno-linguistic groups, and why particular language policies (e.g., the move to declare English the official national language when it is under no threat from other languages) are so strongly supported.

Another example of research from political science that helps us better understand and explain what is at stake in controversies involving language concerns the concepts of "equality" and "inequality" as they are used in conflicts over language policies. In the US context, assimilationists believe that the key to equal opportunity for non-English speakers is a shift to English as rapidly as possible; therefore, according to assimilationists, policies that might encourage non-English speakers to continue to rely on their native languages, such as bilingual education, bilingual ballots, etc., are actually *hindering* their chances of achieving social equality. On the other hand, pluralists believe that the US has always been a multilingual society, even though English has always been the dominant language. For pluralists, the relation between language and social equality and mobility is less clear cut, and they argue that the achievement of equal opportunity should take into account the country's fundamental ethnolinguistic diversity. The work of political theorist Will Kymlicka on multicultural citizenship (cited in chapter 6) provides a detailed argument in support of the pluralist position in this controversy. For Kymlicka, the well-being of the individual self is the proper moral foundation for any just community, and this well-being must be defined by the individual (not, for example, by the state), which means that individuals need to be free to define for themselves what is meaningful and worthwhile in their own lives. Kymlicka believes that since individual choices are made within a cultural context, the individual self has a stake in the community in which it has developed, because that community's cultural structure provides the "context for choice" for "me" (Kymlicka, 1989, pp. 164–5). Therefore, according to Kymlicka, it is important to preserve the structure of cultural communities in order to preserve meaningful choices about "the good" for the individual. Since the state operates within a linguistic and cultural context, it cannot operate neutrally with respect to

language and culture, as some believe it can with regard to religious diversity. Applying this approach to LPP, Schmidt concludes that:

> the implications of Kymlicka's arguments are powerful for ethnolinguistic groups that are basic components of a multilingual country. In order to give individuals fair equality of opportunity to realize their own conception of a good life, the state must try to provide equally effective support for the structures of each component ethnolinguistic community making up the country. This would seem to provide powerful and reasoned support for a language policy in support of multiple languages in a multilingual country.
>
> **(p. 106)**

Kymlicka distinguishes between multinational and multiethnic countries, arguing that the rights of national groups (those that were incorporated through conquest, annexation, or voluntary merger) have the greater claim to full cultural protections (including language) than those of ethnic groups that came voluntarily as immigrants. Kymlicka's theories and implications for LPP are also discussed by Stephen May (chapter 14).

As Schmidt notes, a key element in the support of majority languages, often at the expense of support for minority languages, is that majority languages facilitate social mobility, higher earnings, and integration into the dominant culture. Research in the economics of language (François Grin, chapter 5), dating back to the 1960s, has applied economic models and principles to operationalize these claims as testable hypotheses. Topics researched have included language and earnings, language dynamics, language and economic activity, and the economics of language-policy evaluation. One of the important conclusions from this research is that while mainstream economic models and analyses can provide useful data for policy-makers to help guide their decision-making, when it comes to arguments in support of language diversity, almost every type of "market failure" occurs. It is for this reason, according to Grin, that state intervention on behalf of language diversity is both justified and necessary.

To summarize this discussion of the contributions to theory in LPP research from a variety of disciplines, the following points can be made:

1   Language-policy debates are always about more than language. Insights from political, economic, and social theory can provide

scholars in LPP research with the tools to explain what is at stake, why it matters, and what effect particular policies or policy approaches might (or might not) have on such debates.

2 The way(s) in which LPP scholars and researchers define and use terms such as "language," "language policy," "the state," "equality," and so on have consequences for their analyses and recommendations on issues which involve language planning and/or language policies.

3 Ideologies about language generally and specific languages in particular have real effects on language policies and practices, and delimit to a large extent what is and is not possible in the realm of language planning and policy-making.

4 Research in LPP must be understood as both a *multidisciplinary* and an *interdisciplinary* activity, in that conceptual and methodological tools borrowed from various disciplines need to be *appropriately integrated* and applied to real-world problems and challenges involving language, which, by definition, are embedded in all aspects of society and social life.

