

SHORT PAPER

Reflect, Revisit, Reimagine: Ethnography of Language Policy and Planning†

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Abstract

Tracing applied linguists' interests in language policy and planning (LPP) as reflected in the pages of the *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics* since its founding in 1980, I focus on the emergence of, and current boom in, ethnographic LPP research. I draw on the ethnographic concept of ideological and implementational LPP spaces as scalar, layered policies and practices influencing each other, mutually reinforcing, wedging, and transforming ideology through implementation and vice versa. Doing so highlights how the perennial policy-practice gap is given nuance through exploration of the intertwining dynamics of top-down/bottom-up language planning activities and processes, monoglossic/heteroglossic language ideologies and practices, potential equality/actual inequality of languages, and critical/transformational research paradigms in LPP.

Reflect: Language Policy and Planning in the *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics*

We are in the Age of the Refugee. So Robert Kaplan begins the 1982 *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics* (ARAL) issue on language policy. “My life has been filled with newsreel clips of people fleeing from something” (Kaplan, 1982: ix), he recalls, from turn-of-the-twentieth-century wars, such as the Spanish-American War, through a ceaseless succession of invasions, world wars, civil wars, famine, civil disruption, and persecution, each pushing out new waves of refugees who must perforce settle in “some new home...learn a new way of life and, in many cases, a new language. This problem of accommodation may be the central social problem of the century,” a problem from which emanate language policy questions the volume addresses (Kaplan, 1982: x). The articles that follow explore national language policies ranging from recognizing language as resource to seeing language as a commodity to be managed or as little more than a tool; language-in-education policy questions, such as which languages to teach to maintain national unity and cultural identity while also permitting access to technology and modernization; and educational practice as separate from

†When we were both new assistant professors in Educational Linguistics at Penn in the mid-1980s, Tere Pica came back from a meeting of the American Association for Applied Linguistics (AAAL) reporting to me that language policy and planning (LPP) was a hot topic there. Little did we know then that I would find myself honored in the following decades to give two AAAL plenary talks on my ethnographic LPP work (Hornberger, 1998, 2009b). I mention these personally meaningful reflections as samples of AAAL's longtime support for and leadership in LPP scholarship – including the present retrospective and prospective look at ethnography of LPP in the *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics* and in our field. I am immensely grateful for all of it.

policy (Kaplan, 1982: xi). From his 1982 vantage point, Kaplan further writes that a “North-South Dialogue” has emerged around technology transfer between developed and developing nations, bringing with it cultural, social, ecological, and especially linguistic issues of equity of access and ensuing policy questions (Kaplan, 1982: x).

This first ARAL language policy issue played a significant role in defining and charting topics and concerns of the language policy and planning (LPP) field, and quite intentionally so (Kaplan, 1982: xi). Its reflections on language, education, identity, nations, and movements of people and technology across national and north-south boundaries are eerily the same as compelling concerns around globalization, mobility, the flow of information and inclusion of Global South epistemologies and perspectives we articulate in the twenty-first century (e.g., Shoba & Chimbutane, 2013). William Grabe’s foreword to ARAL’s second, 1993/1994 LPP issue highlighted increased recognition and exploration of the multilingual, political, and local nature of LPP, dissociations between policy and planning, and the predictive potential of LPP models (Grabe, 1993/1994: vii-viii). The volume featured thematic essays on, for example, political perspectives, language-in-education policy and planning, unplanned LPP, language maintenance and revival, followed by ten country and regional surveys, and closing, as did the 1982 volume, with Richard Tucker’s concluding thoughts (see Table 1 in the Appendix for an overview of ARAL’s 45 LPP articles across its four decades).

The continuity of LPP concerns is striking, while the theoretical frameworks and methods by which we explore them have expanded and evolved. An ethnographic perspective is not in evidence in the early ARAL LPP issues. Nor was it particularly visible in two mainstay LPP academic journals dating from the 1970s: Joshua Fishman’s *International Journal of the Sociology of Language (IJSL)* with its encyclopedic documentation of multilingual national contexts and the fate of language policies therein, and *Language Problems and Language Planning*, whose title makes clear the problem-solving orientation in LPP research in its first few decades, an orientation still with us, although the problems and their solutions are understood today in arguably more nuanced and complex terms. It was the launch in 2000 of three new applied linguistics journals focusing on language policy (*Language Policy* [Bernard Spolsky, founding editor], *Current Issues in Language Planning* [Robert Kaplan and Richard Baldauf, founding editors], and the *Journal of Language, Identity & Education* [Thomas Ricento and Terrence Wiley, founding editors]) that infused intellectual energy into the LPP field with increased theoretical attention to critical, postmodern, complexity, and globalization perspectives and methodological contributions from ethnographic and discourse analytic approaches.

