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## **Language policy and planning, institutions and neoliberalisation**

Eva Codó

### **Introduction**

As a form of socio-political action, language policy and planning (henceforth LPP) is intimately linked to the historically-situated understanding of the interests, aspirations and values of a polity. Traditionally, national states have been key players in the design and implementation of language policy measures. Today the role of the state in LPP is more nuanced than previously. On the one hand, new agenda-setting political actors have emerged, such as supranational agencies, like the Council of Europe (Sokolovska, 2016), and non-profit international organisations (Muelhmann & Duchêne, 2007). On the other hand, as of the 1980s the relationship between the state and the economic sector has been altered profoundly. The establishment of neoliberalism as a hegemonic political, economic and moral orthodoxy worldwide, with its emphasis on efficiency, deregulation and the lowering of public expenditure, has spurred the partial retreat of the state from key social fields, such as education, social services and healthcare. As Harvey (2005) argues, (state) government has turned into (social) governance, where civil society organisations and private companies have taken on increasingly socially regulatory roles in lieu of or together with the state. This generates myriad tensions for partner organisations, tensions that materialise in (often contradictory) language policies, practices and legitimising discourses (see Block this volume).

Practices of institutional neoliberalisation cannot be delinked from globalisation processes; in fact, they are co-constitutive. Following Harvey (2005) I understand globalisation not only as the intensification of the circulation of capitals, people and semiotic practices around the globe, but as a new mode of production predicated on the volatility of markets in rapidly evolving technological environments and on the flexibilisation of labour. Indeed, flexibilisation is the buzzword of neoliberal globalisation, and the condition and the outcome of neoliberal policy.

The institutional and economic transformations mentioned above are possible because neoliberalism is only just a mode of political-economic action or thought, but an ethos, where the market is seen as the guiding principle for all human actions (Harvey 2005). Individual subjectivities are corporatised, turned into Foucault's (2008) enterprising selves, where knowledge is reconceptualised as human capital (Holborow, 2012). Individuals are imagined as bundles of skills (which crucially include soft skills like language or communication), which are measurable and improvable (Urcioui, 2008). These processes bring new dynamics to institutions, whether public, private or non-governmental, to which issues of LPP are essential to their everyday functioning but also to the accomplishment of their evolving social mission. Yet little attention has traditionally been played in the field of LPP to issues of political economy (Ricento, 2015), thus often producing naïve accounts of the role of language in relation to the promotion of social justice.

As can be seen from the above, I understand language policy and practice not as separate analytical levels but as one complex whole (Spolsky, 2004). Policy is practiced (Bonacina-Pugh, 2012) and language practices enact *de facto* or declared policy. Policy and practice stand in a dialectical relationship to each other. My perspective also draws on Tollefson's (2006) defence of the political –in the sense of ideological and power-laden– nature of language policy in the reproduction of social inequality and on Ricento's (2015 and

this volume) need to comprehend language policy within broader processes of socio-political and cultural transformation. To investigate LLP in neoliberalising institutional spaces, it is thus necessary to understand its entanglement with emergent socioeconomic, political and moral orders, as well as to investigate the conditions, constraints and possibilities of language policy in specific institutional locales.

Institutions<sup>1</sup> are, by definition, sites of social struggle where actors have conflicting goals and distributed access to knowledge and power (Cicourel, 1980). They are structures of social selection based on linguistic performance. They process and sort individuals as a way of regulating access to scarce material and symbolic resources. Institutions are not neutral sites, but socio-institutional regimes which are deeply ideological in that they “‘iron out’ the contradictions, dilemmas and antagonisms of practices in ways which accord to the interests and projects of domination” (Chouliaraki & Fairclough, 1999, p. 26). Thus, as (interested) spaces of control and selection, institutions sustain and reproduce structures of power, though in ways which appear open, meritocratic or simply commonsensical. In times of change, such as the present neoliberal epoch, institutions –if they are to survive– must cope with the tensions stemming from the need to redefine their social mission and values. Codó and Pérez-Milans (2014) have argued that this is, essentially, a discursive process, which affects LPP, language performance and assessment, and social and moral categorisation.