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Language Policy: Theory and Practice – An Introduction

Thomas Ricento

My goal in this chapter is to locate language policy (LP) as a field of inquiry within the social sciences and humanities. I argue that the most useful way to approach the history of LP research is by a consideration of the domains of inquiry that have attracted attention, and how findings have stimulated critical reflection on the goals and methods of research, including the questioning of some basic assumptions about the role of such research in reaffirming or opposing social inequalities. Following this, I will consider how theory has influenced practice, and vice versa.

Theory in Language Policy Research

Before addressing these topics, I make some preliminary comments about theory in LP research. An important claim of this book is that there is no overarching theory of LP and planning, in large part because of the complexity of the issues which involve language in society. As researchers and policy analysts we ask basic and varied questions about events in the world: for example, why are standard languages considered to be "better" than dialects? Why do members of some immigrant groups maintain their languages across generations, while members of other groups lose their language after one or two generations? Does the global spread of English entail the marginalization and eventual loss of indigenous languages in developing countries? If so, is this a good or bad thing? In some cases, a theory or model may be proposed to account for a specific type of phenomenon, based on triangulation of a preponderance of the best available empirical evidence. An example of this is Fishman's famous

Graded Intergenerational Disruption Scale (GIDS) (Fishman, 1991), which lists eight stages of the relative strength of a regional or minority language in competition with another more dominant language, or languages, for survival. In other cases, researchers might focus on relationships between attitudes within various speech communities and patterns of language use. While the GIDS is one of the few models available in the field of LP which endeavors to predict the chances of the survival of a language on the basis of the evidence of actual cases, it has value only to the extent a minority language group and/or a society wishes to "reverse" language shift and loss, and to take action to "protect" the language through concrete policies. A theory of language acquisition, use, shift, revitalization, or loss has little value in and of itself as a tool to argue for the need for specific language policies; rather, in order to advocate specific policies or policy directions, scholars need to demonstrate *empirically* – as well as conceptually – the societal benefits, and costs, of such policies. The best way to achieve this is to bring together empirical data from a range of disciplinary perspectives (and those perspectives and examples of data are provided in this book) which support the value of particular policy recommendations, however such value might be defined. While the compiling of such evidence does not constitute an LP, or even provide a road map for devising or evaluating effective policy options (see Grin, 2003, on how to evaluate language policies), it is a necessary component in any serious attempt to influence public policy choices and desired outcomes.

While much of the research in this book and elsewhere suggests that language behavior and social policy are ideologically encumbered, simply exposing these ideological formations is insufficient to justify enactment of particular policies; the assumption, for example, that linguistic diversity is a tangible social "good" requires evidence beyond moral or "naturalness" arguments. After all, LP is not just an exercise in philosophical inquiry; it is interested in addressing social problems which often involve language, to one degree or another, and in proposing realistic remedies. Yet this search for answers does not begin in a theoretical or methodological vacuum; researchers begin with assumptions about "how the world works" and, in the optimal situation, engage reflexively with the topics they choose to investigate, questioning and examining their epistemological and theoretical assumptions on a range of matters as they try to understand phenomena of which they partake and by which their views are formed. The beginning of wisdom is the recognition that "scientific" detached

objectivity in such research is not possible, since researchers always begin with particular experiences and positions on what the social "good" might be and what sorts of changes in social (including language) policy might advance a particular vision of that good. Despite this observation (which unfortunately is not always or often acknowledged by social scientists, including those working in LP), there is a great and recognizable difference between good and less good research, reflecting (1) relative degrees of clarity and coherence of theoretical and conceptual frameworks or approaches; (2) the representativeness, depth, and quality of data; (3) the relative degree to which the data and conclusions support the theoretical assumptions and hypotheses which follow from those assumptions; and (4) the relevance of the findings for particular LP goals. Good research may not lead to effective policies, but bad research weakens the legitimacy of good research by casting doubts on the field as a whole.

An important point of this discussion thus far is that "domain of inquiry" is a better way to approach the field than "theories of LP," since researchers tend to ask questions about particular issues, or domains, which involve language matters, rather than searching for data to prove some *a priori* theory. In a few cases (such as Fishman's GIDS, described above), aggregate data obtained from specific cases can lead to models or theories, which can then be put to the test in novel situations; however, this is usually not the primary goal of research. This suggests that a useful way to approach LP as a field is to ask the following question: what is it that scholars who specialize in LP study?

