
Perspectives

HEIDI BYRNES, Associate Editor
Georgetown University

TO PROFESSIONALS IN LANGUAGE EDUCATION, multilingualism and multiculturalism are central concepts with many meanings. In the United States, these terms have traditionally been interpreted as designating the long-term goal of foreign language learning within an educational system that would expeditiously presume that the majority of students were “untainted” monolingual speakers. By contrast, second language teachers—and in this country that means teachers of English as a second language—as well as their students would have to deal with complex multilingual and multicultural realities from the first day of instruction. Accordingly, they would spend much time negotiating the pushes and pulls, the options and orderings, the privileges and pains inherent in those realities, all the while leaving largely uncontested the ideological claims, administrative practices, resource allocations, and even modes of enforcement of the monolingual modern state that provided the larger context for their educational practices.

Gradually, however, the above distinctions are seen not only as intellectually defective but as societally problematic: They reveal bewildering cross-purposes, not to mention problematic hierarchies. Indeed, the dramatic changes all around us seem altogether to disallow such simplistic distinctions and, instead, display multimodal and multilinguistic literacies at all levels of society. We take note of extensive migration in many parts of the world that leads to an array of individual and societal language resources; we observe a multiplicity of choices being made by individuals and societies; we can distinguish functional layers of language use that reflect both centripetal and centrifugal forces, to name but a few of the resultant phenomena. Whether we conceptualize these changes in terms of power contestations or in terms of ecological adjustments, we are observing the breaking open of the very linkage that,

over the last 2 centuries in particular, gave monolingualism its privileged position in the first place, including its privileged position in educational systems—the sovereign Western, increasingly democratic nation-state that ideologically framed itself and politically and administratively established itself through a single, normed national language that would permeate all aspects of public life.

As these nation-states are reconfiguring themselves or are being reconfigured by various cultural, economic, and political forces, we can expect language policies and language education policies (LEPs) to be particularly revelatory sites for understanding language teaching and learning—good reason to feature that complex set of issues in the next two installments of *Perspectives*. We begin by taking an international perspective and, in a second installment, will focus on the situation in the United States. Not surprisingly, the impact of educational policies on the study of languages in schools and universities is most apparent in countries that have centralized approaches to policy making, a situation that applies to many nations around the world. In that sense, they highlight issues that might otherwise escape awareness. But even in countries like the United States that assert decentralization as their fundamental approach to ordering educational practices, both explicit and de facto policies are being made and lead to considerable reshaping of educational practices, such as through various forms of standard-setting in teaching, learning, and the education of teachers themselves.

Elana Shohamy of Tel Aviv University lays the groundwork for our consideration of the implications of language education policies for language study, thus giving us the benefit of her extensive expertise, her spirited engagement, and her deep sense of the ethical and moral dimensions of the work we do, wittingly or unwittingly, as we “teach language.” Not surprisingly, she invites a critical gaze on many up-front practices, as well as many hidden relationships. Not only should the nine viewpoints she proposes give us a considerably

more sophisticated understanding of these matters, ultimately she hopes to persuade us to become responsibly engaged ourselves. In turn, the five commentators who graciously agreed to the impossible task of representing different parts of the world both affirm and differentiate some of the issues raised by Shohamy. Hailing from the other side of the globe, but with extensive experience in language policy matters all around the world, Joseph Lo Bianco, Chief Executive of Language Australia, decisively places language policy making within the larger context of globalization, where English as the international lingua franca forces us to consider what he calls the dynamics and implications of identity language instruction and equality language instruction. Just how complex and uncondusive to generalized recommendations these considerations can be is particularly well exemplified by language education policies in South Africa as Vic Webb from the Centre for Research in the Politics of Language at the University of Pretoria lays them out. The very act of establishing a national LEP might in one instance be interpreted as dominant behavior by the powerful to diminish other peoples and their languages; however, in other contexts such a move may be the most effective way of assuring not only their survival but their ability to thrive and contribute to societal life. Whether we wish to acknowledge this or not, the embeddedness of language policy in economic forces that themselves distribute and redistribute positions of power at all levels of society and globally is a reality. That fact is particularly well exemplified in the perspective offered by Kensaku Yoshida of Sophia University, Tokyo. And yet, things are far from

unidimensional even in the case of a country like Japan, where policy makers have determined that high levels of individual and societal communicative abilities in English are imperative for the society's economic well-being. In the end, policy and practice are so at odds with each other as to have thwarted policy goals for decades. Economic forces were also the initial impetus for one of the most fascinating environments for language policy making, the European Union. Kees van Esch of the University of Nijmegen, who is extensively involved in teacher education issues, points out, as now well-established nation-states are relocating themselves within that Union, one of the particularly intriguing "by-products" is the possibility for asserting minority language rights and heterogeneity among its key characteristics, thereby seemingly counteracting the normative and homogenizing actions of the emerging antecedent 19th-century versions of statehood. Finally, Juan Carlos Godenzzi, formerly responsible for the Indigenous Bilingual Bicultural Education Program at the Ministry of Education in Peru and now at the University of Montreal, brings us back to one of Shohamy's concerns. In considering developments in many South American countries, he reminds us that a key challenge in LEP development is to be extraordinarily sensitive to contextual realities as we as language professionals help to realize in our societies the role of language in understanding and producing knowledge and in creating and upholding multiple communicative networks. I thank the authors for their rich contributions and, as always, invite readers' comments at mlj@lss.wisc.edu.

THE ISSUE

Implications of Language Education Policies for Language Study in Schools and Universities

ELANA SHOHAMY, Tel Aviv University

THE CONTEXT OF LANGUAGE POLICY AND LANGUAGE EDUCATION POLICY

The past few years have witnessed a renewed interest in issues of language policy (LP) emerging from a changing world where nation-states are becoming more varied and diverse and, at the

same time, more global and international. Definitions of national and official languages, and consequently the language(s) that should be taught in educational systems, are being questioned and challenged. These developments have also led to questions about the political and ideological forces behind LP, the legitimacy of making sweep-

ing LP decisions for whole populations, the mechanisms by which LP is introduced, the focus on languages as unidimensional units, the involvement, or lack thereof, of a more diverse constituency of citizens and especially of the educational establishment (teachers and schools), and the relation between LP and actual language learning. I begin this paper with a description of LP and language education policy (LEP) and their connection with political, social, and economic dimensions. I will then discuss a number of issues and dilemmas related to current practices in LEP, focusing in particular on the attempts made by a growing number of nations to create more pluralistic LEPs without fully adopting democratic principles and without adequately considering the complexities of languages and societies. I conclude with a review of the essence of LEP and, on that basis, will query the need for its existence.

LP is concerned with the decisions that people make about languages and their use in society, whereas LEP refers to carrying out such decisions in the specific contexts of schools and universities in relation to home languages (previously referred to as “mother tongues”) and to foreign and second languages. These decisions may include which language(s) should be taught, when (at what age), for how long (number of years and hours of study), by whom and for whom (who is qualified to teach and who is entitled or obligated to learn), and how (which methods, materials, tests, etc. . . .). In general, LPs and LEPs are stated explicitly through official documents such as national laws, declarations of certain languages as “official” or “national,” language standards, curricula, tests, or other types of documents. At times, LPs and LEPs are not stated explicitly but must be derived implicitly by examining a variety of *de facto* practices. In these situations, the LP and the LEP are more difficult to detect because they are “hidden” from public eyes.

In countries with centralized educational systems (and occasionally also with decentralized ones), decisions regarding LPs and LEP are made by central authorities, such as government agencies, parliaments, ministries of education, and regional and local educational boards. In most situations, the LEP serves as the legal means for carrying out national LP agendas. Thus, when certain entities—as small as neighborhoods and communities and as large as cities, nations, or global regions—grant, for a variety of reasons, a language or languages special priority status in society, the LP is manifested in the educational

systems. This priority status in an educational system often means using the language (or languages) as the medium of instruction (often the case of the languages declared as “official”) or teaching the language as a foreign or second language. Such preferred languages may include heritage, community, immigrant, indigenous, foreign, or global languages, and not only the national language(s), an issue that has special relevance when the official or national language(s) are different than the home language(s) of some of the learners. Not surprisingly, in the current political environment, where nation-states are becoming more multilingual, multinational and, at the same time, more global, students are asked to learn other languages that reflect and affect the interests of different groups in quite different ways.