This chapter maps out the empirical research conducted on language policy and practice in neoliberalising institutional spaces. The goal is not to be comprehensive, but to point readers towards key terrains, concepts and authors. For organisational purposes, I have divided this chapter into three main types of institutional spaces which allow me to delve into the multi-layered, interlocking transformations of language policies and practices; individual subjectivities; institutional regimes; and political economy in contemporary institutions. The three fields presented are the workplace, education and civil society organisations. In the first

section, I will review studies that have investigated changing language policies and practices in relation to labour processes in the neoliberalised work environments of late modernity. In the second section, I will refer to the ways in which the neoliberalisation of education has impacted on and been effected through language policies in that domain. In the third section, I will discuss research which has addressed the study of language policy in non-governmental organisations providing services outsourced by the state. The chapter will conclude with a succinct discussion of possible avenues for further investigation on LPP, institutions and neoliberalisation.

### **Language policy in the neoliberalising workplace**

LPP has not just become central to contemporary economic and labour processes, but constitutes a “privileged window into the workings of late capitalism, and a terrain on which we can see its tensions being worked out” (Heller & Duchêne, 2012, p. 14). Through the co-constitutive discursive tropes of “pride” and “profit”, these authors show the multiple tensions emerging from the inscription of language, traditionally linked to national identity and the reproduction of the community, into the logics of the market, driven by considerations of flexibility, efficiency and revenue.

One of the distinctive features of language in the new economy is that it has become a primary mode of production (Allan, 2013). In a number of contemporary workplaces, like call centres, translation agencies or language teaching, language work constitutes the essence of the job. This entails and hinges on a “managerial conception of language” which “exploits all of a person’s competencies” (Boutet, 2012, p. 223). As language is equated with productivity and outcomes, it is objectified, turned into a skill, regimented, regulated and monitored (Cameron, 2000). Linguistic performances are “marketable commodities rather than as

expressions of true selves or of relatively good or poor accomplishments of socially located personae” (Heller, 2010, p. 103).

The commodification of language, that is, the process by which “language comes to be valued and sought for the economic profit it can bring through exchange in the market” (Park & Wee 2012, p. 125), is but one facet of the generalised commodification of the self in contemporary workplaces. Urciouli describes how worker subjectivities are conceptualised as segmented selves that are then “recast as assemblages of productive elements” (2008, p. 224), subject to quantification and in need of constant improvement. Emphasis is placed on soft rather than on hard skills, that is, on relational and communicative abilities. Soft skill discourse promises professional success through self-transformation; this is because soft skills work as Foucauldian technologies of self, in other words, they claim to “empower” workers by shaping their personalities to modes of conduct and attribute needed for the workplace (Urciouli & LaDousa, 2013).

In a case study of ELT programmes for migrants in Canada, Allan (2013) described how those programmes aimed to produce flexible workers for the Canadian knowledge-based economy. She showed how the institution had a clear neoliberalising agenda construed as “professional language training”. Migrant underemployment was ideologically viewed not as a structural problem but as stemming from migrants’ lack of appropriate skills. Because the problem was individualised, the ELT programme became fertile ground for neoliberal governance. Not only was language teaching imagined as the teaching of soft skills, but migrants were advised to adopt an entrepreneurial stance, self-marketise, and self-imagine as “tasks” in constant need of reflexive self-improvement if they wanted to find a job. Allan observed how this “standardisation” of the self had to be reconciled with employers’ search for individualised authenticity, predicated on the workers’ identification with corporate values, which, significantly, were often conflated with general Canadian values.

Similar practices have been observed by Campbell and Roberts (2007) in job selection processes in the UK. The work interview has evolved significantly in recent decades in line with the neoliberal transformation of labour environments and shifts in the desired attributes of the workforce. In many industrialised societies, the competency- or skill-based interview is the current institutionalised regime for selecting new employees, even for non-qualified posts. The contemporary job interview requires the blending in synthetic ways of various discursive modes: a formal and an informal register; personal and impersonal talk; situated story-telling and abstract, analytical reasoning, etc. The highly complex linguistic capitals that must be mobilised in order to perform successfully, i.e., display a credible individualised self which is aligned with corporate cultures, are not available to all candidates, in particular, those from migrant or ethnic minority backgrounds.

