

Advances in Interdisciplinary Language Policy
François Grin, László MarácZ and Nike K. Pokorn (eds) (2022)

Amsterdam and Philadelphia: John Benjamins. Pp. 570
ISBN: 9789027210159 (hbk)
ISBN: 9789027258274 (eBook)

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In the decades since Language Planning and Policy (LPP) first emerged as a distinct academic specialisation, prominent authors in the field have often cautioned against the tendency to approach it from an overly ‘linguacentric’ position. All too regularly, scholars have placed too much focus on issues related to language per se and too little on the wider social, political, and economic factors which determine the form policies take (Spolsky, 2004; Edwards, 2007). While recent years have seen some important developments correcting this tendency – endeavouring, for instance, to integrate political economic perspectives (e.g., Ricento, 2015; Ginsburgh and Weber, 2016) or ethnographic methods (McCarty, 2011) into the field – *Advances in Interdisciplinary Language Policy* is maybe the most comprehensive attempt to date at applying a wide variety of academic approaches to LPP. Edited by François Grin, László MarácZ, and Nike K. Pokorn, this volume emerged from the European Commission-funded project, Mobility and Inclusion in Multilingual Europe (MIME). It details many of the key findings of four years’ worth of work by 25 research teams spread across a dozen academic disciplines and 16 countries throughout Europe, and most certainly marks an advance in how language policy is approached.

The work takes as its starting point the central observation that the European community faces a trade-off between two important but contradictory goals which are being pursued simultaneously: mobility and inclusion – whereby increasing levels of mobility across national boundaries amongst European

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citizens can threaten the cultural and linguistic diversity of the continent's regions. This trade-off model is a valuable approach with clear roots in project leader Grin's background as an economist. It clarifies a dynamic often seen in public policy making, albeit one which has not always been clearly understood by those involved in LPP.

The seven parts of the book are comprised of 26 chapters, each of which uses this trade-off principle as a starting point for thinking through aspects of the linguistic challenges facing Europe. Commendably, each chapter is structured to make its contents accessible to those approaching the topic from different disciplinary backgrounds and who may thus be unfamiliar with some of the ideas employed. Key concepts and discipline-specific methodological approaches are therefore explained towards the beginning of each chapter. While the authors have previously published many of their findings in a great number of different fora, including the *MIME Vademecum*, which summarised their work in an easily digestible format aimed specifically at policy makers (Grin and Cavin, 2018), it is nonetheless most welcome to see their material collected here and presented in its full context, with much of it pushing the boundaries of the discipline in innovative directions.

Part 1 of the book, 'Setting the Scene', consists of two chapters. The first, a general introduction by the editors, explains the origins and goals of the *MIME* project and introduces the trade-off model at the core of its analysis, as well as highlighting the unique place this volume holds in the literature by virtue of its highly interdisciplinary nature. In the second chapter, Grin continues the discussion of many of the topics addressed in the introduction, applying a policy analysis lens and presenting the notion of complexity as a key factor that studies of LPP must consider.

The second part of the book looks at the most explicitly political dimensions of the work conducted by the *MIME* researchers. In Chapter 3, von Busekist examines case studies of a number of quasi-federated states and proposes the creation of a 'linguistic passport' which details a migrant's language competencies based on the Common European Framework of Reference. It is suggested that such a document would offer a way to deal with the non-convergence of mobility and inclusion. Chapter 4 compares the status of minority and migrant languages in Europe, with authors Houtkamp and Marác arguing for an increased provision of language rights for migrant languages based on the personality principle. In the final chapter of the section, Dobos, Nagy, and Vizi take the multilingual region of Vojvodina in Serbia as a case study to analyse the effects of European integration on minority policies.

The following three chapters which comprise Part 3 approach issues of language policy, mobility, and inclusion from a more sociological perspective. Janssens' contribution in Chapter 6 takes Brussels as a case study of a highly multilingual site in which various language networks strive to negotiate issues of migration and integration, and the authors offer some suggestions for increasing inclusion in such a society. In Chapter 7, Kraus and Frank use Barcelona and Riga as examples to explore the notion of 'complex diversity', examining how different policy responses in each city to the dynamics of Europeanisation and transnationalisation create different identity frameworks for citizens. Part 3 concludes with one further discussion of urban multilingualism, although Mamadouh and El Ayadi take a more geographically informed approach here to investigate notions of public space, language, and belonging.

Part 4 moves the discussion to how the multilingual challenge can be addressed in educational contexts. Iannàccaro, Dell'Aquila, and Stria's discussion of the 'linguistic unease' that can be experienced in the classroom by children from multilingual backgrounds makes some valuable suggestions for how teachers can be best prepared to support such children without seeing multilingualism as a burden. The following chapter by Fettes asks how a more just balance can be achieved between mobility and inclusion in terms of LPP in schools by focusing on the community and municipal levels. In Chapter 11, Conceição and Caruso argue that, while facilitating mobility, the internationalisation of third-level institutions across Europe is also increasing the use of English and thus failing to promote adequate levels of inclusion.