Another way of describing the function of central authorities is to say that they introduce, establish, and often impose LEP as ways of creating order, managing and controlling the linguistic repertoire of the nation (or other political entities). Educational institutions, in turn, serve as the vehicles through which this order comes about. In other words, because LP is not neutral, but rather embedded in a whole set of political, ideological, social, and economic agendas, LEP is not neutral either, but serves as the vehicle for promoting and perpetuating such agendas. Taken together, both of these statements reflect the fact that languages express national (or other) identities that are often embedded in shared history and cultures; they are also ideological because they are associated with aspirations of unity, loyalty, and patriotism; they are social because they are perceived as symbols of status, power, group identity, and belonging; and they are economic because knowledge of languages can be linked to different types of economic consequences, positive as well as negative.

The inherent complexity of current language use is particularly apparent in the changing nation-state, in developing regional and global entities (e.g., the European Union, NAFTA), and in vast migration world-wide, all leading to strong demands for civil rights by the multilingual and multiethnic groups. In many entities, fierce conflicts take place between and within groups (as well as with central authorities) due to demands for recognition and acknowledgment of difference and special linguistic rights. Many of these battles are fought through LP and LEP, as the control of languages and linguistic rights facilitates or hinders access to resources in various societal domains, such as the workplace, educa-

tion, or government, and enhances or denies status in society. In short, language confers power. In response to this linguistic struggle, state authorities adopt a variety of approaches, from repressing differences to providing solutions that reflect democratic pluralism. Within this spectrum of possibilities, we should, nonetheless, expect that dominant groups are rarely inclined to give up their advantage and to accept pluralist policies, especially because changes are likely to lead to redistribution of wealth and realignment in political power.

With the rise of the modern nation-state, LP has become a common method of determining membership of and access to the state's institutions. In the market-place, it is the buyer who determines policy, for a seller depends on being able to communicate the qualities of the items he or she is selling. In a governmental setting, it is the bureaucrat who is able to decide what languages he or she is prepared to understand. If you can't speak the national language, you might be blocked from access to banks or police or even hospitals. Language policies then apply to members of speech communities who are in some way in the power of policy makers. (Spolsky & Shohamy, 1999, p. 50)

Because of its composition, the new nation-state, with its different ideologies and rules of representation (e.g., common history) and its connections to the global world, stands in stark contrast to the traditional nation-state and can even be viewed as threatening to it because of the many *others* it introduces as social actors. As a result, authorities often use propaganda and ideologies about language loyalty, patriotism, collective identity, and the need for "correct and pure language" or "native language" as strategies for continuing their control and holding back the demands of these others. A particularly instructive area for observing this tension-filled dynamic is the development of LP and LEP in democratic societies in which minorities have begun to demand and gain power. These minorities make these demands at the same time as established groups fight to retain their privileged status while appearing, on the surface, to follow the rules of pluralistic, democratic societies, including advocating that all citizens should have the opportunity to learn a variety of languages.

A number of countries (e.g., the Netherlands, Israel, Spain, Japan, South Africa, Hong Kong, Australia) have introduced LEPs that range from policies stating the need to learn one national language plus English (such as in Japan) to those that advocate two or more national languages with a large variety of local and community lan-

guages (such as South Africa). The general formula seems to be this: First, one or more official or national languages are taken to have high priority and to represent some national or dominant group identity, ideology, loyalty, or common history. Second, given the status of English as the world's lingua franca in commerce, academia, and technology, the choice in most non-English-speaking nations is to learn English as the main foreign or additional language in school (at times even as the language of instruction), normally beginning on the elementary level. Third, students study regional, heritage, indigenous or community languages that represent some portion of the population considered to be significant.

How the specifics of these decisions are developed can be seen up-close in one example, the creation of the new LEP of Israel. Israeli society consists of a large number of ethnic, linguistic, and cultural groups who use a variety of languages and have varied backgrounds and identities (Spolsky & Shohamy, 1999). Out of a population of 6.3 million, the majority uses Hebrew for everyday communication. Israel's 1.1 million Arabs (of whom 81% are Muslim, 10% Christian, and 9% are Druze) use geographically-based varieties of spoken Arabic at home, but adhere to Modern Standard Arabic (MSA) as the written form. In addition, about 1 million Israelis are immigrants from the former USSR. For most of this group, the home language is Russian, augmented by a variety of other home languages used in the former Soviet Union. About 70,000 Israelis are immigrants from Ethiopia whose languages are Amharic and Tigrinia. In addition, the approximately 250,000 foreign workers currently residing in Israel use a variety of languages such as Tagalog, Romanian, Turkish, Bulgarian, Spanish, Turkish, and numerous African languages. A large number of Ultra-Orthodox Jews use Yiddish for everyday communication. For many other Jews, Yiddish, Ladino, a variety of Arabic dialects (e.g., Jewish Arabic), and other territorial languages (e.g., Polish, Russian, Bulgarian, Hungarian, English) are considered heritage languages of those who arrived in Israel as immigrants. Both Hebrew and Arabic are designated as official; English is not designated as official, but it is widely used in academia, business, commerce, and technology (see Spolsky & Shohamy, 1999, for elaboration of the variety of languages used in Israel and the origin of their official status).

Until 1996, there was no official document stating the LEP for Israeli schools, yet various languages were taught in the educational system.

Hebrew and Arabic were the languages of instruction for both the Jewish and Arab communities respectively; students of both communities studied English as a foreign language throughout their years in school, and Arabs studied Hebrew as a second language. French or Arabic (primarily MSA) was taught to about 40% of the Jewish population. Some Ultra-Orthodox schools taught in Yiddish, but very few additional languages were taught in the educational system (Hallel & Spolsky, 1993).

In 1996, the first consolidated LEP document was introduced by the Israeli Ministry of Education. It followed a multilingual principle, reflecting the language diversity of the society in which a number of languages are used for different purposes. The LEP document designates Hebrew as the language of instruction in all Jewish schools; English is to be studied from fourth grade onward, and Arabic (MSA) or French as an additional language starting in grade 7 for a period of 3 years. For the Arab community, Arabic continues to serve as the language of instruction in schools, with Hebrew to be taught starting in grade 3 and English starting in grade 4. Encouraged for both groups are additional languages such as community languages (e.g., Russian or Amharic), world languages (e.g., German, Spanish, Japanese, Chinese), and heritage languages (e.g., Yiddish and Ladino). Immigrants are encouraged to maintain home languages (but not as language of instruction) through special classes. The LEP also states the specific languages to be taught and the starting age and duration, but it does not specify the methods of teaching, as these are to be decided through national curricula for each language.

The LEP of Israel may seem progressive and pluralistic. Yet questions must be raised about the extent to which the introduction and practice of the LEP follow principles and practices of democracy, ethics, inclusion, and representation, and whether the policy acknowledges sound educational principles and linguistic realities. The following section explores these matters in some depth in order to raise critical questions about LEP that require attention in the profession.

THE TOP-DOWN APPROACH TO LEP

This first issue relates to the manner in which LEPs are introduced. In most countries, LEPs are initiated and decided by central authorities, whether on a national, state, or municipal level, and are carried out in a top-down manner, often without any input from the constituents. Thus,

LEP represents authoritarian ways of making policy and a form of social domination and control.

True, one can observe bottom-up initiatives by various groups who create their own LEP practices, often in contradiction to the official LEP. Most frequently, this resistance pertains to parents calling for the early study of English, believing that it is important for their children's future economic and educational success. In Hong Kong, parents demanded that their children be taught in English and not in Chinese. In Israel, parents succeeded in introducing spoken Arabic at an early age in a large number of schools in Tel Aviv, in opposition to the LEP. There are cases of groups demanding language classes that emphasize occupational skills, often in contrast to the declared curriculum of educational institutions that define language proficiency in more general terms.