Despite the communicative arduousness of the situation, this type of interview is seen as a transparent way of evaluating candidate skills, and the interview itself is presented as a fair and equitable procedure. The key role of language is underestimated or simply overlooked. As a result, qualified foreign-born candidates underperform, even for low-skilled positions. As Robert states (2013, p. 92), “candidates may well be competent for the job but they are excluded from it because they are not competent for the interview.” It seems clear, then, that implicit institutional language policies that require successful candidates to activate a complex bundle of linguistic and identity features in performing relatable neoliberal selves (Allan, 2013) work to reinforce pre-existing socio-discursive inequalities.

As we have seen, contemporary labour is linguistic, and language *is* contemporary labour. One of the most visible language policy trends in neoliberalising workspaces is the taylorisation of language work, typical of certain language industries such as call centres (Boutet, 2012). Scripted ways of performing (including register, tone of voice, vocal qualities, prosody contours and the use of various strategies linked to the inscription of emotions in the

process of creating closeness and trust in service interaction) are established beforehand independently of the worker, their language trajectories, emotional states, or the course of the exchange (Cameron, 2000). Standardisation requires regular monitoring and sanctioning, as well as the sanitisation of speech, especially (though not exclusively) in the case of bilingual or multilingual workers. These industries' language policies, with strong modernist ideologies of language, strive to erase all forms of linguistic variability, and impose stylised and formatted identities on workers. This has highly alienating effects, as they may be required to pass as native speakers of several languages in the same day or feign identities alien to them, as in the case of Indian call centre employees (Morgan & Ramanathan, 2009). Yet, as Urciouli (2008) points out, not all employees are equally non-agentive linguistically, which questions the flat-hierarchy models saturating the neoliberal imagination of workplaces. In fact, agency is structured, as managerial staff is, on the one hand, less constrained to use language than frontline workers, and on the other, responsible themselves for the formulation of the language policies that those in the lower end of the work hierarchy will enact.

Another observable trend runs counter to the hygienising, standardising drive discussed above. In this case, linguistic diversity is not to be erased, but embraced. Multilingualism is tied to efficiency and productivity, with its adjoining consequences in terms of the reproduction of social inequalities. The diversification of languages, or multilingualisation of institutional spaces, become strategies of localisation or market expansion (Duchêne, 2009; Heller, 2010). Rather than considering multilingual abilities as commodities *per se* with assumed value in the neoliberal market, these analysts inquire into the ways in which language policies are inscribed into business strategies, with what effects and for whom.

Duchêne (2009), for example, investigated the value of multilingualism in a Swiss tourist call centre. He concluded that the understanding of institutional language policies



should be framed within organisational goals on the one hand, i.e., the selling of Switzerland as a multilingual country, and within managerial interests on the other, i.e., enhancing productivity and efficiency. For example, it was observed that accentedness was accepted, contrary to habitual practices in the call centre industries. This acceptance was linked to the need to display “authenticity” by call centre operators as both knowledgeable interlocutors and local speakers, and it was only desirable because it was economically profitable for the institution.

A further study by the same author (Duchêne, 2011) revealed the structured value of multilingualism and the resulting socioeconomic inequalities in a Swiss airport. Again, he observed how this institution’s language policy was inscribed into managerial considerations of flexibility and efficiency; but while multilingualism was a valuable means for the company to deliver effective services, the workers themselves, all low-qualified and occupying precarious job positions, never took advantage of their commodified multilingualism. The “neoliberalism of linguistic diversity”, in Duchêne’s words (2011, p. 82), compels us to investigate the intersecting economic and material constraints operating on the valorisation of multilingualism for individual workers.

All the case studies that have been reviewed in this section have pointed towards a profound transformation of the link between language, labour and identity. Institutional language policies in the neoliberalising workplace are both instruments and outcomes of such transformations, which of course do not begin or end in the workplace. The inculcation of neoliberal values through a utilitarian ideology of knowledge pervades most educational systems in the world. These are the spaces to which I will now turn.

