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Critical Review of 'Historical and Theoretical Perspectives in Language Policy and Planning': the Epistemology and the Language Ideology

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Abstract:

Ricento's article (2000) "Historical and Theoretical Perspectives in Language Policy and Planning" was reviewed. It divides the historical process of Language Policy and Planning into three different stages based on three influential factors of language policy and planning including the macro sociopolitical, the epistemological and the strategic. This paper tries to identify the two elements of epistemology and the language ideology in language policy and planning by examining the works cited in Ricento's article, and further provide the case study of China's Belt and Road Initiative for explanation. Those two elements should be considered in the modern language policy and planning.
Keywords: Language policy and planning, epistemology, ideology, Belt and Road Initiative

1. Review of the passage

With the further development of information technology and the more frequent global trade, the speed of information sharing and the accurate use of language should be considered in making language policy and planning (LPP). According to Cooper (1989: 45), language planning refers to "deliberate efforts to influence the behavior of others with respect to the acquisition, structure, or functional allocation of their language codes". It is proved that people should pay much attention to the acquisition and functional allocation when considering LPP. Therefore, this paper reviews the article "*Historical and Theoretical Perspectives in Language Policy and Planning*" written by Thomas Ricento (2000). It illustrates the developing process of LPP from World War II to the beginning of the 21st century. The author divides the developing process into three different stages based on three influential factors of LPP research including the macro sociopolitical, the epistemological and the strategic.

1.1. The first phrase: early 1960s to 1970s

The first phrase is from the early 1960s to 1970s. At this stage, three factors can be specified as "decolonization and state formation", "the predominance of structuralism" and "the pervasive belief". As for the new nations which just achieved decolonization, researchers are easier to figure out the "transformations, problems and processes of nationhood" as what Fishman (1968) said in those nations. With the influence of structuralism and specific requirements of new nations, researchers like Einar Haugen (1996) and Heinz Kloss (1996) provides provided some structural frameworks such as "language planning model" and "typology of multilingualism". They tried to explore the functions of languages especially the indigenous languages and lingua franca, and the relation between diversity homogeneity of languages. According to Fishman (1968), "language selection is a relatively short-lived problem since the linguistic tie to technological and political modernity is usually unambiguous". Therefore, those new nations should adjust and maintain LPP connected with the social environment.

The author also generated four characteristics of the LPP research including "goals of language planning", "languages regarded as the resource with value", "independence and neutrality of status and corpus planning" and "languages under the sociohistorical and ecological contexts". (Rubin, 1971). The problems in LPP were also discussed by researchers

such as Rubin, Jernudd and Fishman.

1.2. The second phrase: early 1970s to the late 1980s

The period from the early 1970s to the late 1980s is the second phrase. Some newly independent nations have found themselves "more dependent on their former colonial masters in some ways" rather than shared with "the socioeconomic and political structures" which have been called "modernization" (Thomas, 2000). Scholars realized that many models of LPP were not sufficient only from the perspective of description, which is one of the reasons why modernization failed in those new nations. Under the background of "the neo-colonial", developments of linguistics also caused thinking and the analysis of problems in LPP research (Thomas, 2000). Some items like autonomous linguistics and diglossia were also be challenged and criticized by those developments (Fasold, 1992; Woolard & Schieffelin, 1994). According to many anthropologists and linguists, the "universal" language which excludes the multilanguage environment and emphasizes on the standardization was being formed by linguists (Crowley, 2014). With the developments of critics of linguistics, scholars began to focus of the "social, economic, and political effects of language contact" (Thomas, 2000). In other words, they tried to connect LPP with the social environment such as socioeconomic asymmetries and social and economic status of speakers.

As for the second phrase, it concentrates on the "negative effects of LPP theory and models, and the realization of complex and laden sociolinguistics constructions" (Thomas, 2000). Those new nations tried to balance the negative (e.g., the effects and marginalization of indigenous languages, and the limitation of utility) and the positive influence (e.g., economic interests and political forces). Concerning making LPP, "Language linguistic was social behavior" (Thomas, 2000), and it is also affected by the macro and micro factors such as the attitude of individuals and political forces.

1.3. The third phrase: the mid-1980s to the 21st century

The third phrase is roughly from the mid-1980s to the 21st century. At this stage, LPP relates to many global events such as regional coalitions and political changes. However, scholars identified that "the control and dissemination of culture worldwide" greatly affected which made more threats than the colonialism (Thomas, 2000), and "linguistic imperialism" was invoked by Phillipson (1997) to present the relations between the ideology and LPP. Many new nations tried to use "structural economic ideological means" (Thomas, 2000) to avoid the marginalization of languages. With the further analysis of functions between ideology and LPP, those individual elements including context and topic were concerned (Tollefson, 1989). "Critical and postmodern theories and research methods" (Thomas, 2000) were adopted and "sociocultural and econotechnical inequalities" (Thomas, 2000) were also included into LPP. However, the theories were not corresponded to the practices of LPP and those two perspectives should be separated (Fishman, 1994). Therefore, "the synthesis of elements of critical theory with an ecology of languages approach" (Thomas, 2000) were generated and applied. Some approaches of language ecology and rights were also raised in the rhetoric of political science (Conrad, 1996; Phillipson, 1992). With the development of Social Darwinian explanations, the ecological paradigm of LPP could also be involved into explaining language behavior and develop into evolutionary biology and anthropology.