Yet, in most situations, central authorities introduce LEPs in a top-down manner through a variety of mechanisms and procedures, thereby reinforcing, perpetuating, and suppressing resistance. Such mechanisms may include compulsory tests in specific languages that receive priority. These tests serve as gatekeepers for exit or entrance criteria at various institutions. Financial rewards or penalties may also be meted out to schools according to the level of implementation of the LEP. These mechanisms are further described in the section "Lack of Input" below.

THE LACK OF REPRESENTATION OF CONSTITUENCIES

Related to top-down imposition of the LEP is the limited representation of broad sectors of the population in decisions and in implementation of the LEP, even though they are strongly affected by it. Most LEPs are introduced by those in authority, usually government administrators and, at times, also academic experts. These policies represent the views of a few who may have specific interests in the public learning of specific languages and not of others. Given the loaded LEP agendas representing a variety of ideologies, this approach to introducing LEP can be dangerous, especially in democratic societies for whom broad representation of groups with multiple and often contradictory agendas is essential if policies are to be accepted as fair and ethical.

Obviously, the introduction of LEP does not in itself guarantee success in language learning. Yet, it does guarantee that those in authority (e.g., governments and ministries of education) will allocate resources so that students devote time to

learning these languages and not others. It is, therefore, all the more surprising that those who are affected by LEPs are rarely asked to be involved in their creation. Is this because they are assumed to know nothing about educational matters and relevance and, therefore, have little of value to contribute? Is it because they might push for alternatives that would be unacceptable to those in a position of power? Or is it because they would hinder the smooth functioning of central administrations? By portraying the public as simply having no interest in issues of language and language use, policy makers can all too easily avoid facing the hard questions.

In the case of the new Israeli LEP, the Ministry of Education did hold a number of internal meetings to discuss the educational language policy, and the ministry received advice from academic advisors with a background in language policy, but it was a top-down act, inasmuch as the Ministry introduced the new policy as special documents to all schools in the nation that were then expected to carry it out, without any consideration of the wishes, aspirations, and especially the realities of those affected by it. In particular, there was no input whatsoever from language teachers, principals, students, and parents as to the policy's suitability and appropriateness for their needs and identities. Such acts of governance can therefore be considered undemocratic and unethical, even though they establish policies that would appear to be suited for a pluralistic society.

A crucial component for more democratic decision making in LEP creation is, of course, the ready and timely availability of pertinent information for the diverse constituencies in order to help them understand what is at stake and what is not at stake. For instance, James Lantolf reports that the Bolivian government wished to introduce indigenous language education into communities where there had been no education at all (personal communication, 2002). The consequences of moving from an oral to a literate culture were not considered and, in fact, not known, either by the community or by the government agencies. Curriculum was developed independently of the teachers and the community, and only subsequently were open meetings held in order to create the appearance of a more democratic process.

THE LACK OF INPUT FROM LANGUAGE TEACHERS

The lack of representation and input of language teachers in LEP is of particular concern. By

framing LEP decisions as political acts, their creators remove them from professional input and action, even though teachers are expected to carry out the policies through their teaching practices in their classrooms. Such an approach reduces teachers to bureaucrats who are the agents of big government policies without having any say in their shaping and delivery.

Surprisingly, with few exceptions—like the Bolivian case reported by Lantolf, where language teachers actually went on strike being one—language teachers themselves all too often buy into this official view, unaware that decisions about the languages they teach are embedded in a variety of ideological and political agendas. One is inclined to see the fact that teacher education programs in many countries do not include LEP as part of teacher preparation as one reason that language teachers are not more involved. The study of how to influence LEP has not yet become an integral part of the basic intellectual preparation of language teaching professionals. As educational goals are being transformed to meet the evolving needs of increasingly diverse student populations in many countries, teachers should not view themselves as “just teaching languages,” or as responsible for carrying out orders. Rather, they should view themselves as social actors who are aware of the loaded agendas that they are helping to realize through their teaching and who should, therefore, provide differentiated and well-informed input through active involvement in the creation of LEPs.

Such an activist role for teachers in the creation, introduction, and implementation of LEPs presents challenges to the teachers of all languages, but particularly to teachers of English, who have a special status because of the global power of the language they teach. Because the English language can increase citizens' opportunities in various venues, it can also create inequalities between those who know it and those who do not (not to mention the fact that it can threaten local languages). English language teachers must view themselves as belonging to the larger profession of language teachers, not just as teachers of English, a reconception that also requires them to consider the political and social implications for the diverse constituencies of all the languages being taught.

THE LACK OF KNOWLEDGE AND INVOLVEMENT OF CITIZENS

If LEP needs to be more inclusive of language teachers, it also needs to involve more of the

public at large, including students and other language learners. Yet, most of the public lacks knowledge of language and its power in society. Such lacunae in the public's knowledge lead to myths and misconceptions about language learning, a state of affairs that is most visible in pluralistic, democratic societies. For example, the public may support LEPs that perpetuate the learning of majority languages and reject the need for maintaining home or community languages, believing them to have no value. Such beliefs may even exist among immigrants and indigenous groups who are led to perceive their languages as liabilities for their children's acquisition of the majority language and for their success in school and society. As a result, politicians can easily convince the public, majority and minority groups alike, to buy into their ideologies and into constructs such as assimilative and subtractive approaches to language learning. Because some current initiatives, such as the one in New York state, encourage immigrant parents to choose the type of language programs their children should have, parents are in particular need of complete information, the basis for sound decision making and functioning democracies. Clearly, academics have an important role to play in informing and educating the public on these topics; yet, they are generally not inclined to take up such roles, but would rather inform their own colleagues.

COVERT MECHANISMS OF LEP IMPOSITION

A number of strategies and mechanisms are used by central authorities to create, perpetuate, and manipulate LEPs. Even though LEP that is expressed in official documents provides relatively transparent information about specific decisions regarding language, much of LEP is actually carried out through a variety of indirect actions and practices that, in their totality, serve as *de facto* LEPs that can override and contradict existing policies and create alternative policy realities. Among the main covert mechanisms are language tests, entrance criteria, teaching materials, and language standards. As a result, LEP documents often become no more than declarations of intentions that can easily be manipulated, even in ways that contradict the official LEP.

To demonstrate this point, one can examine a situation where the LEP declares a specific language as significant, as a priority for the educational system, or both. At the same time, by establishing entrance criteria that include a test of another language, new *de facto* policy is created,

with the consequence that the tested language becomes the only important language. Indeed, because tests are often more powerful than any written policy, they can lead to the elimination and suppression of certain languages (Shohamy, 2001, *in press*). Tests can also be used as tools to privilege certain forms and levels of knowledge of languages. LEP may state that correct grammar or native-like accents are not essential for acceptable proficiency—yet language tests that demand correct grammar and native-like accent create different, *de facto* criteria that can become barriers for keeping unwanted groups such as immigrants from entering educational institutions or the workplace.

It is important to note here that indirect and covert agendas stand behind LEP not only in specific nations, but also in transnational and global domains, often accompanied by propaganda and ideologies. Such is the case when, through the use of English as the language of instruction and as a requirement for acceptance to institutions of higher education, the power of the English language and its speakers is perpetuated. When a newly opened university in Central Asia (in the former USSR), funded by the United States and other Western countries, declared English to be the language of instruction, it simultaneously overlooked and devalued the local languages. The school's policy that presents English as the language of world democracy and the language of freedom and openness perpetuates the dominance and influence of the West and its ideologies and creates a *de facto* language policy with regard to the English language.

THE LIMITED EDUCATIONAL LEVELS ADDRESSED BY LEP

In many countries, LEP addresses language learning in *schools* because schools are viewed as tools in the hands of central governments and as essential means for shaping populations. By contrast, LEP rarely extends to language learning in higher education, even though higher educational institutions are just as much instruments of the state or special interests as are all other cultural institutions. As a result, broad gaps and extensive contradictions may exist between the two educational levels. Thus, Israel's LEP refers only to elementary through secondary schools, while universities can create their own policies, even in contradiction to those stated in the national LEP. In fact, universities often do not have an official and public LEP, but instead create *de facto* policies through the various practices mentioned pre-

vously. In Israel, for example, we find university entrance examinations in Hebrew and English but not in Arabic (favoring those whose first language is Hebrew and disadvantaging students whose home language is Arabic). Furthermore, although the LEP for schools declares both Arabic and Hebrew to be languages of instruction, Hebrew is the exclusive language of instruction in higher education. This practice discriminates against those who were educated in Arabic all their lives. Far from being an isolated case, this situation is typical of countries that declare bilingual or multilingual policies for schools, but do not pursue these policies in higher education. Some universities in the Basque country and bilingual cities such as Ottawa (where the bilingual LEPs are in force at some institutions of higher education) are welcome exceptions.