### **The neoliberalisation of education and language policy**

The field of education, a key state instrument (together with the media), responsible for the ideological moulding of future generations, has been turned upside down through the implementation of neoliberal policies (Gray & Block, 2012). The neoliberalisation of education has affected the organisation of school systems worldwide, as well as the objectives and contents of education. Hirtt (2009) upholds that the goal of democratising access to education that was prevalent in Western democracies after World War II has been replaced by the goal of aligning the school system with the needs of the economic sector (“massification” to “marketisation”). The main objective of national educational systems is no longer the creation of national citizens but of productive workers who can enhance the global competitiveness of the national economy.

Deregulation and decentralisation have been the driving forces behind most contemporary reforms in educational organisation, since decentralised systems are better able to adapt to the changing demands of the industrial and financial sectors. Interestingly, organisational decentralisation has run parallel to increased governmental regulation of outcomes and objectives, and the implementation of strict measures of institutional accountability – the “audit culture” that Urciouli (2008) refers to. In a case study of two teacher-training programmes in the UK, Gray and Block (2012) showed how both teaching and teacher training have increasingly become product-oriented, subject to greater quality control and accountability requirements. Indeed, in the two courses examined, the emphasis was placed on “effective” curriculum delivery and “best” practice. This, they claim, has the effect of “sanitising” education (Hill & Kumar, 2009) providing fertile ground for the consolidation of neoliberal ideals. Teaching was constructed as the inculcation of instrumental skills and knowledge, stripped of opportunities for self-reflection and self-transformation.

The state’s neoliberalising agenda and the growing influence of the business sector on defining the school curricula have had an impact on school contents. A utilitarian view of

education has caused the dismissal of “general culture” in favour of a technicist and acritical curriculum (Hill & Kumar, 2009) that favours professional, social and “transversal” skills (Hirrt, 2009) and lifelong learning. This technicist drive is most clearly reflected in the ascendance of certain school disciplines, like English and ICT. LoBianco (2014) explains how English and ICT are disappearing as separate disciplines in the primary school curricula, and have instead entered the set of basic skills all kids should acquire. For Giroux (2009), the medium and long-term effects of these transformations will be the widening of social inequalities (both among and within states), as the majority of pupils in schools will be trained for the service economy, which requires soft, relational skills, and only a (white) minority will acquire the knowledge necessary for highly skilled positions.

Another facet of the neoliberal marketisation of education is that it is increasingly seen as a profitable business; the attractiveness of private education is enhanced by the streamlining of budgets and the reduction of state expenditure on the public school system. The end-result of this process, grounded on competition, selection and exclusion, is the loss of equity (Hill & Kumar, 2009). Yet, what makes it particularly difficult to expose is that it is clad in the discourse of “choice” (of parents, students and schools). For example, in a study in Cambodia, Clayton (2008) historicised English language education policies and linked their evolution to the workings of international aid agencies and NGOs in the country. Despite the rhetoric of choice, the country’s adoption of English as main foreign language was, in fact, always highly constrained. It was shaped by hegemonic discourses linking the language to externally oriented modes of development, which in turn hinged on the constitution of an enabling state and the implementation of “open market” policies. On the individual level, Clayton showed how “choice” was unequally distributed and was actually employed to mask privileged social and class positions.

This case study takes me to one of the most influential lines of research in language policy in the educational field, namely that of the intensification of the demand for English worldwide. As the “ultimate commodified linguistic resource in the global market” (Park & Wee, 2012, p. 124), English is often constructed as both the arm of neoliberalism and the signal of its effects. Phillipson’s linguistic imperialism (1992, 2009) is a classic in this field, but there is also research on less well-known aspects of the mutual implication of English and neoliberalism, such as the ways in which Anglo-American transnational corporations influence TESOL curricula and materials. As an example, Gray (2012) analysed the featuring of celebrities in English language textbooks, and on the meanings and values that are transmitted by texts and activities, both in relation to the English language and with regard to desirable identity-types. In Gray’s study, the ideal emergent subjectivity was that of the neoliberal enterprising self, self-marketed and self-branded, who presents himself/herself as an active shaper of his/her own fate through self-determination and a positive frame of mind.