2. Epistemology and the language ideology in LPP

According to the analysis, LPP is a multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary field which is influenced by various factors, while the limitations of LPP research still exists. LPP was regarded as a sub-field of sociolinguistics which should deal with issues of language behavior and identity (Thomas, 2000). For further research, the framework that makes the micro-level (the sociolinguistics of language) and macro-level (the sociolinguistics of society) research integrated should be analyzed, and it can lead LPP research to the next phrase (Thomas, 2000).This paper mainly focuses on the epistemology and the language ideology of language policy and planning especially the government-academia relations, taking the situation in China as an example.

LPP research takes LPP practice as its target, and LPP research began in the 1960s (He & Mao, 2020). LPP research covers all dimensions of LPP practice, and research results may influence all approaches to all LPP goals (He & Mao, 2020). When the government and academies are involved into the language practice, it is necessary for the nation to establish and develop the language agencies. Ricento (2000) believed that "the key variable which separates the older technicist approaches from the newer critical ones is agency". The language academy (LA) and language agencies were thoroughly discussed by scholars (Zhao & Shang, 2015).

In the 1950s and 1960s, because of the founding of the People's Republic of China, there existed many different issues related to the ideology and ethnography, and the language planning was developed with many shared state-centric characteristics. At the stage of establishing a nation, Language planning was regarded as a task for nationhood building. The state-centric language planning agencies played an important role in the field of ideology, and the Modern Chinese Dictionary got published at that period.

Until the mid-1980s, there existed a focus shift which was called "technological turn". It means that the standardization became more important in the field of language planning. The role of language agencies also switched from implementation to cultivation. "The language planning goals, and the sociopolitical contexts have seen changes" (Zhao & Shang, 2015). During the standardization, it is also important to critically reduce inequality, and to protect the minority languages. Meanwhile, the language planning and policies from the micro (e.g., international environment and state) and macro (e.g., individuals) levels should also be discussed in the developing process. "the roles of individuals and collectivities in the processes of language use, attitudes, and ultimately policies" was also analyzed (Ricento, 2000). Based on the professional suggestions provided by the experts, the Chinese government has made the language planning policies such as the successive "Five-Year Plans for Language Work" by the State Language Commission (He & Mao, 2020). What is more, there are also five needs-driven areas for the centers of LPP research including strategic language policy / planning, language digitalization / artificial intelligence, Chinese language / text standardization, National language capacity / language education, and language resources protection / development (He & Mao, 2020).

The question "to what degree can governments influence academia in LPP research based on China" was also discussed (He & Mao, 2020). There are also three influential factors of LPP research including social needs, financial support, and cooperative academia (He & Mao, 2020). But it is no doubt that the attitudes of academics are quite difficult to manage, and the choices of government are also influenced by the ideology. The research needs to be funded as well. Therefore, the relation between the official language agencies and governments is close and complex enough. In other words, the relation was also described as a "love-hate relationship" (He & Mao, 2020).

Specifically, the language planning policies in China were also discussed under the background of the Belt and Road Initiative (Gao, 2020). Language planning was defined as "a body of ideas, laws, and regulations, change rules, beliefs, and practices intended to achieve a planned change or to stop change from happening in the language use in one or more countries", and it was classified into four main categories including status, corpus, language-in-education, and language use planning (Gao, 2020). The language planning agencies such as the ministry of culture and foreign affairs have cooperated with many state ministries and committees to "draft and issue policies and documents" (Gao, 2020). Those policies must ideologically serve five purposes of communicating, entailing discourse power, dealing with matters in global governance and promoting socioeconomic growth.

One important principle for the language policies and planning is to establish and to promote the ecosystem of language and discourse. Ecosystem consists of five main elements including language service planning, language-in-education planning, foreign language planning, language structure planning, and Chinese language status planning. It is the language agencies that make the language policies and planning effective and exact.

For the countries along the belt and road including China, language diversity should also be embraced. With this focus, the protection of natural languages and avoidance of language loss should also be considered. As for China, the positions of Chinese PuTongHua, minority languages, and foreign languages which is used by those countries along the belt and road have been analyzed. In order to form a sustainable language environment, language agencies should make proper decisions to balance those three categories (Gao, 2000).

3. Case analysis: the epistemology and ideology in China

According to the analysis of the epistemology and the language ideology of language policy and planning mentioned above, it is proved that LPP has kept close relations with the epistemology and the nation's ideology from the beginning of the LPP research, and the relation between the government and the language academies became more complex because of many social changes.