The best way to answer this question is to do some historical archeology on LP research over the past half century to see which topics have attracted attention, and to analyze how insights from the theories and methods outlined in this book have contributed to reformulations of the nature and purpose of research in LP. Although LP is an interdisciplinary field, it came into its own as a branch of sociolinguistics. During the 1950s and 1960s, Western-trained linguists were engaged by many of the new nations of Africa, South America, and Asia to develop grammars, writing systems, and dictionaries for indigenous languages. Scholars trained in descriptive linguistics were eager to gather data on hitherto understudied languages and advance current theories of language structure and use. Joshua Fishman (1968, p. 11), the seminal figure in the sociology of language, saw developing nations as providing an "indispensable and truly intriguing array of field-work locations for a new breed of genuine sociolinguists." This

research was directly relevant to language planning, especially for many aspects of corpus planning (see chapter 2 for a discussion of corpus and status planning activities). Beyond benefits to linguistic theory, the activities of many sociolinguists were understood (by them) as beneficial to nation-building and national unification; the decision of which language (i.e., colonial or indigenous) would best serve these interests was often based on which language would provide access to advanced, that is, Western, technological and economic assistance. A consensus view, especially among Western sociolinguists, was that a major European language (usually French or English) should be used for formal and specialized domains while local languages could serve other functions (Ricento, 2000, p. 198). The result – stable diglossia – had the (perhaps unintended) effect of lowering the status and relegating the domains of indigenous languages to local uses, while elevating the status and extending the domains of the former colonial language to national political and elite educational sectors, helping to perpetuate the stratified, class-based structures of the colonial era.

Beginning in the late 1970s and continuing through the 1990s, scholars with an interest in understanding the role played by language in the reproduction of social and economic inequality, and influenced by critical and postmodern theories, began to question some of the assumptions which informed the early work in LP. For example, reflecting on the role of linguistics in language-planning activities in newly independent states, a number of scholars argued that rather than recording languages or providing neutral descriptions of socio-linguistic reality, linguists had helped create languages (Crowley, 1990). The notion of language as a discrete, finite entity defined by standard grammars was characterized by a number of critical scholars and linguists as a function of the methods, and values, of positivistic linguistics (e.g., Harris, 1981; Le Page, 1985; Mühlhäusler, 1990, 1996; Sankoff, 1988). Even the construct "diglossia," which was invoked as a description of the situation in many developing countries, was criticized as "an ideological naturalization of sociolinguistic arrangements" (Woolard & Schieffelin, 1994, p. 69), perpetuating linguistic and (related) societal inequalities. Well-accepted terms, such as "native speaker," "mother tongue," and "linguistic competence," all central to mainstream linguistic theories, were called into question and even abandoned by some scholars as inadequate in dealing with the complex multi-lingualism that existed in many language-contact settings throughout the world. Thus, linguistic theories adopted by language planners, rather than being neutral, objective, scientific tools, were viewed by

critical scholars beginning in the 1980s as detrimental to the develop-
ment of equitable language policies in complex multilingual settings.
This realization led to a rather broad calling into question of received
ideas about the nature of language itself, and of the degree to which
scholars of language were perpetuating assumptions that had the effect
of rationalizing the support of colonial languages, and concomitant
economic interests, at the expense of indigenous languages and local
economic development. This movement from a more positivistic to
a more critical epistemological orientation was seen in the publication
of a number of important articles and books beginning in the 1980s.
For example, the papers in Wolfson and Manes (1985, p. ix) were
concerned with the ways that "language use reflects and indeed
influences social, economic or political inequality." In the preface to
that volume, Dell Hymes (1985, p. vii) noted that:

> Were there no political domination or social stratification in the world,
> there would still be linguistic inequality . . . Allocation and hierarchy
> are intrinsic. Nor should the investments of many, perhaps even in-
> cluding ourselves, in some existing arrangements be underestimated.
> Effective change in the direction of greater equality will only partly
> be change in attitude, or removal of external domination; it will be
> inseparable in many cases from change of social system.