The “craze” for English language education is particularly visible in Expanding Circle countries, most notably Europe and Asia (see Park, 2009, for an in-depth analysis of the South Korean case) and has translated into various forms of bilingual, multilingual or simply English-medium education (EMI).

From a language policy-making perspective, research on English language education worldwide has tended to focus on macro-level state policies, the factors contributing to their formulation, their social reception and the problems envisaged in their implementation. Another approach has been to focus on the actual policy texts, their educational objectives, framing pedagogical principles and grounding linguistic ideologies (e.g., Pan, 2011) with a view to critiquing their social effects in the (re)production of class, gender and ethnicity-based inequalities (see Tollefson, 2006). Pennycook (2006) criticises the frequently expressed view that power is unidirectionally exerted by the state through language policy, and instead places

the focus on the micro-level of classroom language use that, for him, is the true locus of governance. In that sense, Johnson (2009) defends the need for ethnographies of language policy as a way of establishing the connection between macro-level language policies and the interpretation and implementation of those policies on the ground. In the case of English language policies and practices in specific national, regional and local contexts, such ethnographies are fairly rare.

One exception is the ethnographic study by Pérez-Milans (2013) of English language education in three Chinese “experimental schools”. The author investigated how a programme of neoliberally inspired reforms, linked to discursive tropes of academic excellence, meritocracy and competition, was carried through in Chinese schools in order to modernise and improve the quality of the educational system. Organisational decentralisation and flexibilisation coexisted with state-defined goals and curricular contents, and frequent standardised controls in the form of school evaluations and student exams. In that context, the importance attached to English language education became an emblem of the efforts made by the Chinese state to equip its citizens, and the national economy more generally, with the skills needed to compete in an internationalised global market.

English in Chinese schools was construed as a “technical” skill stripped of any links to the values of (Western) liberal democracies, and was imbued with what were discursively represented as “Chinese characteristics”. In the case of English pedagogies, this translated into a “specifically Chinese way of teaching English” (p. 147), which combined the acquisition of English-specific skills and knowledge with the internalisation of the values of cooperation, motivation and patriotism, featured as core Chinese values and discursively constructed as distinctive of the on-going innovation reforms. Teaching practices on the ground, such as abundant stylised choral repetitions in the English language classes, reflected and constructed institutional objectives and national policy agendas, and as the author claims,

were “linked to sociocultural meanings that have a wider significance, beyond the classroom context” (p. 156).

In Europe, English-medium programmes are generally known as CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Learning), for many analysts a European development of CBL (Content-Based Learning). The official CLIL rhetoric (European Commission, 2014) is yet fairly distinctive, and emphasises the fostering of key European values like social cohesion, democratic citizenship and intercultural dialogue through CLIL.

Most CLIL research has been acritical, embracing the inherent goodness of this approach, and centring on assessing its effectiveness for raising students’ proficiency levels (see Cenoz, Genessee and Gorter, 2013, for an overview of existing studies and research gaps in the field). Few situated investigations have been conducted which explore the social inequalities engendered by CLIL programmes within and beyond the boundaries of schools. One exception is the research undertaken in a secondary school in Madrid (Martín Rojo, 2013; Pérez-Milans & Patiño-Santos, 2014). These studies showed that despite official emphasis on democratic values and social cohesion, the implementation of a Spanish-English bilingual programme created hierarchies among teachers, students, and the other existing language programme in the school, aimed to provide intensive Spanish training for migrant teenagers. The linguistic prerequisites to access the programme (a set level of English but also of Spanish, which excluded English-competent migrants) enforced a language-based student selection, which coupled with broader social ideologies of English as linked to excellence and internationalisation, constructed the programme as elitist and the students as “academic/good”.

