

Abstract: Joseph Lo Bianco

KEYNOTE ABSTRACT

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A text, some debate and the talk of teachers: dimensions, problems and rights in language education planning today

In this paper I will try to account for the complex reality of language education planning in diverse socio-political and economic contexts and develop a framework for teachers and applied linguists to support participation in policy debates.

I will propose a model that involves three dimensions: a *textual* (legal-political) element, in the hands of policy makers and conducted with the instruments of law and administration; a *discursive* (argumentative-rhetorical) element which is citizen-centred and conducted with the tools of debate, argument and persuasion, and a *performance* dimension, in the hands (or mouths) of teachers, whose enactment of linguistic choices shapes and directs the communicative fortunes of learners.

Language policy and language education planning (LP) arose within the discipline of applied linguistics during the 1950s and 1960s, partly as a response of developed country experts to developing country problems. In recent years LP has endured radical critique for being overly descriptive and technical and, for some critics, for complicity in the exercise of power over the lives of minority and vulnerable populations. Responding to these critiques has enriched the field of LP in academic and scholarly concepts, but today it is an unwieldy and still formative field of scholarship. In actual LP practice however public officials rarely draw on the conceptual, theoretical or empirical repository of knowledge generated through LP scholarship.

In this paper I will take examples from extra-national, national and sub-national contexts of communicative interaction in diverse parts of the world. The model I propose aims to produce a more dynamic characterisation of the communicative realities of a rapidly globalising world with the weakening of national states, the integration of economies, but the persisting inequalities of economics and opportunities across the world. My aim is to allow professionals to help shape policy interventions in the interests of language rights, multilingualism and social justice, as well as additive bilinguals for global communication.