ORGANIZING SOCIETIES BY DISCRETE LANGUAGE UNITS

For most people the language or languages that they use are sometimes very important for forming their identity; yet at other times, they are less important than other identity-bearing factors. Nonetheless, LP and LEP assume that language should be the most important, even the only, criterion that organizes societies. Linguists, too, tend to analyze and define the world in linguistic terms, often not realizing that using language as the sole indicator of identity can become a discriminatory act because language is often a destiny into which one is born and over which one has little control, especially when it comes to accent and correctness.

In many countries, the home language of a group becomes the main criterion for identification; LP thereby may ignore other factors, such as religion, culture, history, and gender. Language, however, can also be totally overlooked when groups of certain origins (i.e., Muslim) are expected to use Arabic, a phenomenon that is viewed by some as irrelevant in today's world where nation (or group) and language often do not coincide.

More generally, a LEP that organizes education and societies according to discrete and defined boundaries (i.e., number of languages, order of importance of languages) in strict and "hermetically sealed units" (Makoni, 1998) can be particularly problematic in multilingual societies, such as those in Africa and India, where there are no clear divisions among languages, and languages are embedded one within another. Thus, Makoni criticizes the South African LP that establishes 11

separate languages as being "socially alienating and cognitively disadvantaging to the very people it is intended to serve" (2002, p. 1). He claims that these languages became separate and indigenous in colonial time, the result of a "linguistic fixity" that colonialists and missionaries invented for bureaucratic convenience and in contravention to sociohistorical facts. A more appropriate understanding, he argues, would be in terms of a continuum. In addition, there are great divides between the official, standard version of the language and the version that is actually used. As a consequence, students enter schools speaking a nonstandard version of the official language, which itself draws on a number of other languages (e.g., English, Afrikaans, and some African dialects and languages). In such contexts, assigning a "mother tongue" to a student may have little to do with sociolinguistic realities.

A similar situation applies to numerous cases world-wide, when the LEP assumes a uniform standard language, even though a large number of dialects are spoken by different groups, and these dialects are different from one another and without clear boundaries. Schools often demand that the standard language be used in school, but this requirement is far from reality. Furthermore, using language as the main organizing variable of societies in LP and in LEP is bound to exclude large portions of the population. In South Africa, 11 languages are considered official, yet, a relatively large percentage of the population who uses "the other languages" is excluded. Viewing languages in a more embedded and integrative fashion is also appropriate for most immigrant societies where students arrive with knowledge of other languages and, with time, tend to code-mix, code-switch, and go through a variety of different phases and stages of language use and proficiency. Clearly, languages cannot be viewed in discrete terms and as detached from a variety of other contextual variables.

LEP AND LINGUISTIC RIGHTS

The concerns mentioned above notwithstanding, linguistic rights do need to be valued, particularly in those situations where people (especially immigrants and indigenous groups) do not have command of the language(s) of power, and, therefore, cannot participate fully as citizens in society. In general, LEPs impose sweeping and categorical decisions with little attention to linguistic rights and to the values of knowing other languages. There is, therefore, reason to examine in depth what linguistic rights mean in educa-

tional contexts, whether they are different from linguistic rights in noneducational settings, and how these rights should be protected within different types of LEPs. The tensions are these: LEPs tend to give priority to linguistic order over assuring linguistic rights and recognizing the background of students. Even where they do protect the rights of students (and teachers), they tend to rely on sweeping generalizations that protect the rights of some and not others. Thus, immigrants are often expected to function in the new language in a very short time with little thought given to continued use of their home languages in educational contexts. One recent practice for protecting the rights of students who are not fully proficient in the main language of instruction is educational accommodation and adaptation. Among such accommodations are bilingual versions of tests, which include learners' home languages or material that incorporates knowledge or contexts from their home countries that is familiar to immigrants or other groups. Extensive research is currently taking place to determine forms of accommodation that are effective and that can facilitate the demonstration of academic performance. In some situations, the courts take on leading roles in protecting the linguistic rights of students and teachers, particularly with regard to teaching, learning, and testing methods and materials.

THE CONNECTION OF LEP AND LANGUAGE LEARNING

Curiously, not much information is available about how LEP relates to language learning, perhaps because LEP is often considered a separate entity, driven by political agendas and overlooking educational theories and knowledge. Even when certain languages are stipulated as compulsory and are taught in schools, little is known about students' success in learning these languages or about the feasibility of carrying out the LEP. One may suspect that this situation exists because LEPs serve primarily as statements or declarations of intentions with little concern for practices. When policy makers impose languages on schools for a variety of political and social reasons without being attentive to the needs and wishes of those who are affected by the policy and without including those who are expected to carry it out, LEP generally has little effect on the students' language learning, especially when the public has negative attitudes or stereotypes about some of these languages and their people to begin with. Under such circumstances, learning

these languages may actually lead to increased negative attitudes and low achievement or, alternatively, can create greater familiarity and reduced stereotyping of the languages and their speakers. At the same time, there are many examples where, without an official LEP that identifies the languages to be studied, a diversity of languages is learned and acquired successfully, as is the case with the learning of English by young pupils in a large number of countries.

Just as there is little knowledge about the connection between LEP and language learning, few studies trace the effects of introducing a new LEP on attitudes, stereotypes, and on successful language learning. One is tempted to ask: Is this lack of knowledge and investigation a consequence of how LEPs are created, often driven by ideology and overlooking aspirations and needs of schools and societies? Is it because LEP focuses mostly on the languages that should be taught and not on learning and teaching practices? Is it because it is a top-down process rather than a dialogical process? Is it because there is no input from teachers and students who are immersed in experiences and realities? Should one, more generally, attribute this dearth of information to how languages are taught and learned? Is it because many LEPs overlook insights from second language acquisition theories and practices? Is it because we have yet to define what constitutes success (and failure) of LEPs and, likewise, of learning languages (e.g., achievements, motivation, attitudes, relationships)? Is it that teachers are not paying much attention to LEP or that language policy makers are not noticing educational realities? Or is it that researchers in language policy and language learning do not actively address language policy concerns?

CONCLUSION

With so many issues, questions, criticisms, and dilemmas regarding LEP one wonders whether a centralized LEP is needed at all. For governments, language is a political issue and it will always be so as long as schools are part of political structures. For speakers, however, languages are central to their individual and social identities. How do we reconcile these two facts? Lippi-Green (1997) argues that policies attempting to ensure that everyone speak the same languages or language varieties are no more realistic than policies requiring that everyone be the same height. Decisions about languages that are imposed on whole populations contradict the essence of individual and social freedom because languages are

markers of both private and social identity and group membership and not the possession of nations.

Yet, rather than concluding that LEPs do not serve useful functions, I suggest that we focus on seriously discussing the complex questions raised by educational policy making and on formulating specific proposals for reform in particular contexts. For example, even if LEPs were practiced in more interactive and representational ways, it is worth asking whether educational systems should be agencies that organize language issues through such defined and discrete categories as number of languages and priority status for languages for entire populations. Likewise, we must address the fact that LP and LEP suffer from a noticeable absence of research regarding the long-range effects and consequences of policy for different groups and individuals in different contexts, including the effects on language learning. We know far too little about the links between LP, LEP, and the broader educational, social, economic, and political practices within civil societies that represent democratic pluralism. Language scholars, particularly applied linguists, language policy experts, and language teachers, must be willing to play a crucial role in addressing these issues. They are challenged to contribute to the marketplace of ideas regarding language in the political arena by asking themselves these hard questions: if LEP, then when, where, how, and for whom? Perhaps, such reflections would result in proposals for flexible rather than fixed categories, lead to policies that engage citizens rather than exclude them, and position languages not as means for control, order, even oppression but as mediating tools for creating equality, sustaining rights, creating contacts, and fostering communication and mutual understanding in societies. Certainly, such reflections would have to be shaped and directed not primarily or exclusively toward our academic peers, but toward society as a whole.