The fifth part of the book is titled 'Mediation', with the focus on how language barriers can be negotiated by migrants. In Chapter 12, Ayvazyan and Pym present data based on interviews with Russian immigrants to the province of Tarragona, Spain, reporting that 53% of them said they had experienced a feeling of being excluded because of language or culture. Notably, this typically prompted interviewees to learn Spanish, rather than Catalan, despite Catalan being actively promoted in the area. Chapter 13 deals with the topic of community interpreting. Authors Pokorn and Čibej document the uneasy feeling that many migrants have about the use of interpreters, with fears of inaccuracy and its impingement of their autonomy looming large in the discussion, despite interpretation being necessary in the early stages of migration, particularly in high-risk situations. Following this, Fiedler and Brosch echo Chapter 11's discussion of the use of English in higher education by examining language learning among Erasmus students, showing that all too often exchange students spend their time with other foreign students and make little progress in the local

language, despite having seen language learning as an important incentive for studying abroad. Intercomprehension as a mediation strategy is discussed by Fiorentino and Meulleman in Chapter 15, with particular reference to Italian adoptive parents using intercomprehension as a transitional strategy to facilitate the inclusion of their Spanish-speaking children.

The following section on policy opens with a chapter by Templin, Wickström, and Gazzola, who offer a novel exposition of the trade-off model, examining how different policies regarding status and acquisition planning result in different levels of inclusion and mobility and how such policies affect language dynamics in different types of communities over time. Morales-Gálvez, De Schutter, and Stojanović follow this with an important discussion of the territoriality principle in language policy, clearing up many of the misunderstandings that often surround it. Chapter 18 gives a perspective from moral philosophy – something still relatively rare in discussions of LPP – with Carey and Shorten looking at the ethical principles behind linguistic justice and arguing that following such principles often demands a multilingual language policy regime. Civico introduces ‘agent-based modelling’ in the following chapter, describing its suitability for analysing the complexity that characterises many multilingual contexts. In Chapter 20, Dunbar and McKelvey provide a comprehensive discussion of the legal regulation of mobility, which often includes stipulations on language. The authors note that while such stipulations can sometimes be harmful to inclusion, international human rights principles regarding non-discrimination, equal protection under the law, and proportionality present a basis for ensuring the provision of language teaching and mother-tongue education for the children of migrants.

The final part of the book, titled ‘Frontiers of multilingualism’, addresses various other innovative aspects of multilingualism that the MIME researchers examined. Chapter 21 offers an analysis of the security implications of the management of multilingualism in former USSR states. While authors Ozoliņa and Bambals focus on Russian speakers in Latvia, the war in Ukraine has, of course, given this topic a greatly increased salience. Consumer protection by means of translation is the focus of Kaddous and Marcus’ chapter (22), which notes that current legislation on this matter differs greatly from field to field. The authors recommend a more active approach to using EU consumer legislation to promote multilingualism and foster mobility and inclusion. Chapter 23 provides a unique exploration of Roma strategies for group language learning, with author Pop suggesting that the Roma approach, with its focus on fun, willingness to learn from everyone, and to practice at every opportunity is an example that could be of much benefit in other multilingual contexts. In Chapter 24, the

case of Scandinavian retirees in Spain is inspected by Gustafson and Cardozo. The authors note that such migrants rarely learn Spanish or attempt to integrate into the local community and examine the strategies they adopt for negotiating life in Spain, including relying on peer-support networks or local Scandinavian associations. Chapter 25 adds a very important contribution to the literature on the advantages of multilingualism, as Fürst and Grin demonstrate a robust statistical relationship between multilingualism and creativity, which in turn is a key driver of prosperity. The book concludes with a chapter by Dembinski, Rudaz, Soissons, and Chesney, who use data from the financial sector to demonstrate that the use of Global English can affect the way in which non-native English speakers view ethical dilemmas in internationalised workplaces.

This, then, is clearly a very impressive work and one which will be a benchmark against which future attempts to address issues of LPP in an interdisciplinary matter will inevitably be measured. It could readily be used as a textbook for university courses which examine language policy in the context of globalisation and population movement. A key strength of the volume is its presenting of LPP research in relation to a major challenge facing Europe in the early 21st century: the tension between population mobility and integration. Such eminently practical discussions have been attempted all too rarely in the literature published to date. Having this variety of cutting-edge material compiled in one volume is a tremendous boon for not just researchers or those teaching LPP or related subjects but also for those at the coal face who must make policy decisions about how we balance the costs and opportunities associated with mobility, inclusion, and multilingualism in an era of increased migration.

One deficit of the text is perhaps the omission of a concluding chapter synthesising the material presented and suggesting directions for future research that builds on the trade-off approach to language policy. This, however, is a minor quibble, as the reader will surely have no shortage of ideas prompted by their own reading of the text. As this is a work on mobility and inclusion, it is also notable that the refugee crisis which took place during the height of the MIME research period receives little direct mention in the book – perhaps as the project placed much of its emphasis on European citizens. In an era of worsening ecological breakdown which affects those in the Global South disproportionately, as well as increased geopolitical instability and the militarisation of borders on many fronts, this emphasis on citizenship will surely have to be rethought and problematised by future works of a similar vein. There is also little explicit acknowledgement of the degree to which the non-convergence of mobility and inclusion, when combined with economic stagnation and austerity, can prompt populations to favour the sort of nativist and fascist politics that have become all

too prominent throughout Europe since the 2008 economic crash. This is surely a major challenge facing all who are committed to values such as cultural pluralism, freedom of movement and respect for minoritised groups.

Nonetheless, *Advances in Interdisciplinary Language Policy* has enormous strengths which provide an important foundation for future research and the next wave of advances in all matters of LPP. It exemplifies what can be achieved through adopting an interdisciplinary approach with an integrated analytical framework and solidifies the legacy of the trailblazing MIME project. A valuable contribution.

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(Received and accepted 9th January 2023)