Yet, in Relaño-Pastor (2015), based on data from the same school, we see how students resisted these ascribed identities, and foregrounded their working-class or middle-class affiliations. This study sheds light on the many contradictions that *practiced* language

policy (Bonacina-Pugh, 2012) entails, among which are the discursive tensions between European policy texts and the views of socially-situated stakeholders, who in that case held neoliberal ideas of English as commodity and added value. This investigation also questions globalist ideologies of English, and underlines the need to understand learning English as tied to local ways of “doing learning English” and their affective histories. In the case of the school investigated, this meant not only engaging in fluid Spanish/English bilingualism, but also speaking English with a Spanish accent for social inclusion.

The association of English with the neoliberal agenda has spurred discourses that often fairly uncritically advocate for multilingualism to be put at the centre of a more democratic and inclusive language policy. However, Flores (2013) cautions against such naive and celebratory views of multilingualism, and in particular of individual multilingualism, often referred to as plurilingualism. He claims that the idea of the plurilingual subject, as defined in many European policy documents (i.e., as somebody who can unproblematically employ several languages in the same conversation), aligns it with the dynamic and flexible neoliberal worker who is able to navigate cultural differences in heterogeneous work environments. Flores warns against the inequalities built in this policy ideal that may actually work to benefit mobile plurilingual elites to the detriment of other (less mobile) social groups.

This section has outlined some of the effects of the neoliberalisation of education on language policy at primary and secondary school levels, but these effects are perhaps most visible at tertiary education, where a great deal of research on language policy and neoliberalisation has been conducted. This is the focus of the next section.

### **Markets of higher education, internationalisation and English**

University education has become a major global industry (Lee & Lee, 2013) shaped by competition and neoliberally informed notions of educational quality, productivity and efficiency. University credentials have become commodities with different value in the global and national markets. Students' increasingly make educational choices that take into account the return value of their financial and personal investments in the labour market. The popularisation of often mass-mediated university rankings in the last two decades has corporatised and uniformised the higher education scene. Though often labelled "internationalisation", this process has been characterised as the wholesale acceptance of the US model of academic capitalism (Piller & Cho, 2013).

Universities increasingly adopt policies and practices that equip them to compete globally for top students, renowned scholars, and private and public funding to become "world-class research universities" (Piller & Cho, 2013). National governments have also been adept at enforcing implicit language policies through assessment procedures based on a set of ideologically defined criteria (see Hu, Li & Lei, 2014, for the case of China). One such criterion is the number of courses taught through the medium of English. English-medium instruction (EMI) is an indicator of a university's degree of internationalisation, in turn a measurement of educational quality. Together, these three concepts, i.e., English, internationalisation and excellence, form a pervasive indexical cluster (Lee & Lee, 2013). Universities have implemented EMI policies to enhance their own profile –through the indexical meanings associated with internationalisation– and that of their graduates –where English proficiency indexes greater social mobility and better career prospects, both at home and abroad. National economies benefit from an English-proficient workforce by becoming more competitive globally.

Hu, Li and Lei (2014) discuss the exclusion mechanisms behind the ways such language policies have been implemented on the ground. In the Chinese context studied by



the authors, EMI constituted an elite form of education, given student eligibility requirements (in terms of language proficiency and higher tuition fees). Inequalities also surfaced among faculty and staff both through the teaching eligibility criteria set and the system of material and symbolic incentives/rewards put in place. EMI language policy, thus, (re)produced social structures of inequality and strengthened the desirability of English. Piller and Cho (2013) argue that neoliberalism, through its rejection of any kind of regulation –including language policy– works as a covert language policy imposing English while at the same time disguising its workings. EMI is the product of structures of competition, presenting the ascendance of English as cost-free and the result of the free market or individual determination.

Research is the other university domain where an English-only implicit language policy is being enforced. The use of English is not only linked to excellence in research output, but also to corporate notions of productivity and efficiency. These are increasingly being measured through the number of internationally indexed publications (IJJ), which are almost exclusively in English and mostly actually published in Anglophone countries (Piller & Cho, 2013). Research has focused on the role of institutional policies (e.g., for hiring, tenuring, promoting and remunerating academic staff) in covertly extending the (almost exclusive) use of English as language of academic scholarship (Curry & Lillis, 2013; Piller & Cho, 2013). Lee and Lee (2013) investigated the neoliberal ideologies behind publishing policies in a Korean university. Producing English-language academic outputs was normalised as superior but equally accessible to everyone. Thus, publishing in IJJ was seen as a matter of individual talent or will, erasing structural and material constraints, as well as the pressure that this implicit language policy imposed on academics. The authors showed how ideologies of self-improvement as the path to self-satisfaction and international recognition underlie Korean professors' publishing choices.