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THE COMMENTARIES

Making Language Education Policies: A Needed Response to Globalization

JOSEPH LO BIANCO, Chief Executive,
Language Australia

As usual, Elana Shohamy provides an outstanding stimulus for discussion of language education policy (LEP). The imposed brevity of response format provides a luxurious opportunity to indulge in unqualified generalization. This response is organized under four headings: (a) inevitability and contractions of pluralism, (b) global English and world Englishes, (c) state-centered LEP, and (d) role of language professionals.

INEVITABILITY AND CONTRACTIONS OF PLURALISM

Globalization combines the integration of national economies and technology with vast population mobility. Vast population transfers (the poor and displaced alongside elites and the wealthy curious) are making virtually all states ethnically and linguistically diverse. Service-based commerce, not least tourism and commodified higher education, intensify this engagement with cultural and linguistic difference. Claims for indigenous rights also place languages

on national policy agendas. Globalization is multidirectional and even contradictory. Economic globalization animates resistance from resurgent local identities. This resistance occurs alongside the emergence of supranational polities (e.g., the European Union) that impose a decline in national sovereignty. Linguistic hybridity and multimodal literacy confront standard languages asserted by testing-driven, centrally imposed curricula. Population movements also bring to the surface conflicts between assertions of national sovereignty and human rights claims to refuge and citizenship. Alongside the acceleration in pluralism, there is the obliteration of entire kinds of languages. The transportation to all corners of the globe of consumerist social formations, mediated by industrial and postindustrial literacy-saturated languages attached to states espousing inclusive notions of modernity, has produced a spectacular threat to the world's indigenous and tribal language forms. Of these languages, 90% are threatened with extinction. As the world aggregates towards supranational economic structures and produces multiculturalism everywhere, there is also erosion of space for languages expressing radically divergent forms of society and life.

GLOBAL ENGLISH AND WORLD ENGLISHES

The succession of English-centered global technocapital with English-based empire has converted English into the common, convenient, instrumentally demanded global language. English is immersed in a three-part cultural dynamism: the struggle of forms and norms appropriate to its global status and claimed transethnicity, the struggle for forms and norms for its new local statuses and identities, and the persistence of its identity-representing forms and norms for original native speakers. LEP debates everywhere almost always invoke English, even in its old homelands. Where it is not the main social language, English becomes the preferred second language. Where it is the dominant social language (the most effective means of citizenship) and where economy-based socialization is via literate, academic English, there arises a discourse of tension between minority language activists and the state.

Connoting opportunity, supranational communication, and econo-technical modernity, English's characterizations marginalize popular representations of indigenous and immigrant minority languages. These languages struggle against associations with atavism, localism, and parochialism imposed by the limiting discourses

of state, which in turn provoke rejection from minorities seeking to forestall dislocation, reject anomie, and disrupt assimilative surrender. Even within countries with secure national languages—even when these have international presence—Global English denies states some part of their past autonomous LEP because policies will always devote prominence to the acquisition of English. Not surprisingly, the distribution of bilingualism in Europe reflects the local status of English. Sociologically, bilingualism is both low and scattered in Britain—it is a phenomenon of minorities (among whom it is intergenerationally transitional) and language professionals (among whom it is intergenerationally irrelevant); it is high in non-English parts of Europe (predominantly English-knowing, except in very small nations proximal to large neighbor states, and among language professionals and minorities, where it again appears intergenerationally transitional). LEP must take such factors into account, because these are policy in action, the effect of attitudes and ideologies of language that either sustain or subvert the declared goals of formal LEP.

LIKELIHOOD OF STATE-CENTERED LEP

The massive expansion of globalization-induced pluralism makes state-centered explicit processes of LEP inevitable as states manage multicultural demographics. Two goals struggle for prominence: equality (economic- or citizenship-oriented national language instruction) versus identity (culture-oriented first language development). Although they are intimately linked, state discourses rarely acknowledge this fact. These goals take LEP form in public policy as either assimilative, monoliterate socialization, or integrative, transitional (partially biliterate) bilingualism, all the way to intergenerational, biliterate maintenance bilingualism. Most states undertake the first, some the second, few the third. Universal second or foreign language education is a practice deriving from a different constellation of factors, but it, too, is impacted by LEP for pluralist populations in new relations between heritage bilinguals and target language norms, identities, and pedagogies.

The integrating globe extends instrumental rationality to languages with relative power, not only in economic markets, but also with other kinds of capital: cultural prestige for national elites, geopolitical strategic and security calculations for states, and intergenerational connections and authenticity for minorities resisting as-

similitive pressures. During the 1980s and 1990s, these kinds of capital came together, in both harmony and conflict, in Australian LEP. Top-down discourses of Asian economic regionalism and national strategic interests encountered bottom-up claims to transform national identity and retain minority languages. LEP struggled to combine pluralism and identity-based participation claims, with elite interest demands. Some 15 years of intensive LEP resulted from the elevation of LEP to a national problem. An outcome has been the vast expansion of languages at elementary and secondary schools, counter-discourses of priority for English literacy, tensions between these, but also productive compromise about directions and priorities. More deeply, perhaps, the result has been the conversion of LEP into a site of cultural struggle and representation.

ROLE OF LANGUAGE PROFESSIONALS

Language professionals can play a critical role in LEP. LEP is essentially a governmental process of resource allocation. States engage in LEP as low-ideology political activity. In globalized contexts, with divergent interests and increased stakes, LEP is more ideologized and conflicted. Language professionals are an interest group with ideological predilections and specific stocks of knowledge and information. Effective kinds of participation in policy processes involve engagement with arguments about effectiveness, evaluations of practice, participation in policy discussions in ways that are distinctive to the professional field, but interactive with bottom-up claims, top-down directions.

Elana Shohamy's article stimulates a consideration of the oscillation and tensions between these dimensions: pluralizing and homogenizing policy options; interest in how states seek to either co-opt, distance, or embrace pluralism; citizen collaboration and resistance to state actions; and the role of professional language personnel in the resultant agitation and momentum. LEP is not just the formal realizations of government action, but also its public discourses. Social and economic forces and prevailing language attitudes and ideologies constitute a kind of language planning that accompanies, and impedes or sustains its more formalized alternative. It is not surprising that language planning and policy are fields of growing interest in applied linguistics and relevant too for modern foreign language teaching.

Language Education Policy in an Emerging African Democracy

VIC WEBB, Director, Centre for Research in the Politics of Language, University of Pretoria

The radical social, political, and educational reconstruction of South Africa after 1994, along with its becoming part of the regional, continental, and global community, make it an interesting site for testing the issues raised by Elana Shohamy's position paper.

To do so, we must take note of the main features of South Africa's language education policies (LEPs). The national LEP, in place since July 1997, declares that it (a) is directed at building a non-racial nation, (b) aims at promoting multilingualism and respect for all languages in the country (multilingualism being described as a defining feature of being South African, and schools being obliged to report on their actions to promote multilingualism), (c) favours bilingual education, (d) vests the right to choose a medium of instruction (MoI) from the 11 official languages in the individual learner; and (e) encourages the learning of more than one language. Provincial LEPs add very little to the national policy, and, at the level of institutions, LEPs generally still need to be developed. As regards LEP implementation (or what Shohamy calls "covert mechanisms of LEP imposition") little research has been undertaken.

An analysis of South Africa's LEP from the perspective of the issues that Shohamy discusses provides the following observations:

1. The LEP is not directed at exerting any form of social domination or control. In fact, it seems to aim at allowing the learner population to realise its wishes and aspirations. The issue of language is not used as a gatekeeper in any way; in fact, it is illegal to base admission to any educational institution on language. The fact that schools' media of instruction and the languages to be studied as subjects are to be chosen from the 11 official languages can also not be seen as a denial of learners' linguistic rights because the 11 languages constitute the home languages of 99% of the national population according to the 1996 census.