The view that socioeconomic equality in developing countries was
somehow connected to the establishment (or imposition) of a national
language, based on arguments of increased efficiency leading to greater
unity, was called into question. Clearly, there were many obstacles to
overcome in the case of the newly independent states of Africa in
terms of economic development, and not all of the blame can be put
on language policies. Yet these policies fit into a broader pattern in
which Western-based ideologies about the requisites for national
development, which included the ideology of monolingualism as
necessary for social and economic equality, were imposed on new
states comprised of multiple national (and linguistic) groups. In other
words, Western-based academic language-planning and LP approaches
in the 1950s and 1960s often subsumed a number of ideologies about
(1) the nature of language – that is, as a finite, stable, standardized,
rule-governed instrument for communication; (2) monolingualism and
cultural homogeneity as necessary requirements for social and economic
progress, modernization, and national unity (with stable diglossia as a
fall-back, compromise position); and (3) language selection as a matter

of "rational choice" in which all options are equally available to everyone, or could be made equally available. These basic assumptions were often consonant with the views of Western-based and Western-trained state planners and policy analysts engaged in national (re)-construction in developing countries during the 1950s and 1960s, and continue to be influential to the present day.

In addition to arguing that language policies favored majoritarian or dominant interests at the expense of minority and non-dominant interests, critical scholars such as Tollefson (1986, 1991) and Luke, McHoul, and Mey (1990), among others argued that these interests are often implicit and enmeshed in hegemonic ideologies (such as those mentioned above), which, in effect, have become widely accepted, commonsense ideas, especially in Western societies. The goal of critical scholars interested in promoting social and economic equality was to uncover these ideologies and associated policies in order to bring about social change. This move, then, aligned the research interests of many LP scholars with the emerging tradition of critical theory, which "investigates the processes by which social inequality is produced and sustained, and the struggle to reduce inequality to bring about greater forms of social justice" (chapter 3, pp. 43–4).

At this point, we can see a branching beginning to occur between mainstream sociolinguistic research dealing with language shift in language-contact situations, in which shift is analyzed using census data, interviews, and ethnographic methods (see, e.g., Fasold, 1984, pp. 213–45), and critical approaches, in which language shift is understood not as an incidental and natural outcome of language contact but rather a manifestation of asymmetrical power relations based on social structures and ideologies that position groups – and their languages – hierarchically within a society. Rather than language, per se, the emphasis in research shifted to discourses, with their attendant ideologies and as sites where social relations were reflected, reproduced, and contested (see chapters 3 and 4). Scholars also looked at sociolinguistic arrangements not as inevitable or logical, but rather as the result of political processes and ideologies of state-formation. In this view, societal multilingualism – not monolingual-ism – was seen as normal, and its recognition and acceptance were taken as an important requirement for the realization of meaningful democracy, since the constituent groups of the state are better positioned to participate as equals when their cultures and languages are respected and afforded legitimacy through institutional recognition and support.

The purpose of the preceding discussion has been to show some of the ways in which theories about language influence, and are influenced by, the study of language-contact situations in diverse settings. How we understand and conceptualize *language* has important consequences for how we might evaluate linguistic *arrangements* and the explicit and implicit policies which contribute to – or oppose – such arrangements. This approach to the study of LP favors a deeper and broader perspective on language conflicts, which are too often reduced in popular treatments to technical discussions about the pros and cons of learning or using language/language variety A over language/language variety B in a particular domain or sector.

Theory and Practice in Language Policy

As with any academic field, theory has played an important role in LP research. The chapters in part I of this book describe many important theories and how they have been influential in models proposed to explain the role of language and language policies in the shaping of societies around the world. A good example of such a model is linguistic imperialism (Phillipson, 1992), which attempts to explain how the languages of current and former empires, principally those of the US, England, and France, have been promoted in former colonies through a process of economic, political, social, cultural, and educational domination and exploitation, with devastating effects on indigenous languages. This provocative and controversial claim has generated a great deal of research and a great many publications, which seek to reaffirm, contest, or recast the original claims within emerging new paradigms.[1] While the validity of linguistic imperialism as a descriptive model accounting, in part, for language shift and loss in many countries is hotly debated, the claims made by Phillipson and others have had influence on a range of topics concerned with language teaching, learning, and use. For example, questions have been raised about the morality of teaching "big" languages, such as English, in developing countries and about the privileging of native speakers over non-native speakers in hiring decisions; Phillipson (2003) himself has argued that English poses threats not only to indigenous languages in developing countries, but to smaller European languages as well. Other research by applied linguists has shown that some of the stronger claims of linguistic imperialism are not supported by