So far, it has become evident that language policy in neoliberalised institutions cannot be detached from the establishment of subjectivity regimes grounded on individual self-governance and self-responsibilisation. The inculcation of desirable personality traits for inclusion and citizenship is no longer in the hands of states only, but actually effected by a variety of civil society institutions, to which I now turn.

### **Language, the state and civil society under neoliberalism**

The study of LPP in civil society organisations helps to understand the transformation of the role of the state in the regulation of the social body at this historical juncture. As discussed previously, one of the effects of neoliberalisation has been the destabilisation (not disappearance) of the nation-state as *the* ideological frame of reference. This affects various levels of social governing, including the policing of legitimate languages, cultures and identities. The state now interacts and in fact actually colludes with increasingly influential producers of discourses on language, such as international non-governmental organisations (NGOs) (Muelhmann & Duchêne, 2007). Indeed, these various organisations have become major actors in the production and circulation of discourses on language diversity. The concept of human rights has framed most discursive production in this field, clad in a universalizing, egalitarian rhetoric which has however never questioned the ideological framing of the nation-state (i.e. the idea of homogeneous social groups) or the dominant status of national languages. This research line points towards the importance of NGOs as new sites of linguistic regulation, where valuable resources, like certain languages, language varieties or social identities, get (de)legitimised, visibilised or ideologically erased.

A different line of LPP research in this social field analyses the role of civil society and non-profit organisations in the neoliberal governance of populations and investigates the

kinds of language policies that are legitimised in service provision practices. Some sociolinguists have applied the Foucauldian notion of *governmentality* (Foucault, 1991) to describe the ways in which non-profit associations, often run by volunteers, actually partake in the regulation of peripheral social groups, like migrants, on behalf of the state. This is because in the post-social state migrant-oriented welfare provision (including language education) has been largely downscaled to the non-governmental sector, partly to reduce costs and partly to mask the state's (economic) investment in certain groups. Research in this area has shown that NGOs implement the state's ideological agenda. Codó and Garrido (2010), for example, compared the institutional policies and practices regarding language and multilingualism in two migrant services in Barcelona, more specifically a state immigration office and a free legal advice service run by an NGO. They concluded that both institutions had a covert language policy which de-problematized language issues, construed Spanish as the default, naturalised code of service provision, and imagined multilingualism as a threat to integration. This piece of research pointed at the reproduction by NGOs of the state's technologies of citizenship, among which is the national language.

A similar inculcation of the modernist linking of (national) language and citizenship was observed by Cleghorn (2000) in language education programmes for migrants in Canada and by Garrido (2010) in similar spaces in Catalonia, Spain. The latter also documented the ways in which the language classes aimed to create "good citizens" through the re-socialisation of migrants into appropriate values and modes of conduct that went beyond language learning and concerned moral values, forms of knowledge and various behavioural aspects. Along similar lines, Pujolar (2007) looked at the deployment of expertise discourses, presented as privatised and independent of the state, as a way of legitimizing the regimentation of migrants in a volunteer-run language education scheme for African women in northern Catalonia. The notion of "integration" worked in this space and in society more

generally as the ideological construct through which the management of migrants was effected.

Another strand in this area has investigated the discursive tensions emerging in state subsidiary organisations as a result of their partnering with the state in the neoliberalisation of services for migrants. Codó (2013) investigated the evolution of the field of legal advice in Catalonia and exposed the many discursive, pragmatic and role identity contradictions that service providers had to face as intermediary, welcoming institutions, on the one hand, and veiled state bodies, on the other. Language policy (with Spanish as a pre-requisite for access) emerged, quite significantly, as the locus where contradictions were neutralised and ideological continuity with the institutions of the nation-state was established.