2. While it is true that the national LEP was developed centrally and is managed by the national Department of Education, it is also true that educational stakeholders were consulted throughout the development process (for example at a national conference in May 1997 in Pre-

toria), and it is equally true that specific decisions (for example on the MoI of a school) are taken locally, at the institutional level. The same consultative approach is currently being used for the development of language policy for higher education: All stakeholders were invited to present submissions to the Ministry, and regular meetings have been held with delegates representing the interests of university communities.

On the negative side the following shortcomings in the LEP can be noted:

1. The decision to give schools' governing bodies the right to determine their own MoI may not turn out to be in the best interests of learners. In some provinces, up to 60% of the students learn through a second language (Webb, 2002, p. 185). It is clear that the governing bodies do not possess the necessary information on the advantages and disadvantages of the different MoI options, thus leaving open the possibility that wrong decisions are made and that decisions may be made on the basis of the interests of dominant groups in the decision-making community. It is obviously necessary that the authorities ensure that policy-making bodies are adequately informed and trained in the processes of policy making. An information campaign is also necessary, as noted by Shohamy, to combat popular myths among teacher and parent communities. Among these myths are that the Bantu languages are not appropriate to educational development, that they do not have value in high-function public contexts, and that English is the only path to success in education and the labour market.

2. Linked to this issue (and possibly as a consequence of it), is the fact that English has been allowed to become too dominant in educational life. South African parent and educator communities do not seem to be aware of the negative educational, economic, political, sociocultural, and sociopsychological consequences of an over-emphasis on the role of English.

3. Though the national LEP stipulates that "disadvantages resulting from . . . mismatches between home languages and languages of learning and teaching" must be "countered," no specific guidelines are provided about how this serious problem (recall the 60% mentioned above) should be handled, and how the necessary linguistic knowledge and skills of such learners must be developed.

One matter raised by Shohamy that needs special comment is her approving reference to Makoni, who suggests that the South African LEP

organizes education on the problematic assumption that the 11 official languages are discrete and well-defined entities ("hermetically sealed units"). It is not fully clear what, precisely, Shohamy is referring to here.

If she means that the nine Bantu languages each have no essential linguistic coherence, that view can be contested. It may be true that the nine official Bantu languages of South Africa have been artificially created, that the languages in the two main language families (Sotho and Nguni) are mutually comprehensible (thus forming a continuum); that linguistic behaviour in South Africa is characterized by reasonably extensive code-mixing and code-switching, and that learners' linguistic identities (their "mother tongues") cannot be designated on the basis of "discrete linguistic units." However, there is evidence that their speech communities have come to accept the divisions: There seems to be a growing consciousness of linguistic identity ("I speak Tswana, not Northern Sotho"), and there are indications that proposals to harmonize the constituent members of the two main language families have not been accepted.

If, on the other hand, Shohamy means that South African learners are compelled to choose their MoI according to their predefined linguistic identity or that their choice of languages of study was similarly determined (as was the case in pre-1994 South Africa), she is wrong, as was indicated above.

If she means that the standardised varieties of the South African languages (the "standard languages") are imposed on learners (in the classroom), she may be partly right. The fact is that the designated standards are questioned in some linguistic communities (e.g., standard Zulu in urban areas, and Northern Sotho, formerly named Pedi) by speakers of strong dialects, such as Lovedu. (This specific issue is, of course, not an educational matter but an issue to be resolved by language committees, namely, the National Language Bodies in the country.) On the other hand, there can obviously not be any objection against using standard languages as the languages of the school or as the objects of language study. Linguistically diverse, modern societies need standardized languages for communication across ethnolinguistic group boundaries in all fields of high-function public life, including the provision of education. These are the varieties in which public education is provided, textbooks are published, and the labour market operates. A major task of the language teacher is, thus, to develop learners' knowledge and skills in these high-func-

tion varieties. The standardized version of a language, I would argue, can be considered the legitimate language of the school and the target of formal study.

Finally, if she means that nonstandard varieties (learners' dialects, including urban vernaculars) should not be neglected in school classrooms, she is obviously right. In South Africa (at least in the four northern provinces), learners are free to use their dialects for classroom discussion (though not in written format). The problem, however, lies with the attitudes of teachers towards these "non-standard" varieties. As is known, negative attitudes can cause enormous harm to learners' educational development, and LEPs must, therefore, ensure that teachers adopt a linguistically justifiable and informed attitude toward such learners.

The same requirement applies to learners whose MoI is a second language (generally English in South Africa). LEPs should (a) commit educational authorities to the development of such learners' second language knowledge and skills; (b) ensure that learners are not penalized on the basis of superficial language performance errors such as punctuation, spelling, and even some grammatical errors; (c) place more emphasis on "academic" (learning) communicative skills (such as performing learning tasks linguistically effectively); (d) use educational material that is not alienating to learners; (e) ensure that tolerance and respect are developed for languages other than the language of the school or the learner; and (f) promote the maintenance of home languages by ensuring, for example, that learners do not develop negative attitudes towards them and remain comfortable with their personal ethnolinguistic identity.

The final issue raised by Shohamy is whether there is a need for a LEP and what its functions or roles can be. From the South African perspective, there is no doubt that LEPs are essential. If one considers the power of global economic, political, and social forces, the enormous power of English in South Africa (and in the world), the low standing of the Bantu languages, the widespread myths about languages among the general public, and the fundamental role of language in educational development, an absence of a LEP would most probably result in marked language shift, cultural alienation, the gradual loss of cultural diversity, and, importantly, continued inadequate educational development. At the same time, it would mean that second language users of the replacing language would remain disadvantaged for as long as it takes them to become

"first language speakers" of the dominant language, a fact that may have extremely serious economic, political, and social consequences in the long term. In (South) Africa, the only way to establish pluralism, democracy, and development is by giving the Bantu languages a significant role in formal education. And to achieve that, effective LEPs are necessary.

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Language Education Policy in Japan—The Problem of Espoused Objectives versus Practice

KENSAKU YOSHIDA, Sophia University, Tokyo

Japan is generally considered a monolingual, monocultural nation. Although there are opinions to the contrary (cf. Maher, 2002), the fact that foreign residents amount to just 1.3% of the total population (cf. Ministry of Justice, 2001) does corroborate this opinion. Even so, the discrepancy between language policy (LP) and language education policy (LEP), as construed by the government, and the perceived needs and practices of local educational institutions, as Shohamy describes it, is also a problem in Japan.

In particular, the teaching of English in Japan has been a central topic of concern and attention for many years, even though 22 languages were actually taught in Japanese high schools in the year 2000 (Ministry of Education, 2001). Japanese youth study English for 3 years in junior high school, another 3 years in senior high school, and often at least another 2 years at the university level. Yet, until 1999, the average score of Japanese test takers did not once surpass the 500 mark on the TOEFL test. Worse yet, in comparison with other Asian countries, the Japanese now find themselves second from the bottom scores on the computer-based TOEFL and third from the bottom in scores on the paper-based TOEFL (Educational Testing Service, 2002).

Small wonder that the business world has for years expressed dissatisfaction, a frustration that culminated in the report of the *Prime Minister's Commission on Japan's Goals in the 21st Century* (2000) that proposed making English the second

official language of Japan. Although the proposal itself gained only temporary notoriety, its emphasis on global literacy has the strong support of both government and business. There is now a cabinet-sponsored plan to revitalize the nation by educating Japanese so they can use English effectively (Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science, and Technology, 2002). By contrast, no policies were developed for maintaining the languages of minority populations or for the teaching of languages other than English. The main reason is that LP in Japan is based on the strong demands of the business community, which requires English as the international language of commerce.

OBJECTIVES IN THE COURSE OF STUDY

Because of the perceived failures of the system, it is instructive to examine LEPs issued by the Ministry of Education over the past 40 years. In 1960, the Course of Study emphasized teaching all four skills plus understanding the people who speak the foreign language being learned (Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology). In 1970, after Japan experienced its first real test on the international stage by sponsoring the Tokyo Olympics (1964) and the Osaka International Exposition (1970), focus turned from teaching the four skills separately to a more integrated communicative ability to comprehend the foreign language and express oneself in the language. This integrated, communicative ability included the need to understand the worldviews of other peoples and the creation of a basis for international understanding. More major changes did not occur until the 1989 revision, which first used the expression "communication" in the Course of Study. It emphasized that students were to gain a positive attitude toward communicating in the foreign language and should deepen their understanding of international society. Most recently, the document has added the need to develop the practical ability to communicate. In other words, the Ministry of Education and Science has consistently taken a positive communicative view in its LEP (Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science, and Technology, 1960, 1970, 1989, 1999). What, then, has been the problem? The answer lies in the serious discrepancy between the ideal LEP objectives and the reality of English teaching.