empirical research. For example, Pennycook (2003) provides evidence
that the spread of English is *not* leading inevitably to the "homogen-
ization of world culture"; he shows how language mixing in the lyrics
of rap and hip-hop music is contributing to a global popular culture
which transcends national boundaries and ideologies, while reflect-
ing local cultural and linguistic forms. Other research demonstrates
how English has been used – both symbolically and functionally – to
oppose repressive colonial governments, as in South Africa (de Klerk,
2002), and ultra-nationalist ideologies, as in Sri Lanka (Canagarajah,
2000). Thus, the positing of the model has stimulated new ways of
thinking – and doing research – about the effects of the spread of lan-
guages such as English and French over the past decades and centuries.

Phillipson's model of linguistic imperialism has also stimulated
research and theorizing on ways to neutralize or minimize the
purported negative effects of the spread of "big" languages on minority
languages and their speakers world-wide. One such approach is what
is variously referred to as language rights or linguistic human rights
(see chapter 15). Skutnabb-Kangas and Phillipson both have argued
that an individual's right to use and learn his or her native language
is as basic a human right as that to the free exercise of religion, or
the right of ethnic groups to maintain their cultures and beliefs.
Stephen May (2001, and chapter 14), in part on the basis of the work of
Kymlicka (1995), argues that the languages of national minorities (as
opposed to those of immigrant minorities) merit explicit protection
and promotion by the state, because these minorities are legitimate
groups within the nation-state and no less worthy of such support
than dominant groups.

While linguistic imperialism and linguistic human rights have been
influential constructs in LP research in the past decade or so, they fit
within a larger, evolving set of interrelated research interests and goals.
It is not clear that these related interests and goals rise to the level of a
paradigm in the traditional sense of some grand theory which explains
patterns of language behavior in contact situations, or can predict the
effects of specific language policies on language behavior. However,
there is a growing body of research in LP which is concerned with
the role of language – materially and discursively – in the production,
exercise, and contestation of power at all levels of society, and the
effects of power on language practices, from the daily interactions
of ordinary people to the official policies of governments. What dif-
ferentiates the various strands of research concerned with the nature
and operation of power through and by language are the different

sites on which the research focuses. For example, in postmodern research, texts and their discourses are investigated as the sites where power relations are reflected and reproduced in a variety of genres of speech and writing. In studies of national identity (e.g., Blommaert & Verschueren, 1998; Wodak et al., 1999), analysis of contemporary political speeches, legislation, newspaper reporting, and focus group discussions have been contextualized within a broader sociohistorical framework that goes well beyond the texts themselves. In geolinguistic research, patterns of migration and settlement within geographical contexts (e.g., countries, regions, cities, localities, etc.) are correlated with patterns of language use, shift, and loss within particular political, cultural, and economic historical contexts. What these and other research methods have in common is an awareness of and interest in the operation of power in decision-making relating to languages, whether on the part of individuals, families, groups, states, regions, or supranational bodies, such as the European Union.

We have said that theories have played an important role in the evolution of LP as an interdisciplinary field, stimulating research relevant to language matters in education, economics, political science, history, sociology, geography, and other fields, while insights from these same fields have contributed to the development of integrated models in LP, such as linguistic imperialism and linguistic human rights. What has not been much discussed is the practice of language planning, that is, the development, implementation, and evaluation of specific language policies. To be sure, this is an understudied facet of LP research,[2] a legacy no doubt of the focus on theory from the earliest days of the field (described previously in this chapter). Another reason for the lack of attention to the mechanisms of language planning is that most sociolinguists and applied linguists have little or no training in the policy sciences. There have been quite a few studies on the effects of language policies in Canada (see, e.g., various articles in Edwards, 1998) and on aspects of US language policies, especially on federal policies dealing with the education of language minorities (e.g., Cazden & Snow, 1990; Fernandez, 1987; Ricento, 1998a, 1998b), among many other studies and countries that could be cited; what have not been well developed are clearly articulated models for analyzing and comparing different policy approaches in defined contexts, and ways to evaluate the outcomes that can be applied in different settings. This is not an easy task because of the many variables that need to be considered in proposing (i.e., planning) policies, and because success or failure is not always easy to measure, given the diverse expectations