Revisit: Emergence of the Ethnography of Language Policy and Planning

One emergent conceptual and methodological approach to LPP that has caught the attention of applied linguists as well as anthropologists, educators, and other social scientists in this century is what has come to be known as the ethnography of language policy and planning (ELPP). Educational anthropologists and ethnographers of communication had been looking at language practices and language ideologies in school and classroom contexts since the mid-twentieth century and had long since acknowledged the role of language in constructing—and challenging—inequality in educational settings (Hymes, 1980b, 1992). A natural extension of this work was to turn the ethnographic eye to the ways language policy plays out in educational settings. Indeed, this was foreshadowed in Hymes’ (1980a) call for ethnographic monitoring of U.S. bilingual education programs in light of the political precarity of bilingual education policy.

It was ethnographic explorations of bilingual education policy and practice in the Andes and Philadelphia, respectively, that led me and my student David Johnson to propose the ethnography of language planning and policy as a useful way to understand how people create, interpret, and at times resist LPP across layered ideological and implementational spaces. Comparing my ethnographic work in Bolivia where faculty and Indigenous students in an innovative intercultural bilingual education master's program constructed and negotiated spaces for Indigenous rights and Indigenous education surpassing those envisioned in national multilingual language policies, and David's in Philadelphia where two successive district administrators interpreted the same U.S. educational policy in ways that alternately closed down or opened up spaces for bilingual education programs, we suggested ethnography of language policy as an apt methodological approach to uncover and foreground indistinct voices and unintended consequences in the quest for implementing more robust and successful multilingual education (Hornberger & Johnson, 2007, 2011; Johnson, 2009).

Ethnography as understood here is not just a methodological toolkit that encompasses participant observation, interviews, and document collection, though these methods are mainstays of ethnographic research. With origins in anthropology, ethnography is crucially guided by an ontological and epistemological stance that views human life as created through people making sense of their own lives. That is, "ethnography... is a disciplined way of looking, asking, recording, reflecting, comparing, and reporting" (Hymes, 1980a: 105), but also entails a way of seeing through the lens of cultural interpretation (Wolcott, 2008) and a way of being that incorporates a democratizing and counter-hegemonic moral stance toward inquiry (Hymes, 1980a; Hornberger, 2009a; McCarty, 2015).

Early ethnographic LPP studies in education illuminated paradoxical tensions within communities implementing national language education policy (Hornberger, 1988 on Quechua and bilingual education in Peru) or across LPP levels (Davis, 1994 on multilingual education in Luxembourg), local classroom-level resistance to official LPP (Canagarajah, 1995, 1997), the power of community involvement in bilingual education (Freeman, 1996, 1998), and paradoxical unintended consequences (Jaffe, 1999 on Corsica), positive side effects (King, 2001 on Quechua in Ecuador), or covert underlying motivations (Schiffman, 2003 on Tamil in Singapore) in LPP (for more examples, see Johnson, 2013: 46). An accelerating trajectory of ethnographic LPP research since 2000 has focused in turn on themes of reclaiming the local in language policy (Canagarajah, 2005), imagining multilingual schools (García, Skutnabb-Kangas, & Torres-Guzmán, 2006), schools saving Indigenous languages (Hornberger, 2008), educators and students engaging in heteroglossic practices in heritage language education (Blackledge & Creese, 2010), educators negotiating language policy in schools (Menken & García, 2010), informal, everyday language policymaking (McCarty, 2011), and Indigenous LPP across time, space, and place (Hornberger & McCarty, 2012).

LPP ethnographers' ways of seeing, looking, and being in the sites and with the participants of their research led to the emergence and burgeoning not only of empirical research, but also programmatic statements on ELPP, for example Canagarajah's (2006) chapter on ethnographic methods in language policy in Ricento's influential language policy textbook, Hornberger and Johnson's (2007, 2011) proposal for the ethnography of language policy, and McCarty's (2011) collection of research on ethnography and language policy. Nuances of terminology as to ethnography **in**, **of**, or **and** language policy may reflect slightly differing takes on the scope of the field, but, by and large, the agreed-on terrain of ELPP is substantially the same (Hornberger & Johnson, 2011; Hornberger et al., 2018).