PRACTICE

In line with Shohamy's observations about the power of tests, there is little doubt that entrance

examinations have a strong influence on the way foreign languages are taught in Japan (for a contrary view, see Watanabe, 1997). Although the Course of Study envisions a choice from among three oral communication subjects (A: conversational speaking abilities; B: listening comprehension; C: upper-level speaking, such as discussions and debates), many examination-oriented high schools change version C into what has derisively come to be known as "oral communication G"—a focus on grammar in preparation for college entrance examinations (Yoshida, 2001). As a result many students study English with a "required" or "test" motivation (cf. Okihara, 1991; Tachibana, Matsukawa, & Qu, 1996; Wen, 1997). Unlike the heterogeneous situations that Shohamy describes, the problem with teaching English in Japan, then, is how the ideals envisioned in the government LEP can be implemented in actual teaching practice.

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

Convened in 2000, the Committee to Promote Revision of English Education in Japan presented its recommendations in 2001 (Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science, and Technology, 2001). These recommendations range from curricular considerations to teacher training from elementary school to university level. In particular, the Super English Language High School (SELHi) project introduces content courses taught in English, the use of computer and Internet technology, exchange programs with foreign high schools, and opportunities for international understanding. In addition, it recommended that four task forces be created to (a) research the relationship between the objectives noted in the Course of Study and the actual state of English education, and also examine the possibility of using standardized tests to measure the proficiencies specified in the Course of Study; (b) develop a training program for all junior and senior high school English teachers; (c) specify the level of English proficiency necessary for qualified Japanese teachers of English; and (d) make concrete suggestions for introducing content courses taught in English at the university level.

Most relevant for our discussion is the goal of the first task force: to investigate the gap between the espoused objectives of the government-initiated top-down Course of Study and the actual ways in which English is being taught by determining the extent to which objectives are achieved in terms of teacher teaching practices

and student performance (Can-Do criteria). At the same time, the National Institute of Educational Policy recently administered English tests that reflected rubrics based on the Course of Study to over 10,000 students in junior and senior high schools around the country to see whether the stated objectives are actually being realized.

AFTERWORD

Although current efforts in Japan focus on closing the gap between the espoused objectives of LEP and actual classroom practices, other problems related to LP and LEP must also be addressed. Here a central question is what model of English is to be taught, particularly when over 6,000 so-called Assistant English Teachers (mostly native speakers of English) represent not only native Englishes, but also Western culture as an ideal to be emulated by Japanese learners. Another concern is what other languages are to be learned and used in Japanese society, all the more so as the Course of Study states that the same guidelines apply to all foreign languages. Yet, the nationwide University Entrance Examination Center test includes English, French, German, Chinese, and Korean, but not Spanish or Portuguese, which are spoken by workers from South America, nor does it include other languages taught in high schools across the country. Finally and critically, no LP addresses the maintenance or revitalization of indigenous languages such as Ainu and Okinawan.

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Language Policy and Language Educational Policy from a European Perspective

KEES VAN ESCH, University of Nijmegen
(The Netherlands)

It is much more difficult to write a response to a position paper with which you agree than to one with which you disagree. So let me add a European perspective on language policy (LP) and language educational policy (LEP) to the issues and dilemmas of LP and LEP raised by Shohamy and the other respondents. Specifically, my comments are informed by conversations with Dutch, German, Italian, Spanish, and Swedish participants at a meeting on Learner Autonomy in In-service Teacher Training under the auspices of

the EU initiative Comenius, which took place in early November, 2002. They provided details about LP and LEP in their countries, without which I could not have written this response. I am grateful to them and especially to Adri Elsen, a colleague at the University of Nijmegen, who discussed Shohamy's paper with me and was helpful in formulating this response.

THE NEED FOR PLURALISTIC AND INTERACTIVE LP AND LEP AT DIFFERENT LEVELS IN EUROPE

Shohamy ends her position paper with the question whether LEP is needed at all and advocates a pluralistic LEP with free choices instead of an educational policy imposed on whole populations. Her argument is that languages are "markers of both private and social identity and group membership and not the possession of nations." I fully agree with this position and am convinced that we must take care not to impose LEP on whole populations. I would even extend this position to regions within nations in which majorities impose their official language on minorities who do not have that language as their home language, as is the case for *comunidades* in Spain, such as the Basque Country and Catalonia and, to a minor extent, Galicia, where Spanish-speaking citizens can actually be excluded from jobs and official positions simply because they do not master the same language as people who speak the language that the regional government imposes. Such enforcement of regional governments is just as unfair as the former imposition of Spanish as the official language for the whole of Spain during General Franco's dictatorship. The situation in Franco's days was echoed in Belgium, where French was the only official language until the middle of the 20th century, to the detriment of Flemish. It confirms, as Shohamy has stated in her conclusion, the need for a serious discussion of the complex questions raised by policy-making and for a more interactive and representative way of shaping LEP, not only for national governments but also for regional and local authorities.

Of course, there are also examples of the "better LP and LEP making" proposed by Shohamy. So, according to our German, Swedish, and Dutch partners in the project, in the eastern part of Germany the minority Sorbs are allowed to maintain their language and culture without German being imposed as the official language. The same holds true for Swedish in Finland and

Frisian in Holland, to name two more examples. But in Europe "better LP and LEP making" too often depends on the accidents of policy in a specific country instead of being official LP and LEP of the European Union (EU). As the Treaty of Maastricht (1992) states, "The Union shall respect the national identities of its Member States," but with 11 official languages now and future expansion of the EU by many more states (and, thus, more languages) there is definitely a need for European policies that support pluralism, democracy, and respect for all languages. The situation is at least as complicated as the situation of Israel sketched by Shohamy. According to a Web site on language futures in Europe,¹ there is an emerging division of four dominant positions towards LP in the European Union: (a) the so-called neo-Atlanticists support English as the European language of contact; (b) the defensive national language activists seek a multilingualism of national languages; (c) the regionalists want all languages to get equal status, with hundreds of official languages in Europe; and (d) the technological optimists believe that fully automatic translation will be available soon. These different positions may hinder formulations, decisions, and enactments concerning a common European LP and LEP. Yet, the heterogeneous character of the EU requires LP and LEP as a condition *sine qua non* if the EU is to survive, not only as a common market, but also as a real political and cultural union of nations.

(FOREIGN) LANGUAGE LEARNING AND TEACHING IN THE EU

Related to the former issue is the choice of languages to be learned. With 11 official languages now, and a considerable increase of that number in the near future, Shohamy's question about what languages should be taught, when, for how long, by whom, and for whom points to a deep dilemma. EU data on official languages, language use, and multilingualism indicate a dominance of English. Generally, English is the first foreign language in education in all EU member states (except anglophone ones), and French is almost always the second. English is learned by 26% of non-anglophone primary pupils; French by 4% of non-francophone. In secondary education, the language most taught as a foreign language is English and, overall, 89% of pupils learn English. In Denmark, Germany, Spain, France, Austria, Finland, Sweden,

and the Netherlands, over 90% of all secondary pupils learn English, whereas 32% of pupils learn French, 18% German, and 8% Spanish. In spite of the dominance of English, due to economic, historic, and cultural factors, the EU tries to enhance the learning of all foreign languages (and not only English) by means of the Socrates Actions like *Lingua* (language learning), *Comenius* (teacher education), *Erasmus* (student and docent exchange), and *Grundtvig* (adult education). These Socrates Actions are clear examples of an active and pluralistic LEP that is aimed at maintaining the linguistic and cultural diversity of the EU and at successful communication in the different languages used in the EU. They also show that the situation in the EU is different from that in the United States, where the vast majority of the population speaks English and multilingualism is linked to immigration. In the EU, there is no majority language and the plurality of languages is not the result of immigration. An English-Only movement like that in the United States is not likely to meet with success due to the variety of LPs and LEPs in the EU and the diversity of languages and cultures. Nevertheless, there are those who propagate English as the single global language to be used in Europe.