After this unavoidably short presentation of LPP issues in three key institutional domains shaped by neoliberalising policies, I will now spell out what I consider are the major unaddressed topics in this area. I will conclude by suggesting some avenues for future investigation.

### **Avenues for future research in LPP, institutions and neoliberalisation**

This chapter has tried to map out the fairly uncharted territory of language policy as practiced in contemporary institutional spaces, traversed by processes of neoliberalisation, globalisation, and the tertiarisation and informatisation of the economy. One of the points I have made is that language policy and neoliberalism are co-constitutive. As Piller and Cho (2013) argue, neoliberalism *is* language policy insofar as the neoliberal free-market, free-choice ideology works to favour certain languages (especially English) to the detriment of others; in turn, language policy *is* neoliberalism because the service and knowledge-based economy of late (neoliberal) modernity has communication as its central axis. I have claimed

that, as legitimators of language and regulators of access to it, contemporary institutions are spaces defined by discursive tensions, where old and new policies, practices and discourses co-exist, compete and interlock in unexpected ways.

Most of the studies I have reviewed here are ethnographic. My understanding of LPP as situated at the intersection of local institutional practice and trans-local socioeconomic processes foregrounds the need for a complexifying approach like that of institutional ethnography. Its integrative, holistic (Sarangi & Roberts, 1999) perspective allows researchers to move back and forth from institutional regimes to regional, national or continental agendas in order to comprehend the conditions of appropriation and redefinition of languages in processes of institutional neoliberalisation (Pérez-Milans, 2015).

More ethnographic studies are certainly needed in other kinds of spaces, both geographical and institutional. Geographically, we still know very little about how neoliberalisation is impacting institutional LPP in many parts of the world (e.g., the African continent). And yet I have exemplified here how fundamental a situated perspective is which understands the ways in which local socio-cultural and economic imaginaries articulate with broader ideological processes. On the institutional front, more knowledge about neoliberally inspired LPP is needed in different institutional sectors than those currently investigated (e.g., social welfare, infant education, and health services).

In the institutional terrains discussed in this chapter, there are many aspects pending investigation. In the educational terrain, for example, there is a scarcity of studies on the transformation of the language curriculum to align language teaching with the linguistic needs of the contemporary workplace, the consequences of this transformation and the ensuing tensions for LPP. In that sense, Block, Gray and Holborow (2012) point out that (global) English pedagogies, which foster (neoliberal) ideas of interaction, participation and problem-solving, may come into conflict with traditional ways of doing language education in local

spaces. Data on these conflicts will shed important light on the ways in which institutional tension impacts LPP, that is, they will allow us to understand the various stages of language policy or the “language policy cycle” (Johnson, 2009, p. 142).

Another avenue for further exploration in language-in-education policy is the effect of the commodification of language on intercultural dialogue, one of the mandates of European CLIL education, as we discussed. In that sense, Kramsch finds that the current mystification of the global culture of communication compels students to “surf diversity” (2014, p. 302) rather than actually engage with difference.

All in all, research in this area of disciplinary intersection is, in many ways, just beginning to take off. New LLP data in different neoliberalising institutions will certainly provide more elements for a deeper understanding of the criss-crossing of global, national and regional processes, LPP and specific institutional agendas.

### Endnotes

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7578 words.

**Abstract**

This chapter addresses issues of language policy and planning in the neoliberalising institutional spaces of late modernity. Institutions are conceptualised as interested spaces of control and selection that work to buttress the socioeconomic and political agendas of the dominant classes in ways which appear open, meritocratic or simply commonsensical. The chapter argues for the need to understand the conditions, constraints and possibilities of language policy in specific institutional locales and their entanglement with the socioeconomic, political and moral orders of neoliberalism. The chapter maps out the research undertaken in three key institutional domains, and the workplace, education and the non-governmental sector, where the influx of the commodifying, economicist ethos of neoliberalism has legitimised particular forms of citizenship and identity effected in and through implicit or explicit language policy. The chapter ends by identifying research gaps and suggesting directions for future research in this field.

144 words

**Keywords:** neoliberalisation, institutions, language policy, contemporary labour, language education

**Biodata**

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