Though these were perhaps the first explicit formulations of the ethnography of LPP, its roots and momentum within LPP go back to the 1980s and 1990s and reflect controversies and shifting paradigms in LPP research. Paralleling and influencing sociopolitical, epistemological, and strategic LPP paradigm shifts since World War II (Ricento, 2000), research methods in LPP also embraced an expanding and shifting repertoire in response to critiques of the field. Earlier LPP studies that focused on describing top-down processes of national language planning had been criticized for underlying positivist orientations and for not giving due consideration to sociopolitical context (Ricento, 2000; Johnson & Ricento, 2013; Tollefson, 1991). Critical approaches were, in turn, seen as falling short in accounting for multilayered processes of language planning and in underestimating the agentive role of local actors and how their practices relate to language policies on the macrolevel (Davis, 1999). In response, LPP research methods shifted over time from favoring large-scale census, survey, and self-report questionnaires to inform problem-solving language policies at national or regional levels in the 1950s-1960s, to economic, legal, and political analyses aimed at reforming structures of unequal access in the 1970s-1980s, to ethnographic on-the-ground methods directed toward illuminating the complexities of enacting LPP in local contexts, beginning in the late 1980s, as described above (Hornberger, 2015). Part of, and contributing to, the multilingual turn in language education research and practice (May, 2013), LPP ethnographic research methodologies fostered an increasingly explicit emphasis on underlying advocacy for multilingual and heteroglossic language policy and practices.

Reimagine: Ideological and Implementational Spaces in Language Policy and Planning

Nearly two decades ago, I offered a plea for language users, educators, and researchers to fill up and wedge open ideological and implementational spaces for multiple languages, literacies, identities, and practices to flourish and grow rather than dwindle and disappear (Hornberger, 2002). The opening and filling up of ideological and implementational spaces for multilingual education was an ethnographic insight inspired by Chick's (2001) suggestion that the emergence of alternative multicultural discourses he observed among teachers in South Africa was enabled by the ideological space that new postapartheid multilingual language policies had opened. In my ethnographic examination of multilingual language policies in South Africa and Bolivia, I argued that language educators, language planners, and language users urgently need to fill ideological and implementational spaces for multiple languages, literacies, and identities in classroom, community, and society as richly and fully as possible before they close in again (Hornberger, 2002). Later, comparing South African and Bolivian experiences with the creative responses of local educators to U.S. No Child Left Behind policies, I went on to suggest that even when top-down policies begin to close ideological spaces, implementational spaces carved out from the bottom up can wedge them open (Hornberger, 2006; also Hornberger & Johnson, 2007; Johnson, 2010).

Reimagining and predicting where ethnography of LPP might be headed, as we are tasked to do for this special ARAL colloquium and issue, I suggest that one avenue of increasing attention is the understanding and exploration of ideological and implementational LPP spaces as scalar, layered policies and practices influencing each other, mutually reinforcing, wedging, and transforming ideology through implementation and vice versa. A view of LPP spaces as layered and scalar refers to the permeation across and indexical relationships among different LPP spaces and levels, originally

articulated as the metaphorical LPP onion (Ricento & Hornberger, 1996) and consonant with recent formulations in discourse analysis, linguistic anthropology, and sociolinguistics that move beyond binary analytic categories like macro vs. micro or structure vs. agency to employ alternative concepts such as cross-event speech chains and trajectories, stratified indexicality, and spatiotemporal scales (Mortimer & Wortham, 2015; Wortham, 2005, 2008; Blommaert, 2007; Jie & Blommaert, 2009; Hult, 2010).