The final issue I want to touch on, also mentioned by Shohamy, is the position of the home languages of immigrants. As in the United States, there are activist movements and even official LEPs in some European countries that favour abolishing the linguistic and cultural rights of immigrants (e.g., people coming from Turkey and Morocco). Whether these population groups should be able to study the languages and cultures of their homelands is a subject of debate that is similar to initiatives in some states in the United States that reduce the opportunities for Hispanics and other immigrants and submit proposals for a vote with unclear and nonflexible political arguments and without any research. So "research regarding the long-range effects and consequences of policy" is needed before we adopt this and other measures of LP and LEP. I highlight and support that point of Shohamy's position paper.

NOTE

1 Available on the Web at <http://web.inter.nl.net/users/Paul.Treamor/eulang.html#E>

Perspectives from Latin American Intercultural and Bilingual Education

JUAN C. GODENZZI, Department of Literatures and Modern Languages, Université de Montréal

I agree with Elana Shohamy's suggestion that we focus on discussing the complex questions raised by educational policy setting and on formulating specific proposals for reform in particular contexts. In this response paper, in dialogue with the author's critical questions, I will comment on the sociolinguistic context, the conceptual proposals, the political decisions, and the challenges at the intersection of language education policy (LEP) and language learning.

The sociolinguistic context of current LEPs and language learning is no longer the traditional nation-state with the formula of one language per people, one language per person. The world, nation-states, and individuals are more multilingual and more culturally diverse. In many countries, mass migration doubles and triples the number of languages, and individuals often speak several of these. Thus, language diversity is a way of life, not a problem to be solved. People do not have to choose one language instead of living with two or more. As many experts on cultural issues indicate, monolinguals in much of the contemporary world are aware of the handicap of defending a single position when the ability to use two languages multiplies everyone's moves: On this playing field, any player can get wiggle room by occupying more than one position. Do the language policies (LPs) and LEPs adapt to this complex reality and to contemporary trends? Uniform solutions are simple, but they do not respond to the real needs and educational demands of different groups.

Having such a context in mind, we need new ways of thinking that, in Shohamy's words, "would result in proposals for flexible rather than fixed categories." In this sense, I pose a question: Is a LP fatally destined to serve the interests of power or of particular groups? Will it be possible, in the new context of globalization and of growing diversity, to imagine another way of setting linguistic policies? As a matter of fact, the main goal of a linguistic policy is to facilitate the development of the speakers as full human beings, able to express themselves, to interpret the world, and to create meaning and beauty. To allow every speaker to inhabit fully his or her language and relate successfully to others con-

stitutes a fundamental right that every linguistic policy should guarantee. We are dealing here not with an instrumental policy, but a dialogical one.

I propose the category *intensive and extensive communicative needs* as a conceptual framework that can contribute to the design of such a dialogical policy. In the flux of cultural circuits, each person finds or builds the domain within which meaning will be experienced, that is to say, the locus in which he or she will produce and interpret discourses. And that domain can be understood as a site defined by two dimensions: (a) the dimension of *intensity* or internal domain, and (b) that of the *extensity* or external domain. On the other hand, the intensity dimension corresponds to creative energy and to a strong internal cohesion, the extensity dimension corresponds to an unfolding in time and space, to positions and quantities. Thus, the use of the language spoken at home (or predominantly used at home) allows for more intense, internally cohesive communications. On the other hand, if one wants to communicate with others who are culturally distant, one will have to resort to a second or foreign language, as well as to written or tele-matic mediations. The home language wins in intensity; the second or foreign language wins in extensity. Both dimensions, distinct as they are, are not contradictory; they are, on the contrary, constitutive of our diverse, and sometimes opposite, communication needs.

Concerning the *decisions* about language, Shohamy states that LP is a common method for determining access to the state's institutions and that LEP often represents authoritarian ways of making policies, a form of social domination and control. Because such policies are top down one would prefer a more dialogical process. While that is true, perhaps it is more realistic to consider the possibility that conflictive processes can and do allow for negotiation. Tensions and even oppositions between LP and LEP should not be excluded or ignored. Thus, a tacit LP that imposes monolingualism by means of an official language should be balanced by a LEP that favors intercultural and bilingual education, as in my experience in Peru.

Indeed, in the last decades a more pluralistic legislation has surfaced in Latin America, one which shows more respect for indigenous languages. As is well known, some rhetorical declarations are just that, either because there are no laws or norms that can make them operative or because they collide with daily language social practice. It is within this practice that discriminat-

ing and socially exclusive conduct and attitudes continue their reproduction. Nevertheless, it is worth noting that, in some cases, gestures that, at first, seemed merely symbolic open new spaces of negotiation between indigenous organizations and different state sectors.

Going beyond today's political decisions based in authoritarian and arbitrary prescriptions, a linguistic policy can be envisioned based on principles that invite creativity. These creative proposals would build responses in accordance with particular contexts and with the participation of interested parties. In that regard a recent UNESCO document (2002) is quite illuminating. It offers orientations in education policy associated with languages, and formulates three basic principles: (a) support home language instruction as a means of improving educational quality by building upon the knowledge and experience of the learners and teachers; (b) support bilingual or multilingual education at all levels of education as a means of promoting both social and gender equality and as a key element of linguistically diverse societies; (c) support language as an essential component of intercultural education in order to encourage understanding between different population groups and ensure respect for fundamental rights.

In Latin America several forms or proposals for education, captured by terms like *bilingual education*, *bilingual and bicultural education*, *indigenous education*, *ethno-education*, *bilingual intercultural education*, or *multilingual education*, have appeared recently. Indeed, nowadays almost every Latin American country is developing this type of program, with the government, organized social groups, or both functioning as its source. In spite of skepticism and resistance generated by some sectors, bilingual intercultural education is gaining a consistent presence in discourse and within educational practice in Latin America. Even though difficulties cannot be denied, studies also show achievements (Zúñiga, Ansión, & Cueva, 1987; Moya, 1995; López, 1997; López & Küper, 2001). In that tension, today's debate includes two crucial matters that have the capacity of activating and renovating every education endeavor: (a) the importance of language and languages in understanding and producing knowledge; and (b) the intersubjective and intercultural character of all communication and all learning. One of the challenges is to obtain the consolidation of these bilingual Latin American programs, and to improve their quality, thus generating the possibility that the whole education system receives its enriching influence. That

is the target, for example, of the recent languages and cultures in education policy document issued by the Peruvian Ministerio de Educación (2002). Indigenous organizations, bilingual teachers, intellectuals, and state officers were involved in creating this document.

But we face even more general challenges: We need to rethink the sense of LP and LEP in the midst of a multilingual world where diverse types of cultural and communicative circuits are active simultaneously. In such a framework, Shohamy's invitation to language scholars would reach its full force as it asks the hard question: "if LEP, then when, where, how and for whom?" On this foundation, the task of sensitizing public opinion takes shape in order to overcome prejudices and mythologies about language and languages that hinder understanding among societies.

NOTES

¹ The author was formerly responsible for the Indigenous Bilingual Bicultural Education Program in the Ministry of Education, Peru.

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Forthcoming in *Perspectives*

Language Education Policy and U.S. Schools and Universities

Following up on international viewpoints regarding the role of language education policies, the next issue of *Perspectives*, in *MLJ* 87,4, considers policy influence on language study in schools and universities within the United States.

June Phillips (Weber State University), with experience in a number of major initiatives pertaining to language study, provides initial considerations. Her respondents bring expertise, from the K–12 and postsecondary contexts, on heritage languages and the United States as a multilingual society, on teacher education and certification, and on the role of publishing houses.

They are Thalia Dorvick (McGraw-Hill Higher Education), David Maxwell (Drake University), Mary McGroarty (Northern Arizona University), Mimi Met (National Foreign Language Center), Ana Roca (Florida International University), and Hélène Zimmer-Loew (AATG).

The *MLJ* invites your comments on all issues presented in *Perspectives*.