Using the lens of layered and scaled implementational and ideological spaces, a series of recent ethnographic studies reframe common sense wisdom about the perennial gap between policy and practice, uncovering and giving nuance to several intertwining dynamics. Top-down and bottom-up LPP activities and processes intertwine in implementational and ideological spaces in, for example, immersion education in the rural U.S. Midwest (Paciotto & Delaney-Barmann, 2011), Mozambican primary education (Chimbutane & Benson, 2012), Peruvian bilingual education (Kvietok Dueñas, 2015), Indigenous language education in Australia's Northern Territory (Disbray, 2016), and language-as-resource policy discourse in Greater China (Shen & Gao, 2019). Monoglossic and heteroglossic language ideologies and practices dynamically intertwine in ideological and implementational LPP spaces in, for instance, teachers' and students' talk about, use, and performance of Spanish in an English-only school of the new Latino diaspora in the U.S. (Link, 2011), competing ideologies in the implementation of new regional policies for the teaching of Quechua in Apurímac, Peru (Zavala, 2014), teachers' metapragmatic statements about Sámi language use, language teaching, and language revitalization in Sápmi (Hornberger & Outakoski, 2015), classroom level space for multilingualism that trumps national language-in-education policy in the Kumaun, India (Groff, 2017), and local teachers' use of Indigenous languages in the Ryukyu islands of Japan despite strongly monoglossic Japanese language policy (Hammie, 2019). Potential equality and actual inequality of languages intertwine in the implementational and ideological spaces of Paraguayan Guarani-Spanish bilingual education policy texts, talk, and practices (Mortimer, 2013), the ideologies and practices of local languages as medium of instruction in a multilingual school in Nepal (Phyak, 2013), speaking with a forked tongue about multilingualism in a South African university (Antia & van der Merwe, 2018), and Indigenous preschool education policy as implemented in a Yucatec Mayan community (Anzures, forthcoming). Critical and transformative LPP research paradigms dynamically intertwine in the ideological and implementational LPP spaces of high stakes testing, bilingual education, and Yup'ik language endangerment in Alaska (Wyman et al., 2010), standards-based reform in bilingual classrooms and schools of Philadelphia, USA (Flores & Schissel, 2014), the Zapotecuización of language education in Mexico (DeKorne et al., 2018), and the fostering of multilingual/plurilingual policies and practices in education in Pakistan (Manan et al., 2019). These instances of intertwining dynamics of top-down/bottom-up LPP activities and processes, heteroglossic/monoglossic language ideologies and practices, potential/actual (in)equality of languages, and critical/transformative LPP paradigms give nuance to our understandings of how implementational and ideological spaces play out in the proverbial and ever-elusive policy-to-practice gap in LPP (see also Hornberger et al., 2018).

Four decades on from Kaplan's 1982 reflections, now well into the twenty-first century, the Age of the Refugee has not abated, nor have the implications for language and language policy. In a recent interview on diaspora and home, cultural theorist Homi Bhabha offered a new take on the refugee condition as norm:

Although there is so much discussion these days about global citizenship, or national citizenship, transnational citizenship, those ways of thinking about

belonging still participate in a discourse of permanence: whether it's between two nations, whether it's across the world—the notion of citizenship is, in a sense, about the possibilities of establishing yourself; it's the politics of recognition. And I'm beginning to think that maybe the most important way we can rethink how we belong in the world is to take, ironically, the short temporal span of the refugee.... Because the refugee condition makes the most stringent and severe demands on the national community or the 'world community' to recognize the global right of hospitality which is at the heart of human survival itself. It is 'survival' rather than 'sovereignty' that should frame the ethical and political values that provide us with a workable concept of the good life lived with others (Bhabha, 2015).

This, for me, captures what LPP and especially the ethnography of LPP is essentially about. Whether our quest is for equity of access, social justice, transformative research, or a Global South epistemological stance, the ethnography of LPP is at heart about how, through language and language policy, we as individuals and as societies can best offer the "global right of hospitality" to those who pass our way, whether for short or long term, and to do so as a matter of human survival, but also, and more especially, for a "good life lived with others."

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Appendix

Table 1: Language Policy & Planning Articles in *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics* 1980–2019*

Year	Issue or section titles	Issue Editor	# LPP articles
1982	Language Policy and the Linguistic Situation; Language-in-Education Policy	Robert Kaplan	12
1989	<i>Language Planning: Corpus Planning</i>	Richard Baldauf	2
1993/1994	<i>Language Policy and Planning: Fundamental Issues</i>	William Grabe	15
1998	<i>Language Teaching and Learning</i>	William Grabe	1
2000	<i>Applied Linguistics and the Annual Review of Applied Linguistics</i>	Robert Kaplan & William Grabe	1
2009	<i>Language Policy and Language Assessment</i>	Bernard Spolsky	5
2010	<i>A Survey of Selected Topics in Applied Linguistics</i>	Charlene Polio	1
2013	<i>Multilingualism: Language policy and education in multilingual regions</i>	Charlene Polio	5
2015	<i>Identity in Applied Linguistics</i>	Alison Mackey	2
2017	<i>Younger Second Language Learners</i>	Jenefer Philp, Margaret Borowczyk, & Alison Mackey	1
			45 total

*Source: January 2020 search in *Linguistics and Language Behavior Abstracts* for articles whose titles use language policy(ies), language planning, or language policy and planning (LPP).