There have existed many critical opinions (e.g., Su Peicheng, Li Yuming, and Zai Guoxi) about classifying developing process of language policies and planning in China from 1949 to the present (Zhou Qingsheng, 2019). There are also some slight differences about the developing process of LPP research between China and the western world. Based on the

discussion of ideology of language policies and planning, and the relation between the government and language academies, the following three aspects related to the ethnography and ideology in China can be analyzed.

The language policies on language diversity and loss, and the standardization should be analyzed. When people begin to form a lingua franca in a certain area, it is necessary for them to consider about the language diversity. however, there is a contradiction between the official language and the minority languages, which can be regarded as a binary opposition.

At the beginning, LPP serves for the requirements of language standardization and language reform (Zhou Qingsheng, 2019). In this period, there has been set a series of regulations such as the rules of public expressions, standardization of sectors and domain languages, governance of internet languages, etc. (Zhou Qingsheng, 2019). However, with the promotion of Putonghua in China, many minority languages have met many difficulties.

From 1980s to the present, international linguists have more concentrated on the language ecosystem and language loss (Zhou Qingsheng, 2019). Because China is the country of 56 nationalities, and many nationalities have their own languages. it is necessary for the language agencies to make policies for balancing the positions between the lingua franca and the minority languages. with the promotion of ecosystem of languages, *Law of the Standard and Written Language* was also issued in 2000. Mandarin has been promoted and selected as the lingua franca for decades. Meanwhile, minority languages have also been protected in the form of legislation (Zhou Qingsheng, 2019).

Therefore, it is important for language agencies to realize the standardization of language at the beginning of founding a new nation. Meanwhile, the agencies should also manage the relations between the lingua franca and minority languages. if the stronger position begins to over surpass the weaker, the ecosystem of languages is broken. Both language academies and the government should forbid the unbalance of the binary opposition.

The macro and micro levels of language policies and planning can also be concentrated. The scholar has classified LPP into three different aspects including macro, meso, and micro levels (Kaplan & Baldauf, 1997). The macro planning indicates the projects from the national level and is launched and practiced by the government. The meso planning means the maintenance and renaissance of language planning, while the micro level focuses on the language planning from the perspective of individuals such as families and schools (Li Yingzi, 2016; Zhang Weilei, 2017). But in practice, the micro level and the LPP related to the international language policies and planning are rarely involved (Li Yingzi, 2016).

When making the language policies and planning, the individuals also impact a lot, and there are many different groups of relations including the native languages and foreign languages, lingua franca and minority languages, etc. the BRI language policies and planning have been mentioned above, and it proves that LPP in China has been gradually developed from the perspective of international language planning. Meanwhile, the individual attitudes towards

languages have also been analyzed in recent years.

As one part of language policies and planning, the reform of the Chinese GaoKao is important. Many educational departments of provinces, the language agencies, play an vital role in the reform as well. The total scores of the English subject in GaoKao have been decreased, and the high school students can take the exams many times, while the scores of Chinese subject become more important. The changes of English and Chinese subjects have reflected that the Chinese language agencies have begun to analyze the language policies and planning at the individual level.

As for those university students majoring in English or foreign languages, it is necessary for them to learn another foreign languages beside their majors. This regulation also reflects that the Chinese language planning focuses on the balance between the native language and second foreign languages, and the language agencies begin to focus on the individual level of language planning.

The focus of language planning and policies, and the protection of the ecosystem of language have kept close relation with the language agencies. What is more, the agencies contain both the government and language academies, but these organizations share different positions in the ecosystem of the language. The role of government in the field of language policies and planning should also be discussed.

The LPP has been affected by both the government and language academies, and none of them can make effects on it separately. The government can only influence the LPP research when all three factors including social needs, financial support, and cooperative academia are present (He & Mao, 2020). Besides, the attitudes towards the language learning and policies are also important.

With the development social economy, people should work and live in the multilingual environment. For example, the BRI has brought many opportunities to make Chinese and other persons who come from the countries along the belt and road communicate. It is necessary for them to fully understand each other, otherwise they face a lot of barriers of communication. Therefore, the BRI also informs the language planning policies in China and other countries along the belt and road (Gao, 2020). Those policies also implement the social needs.

However, the factors of financial support and cooperative academia are difficult to control. In China, the language academies should get a large amount of financial support from the government. Meanwhile, the attitudes of cooperative academia are quite difficult to manage, and Chinese intellectuals have a strong tradition of criticizing their rules (He & Mao, 2020).

Therefore, considering about three factors, it is necessary to analyze the relation between government and the language academies. Because the language agencies in China belong to the state-centric organizations, it is difficult to exactly separate the functions of language

academies and the government, and the language policies and planning have usually been issued and practiced by the language agencies, especially the government. When the language agencies make policies and planning, they should think about the positions of both government and language academies, and the language policies and planning, to some extent, can present the ideology and ethnography.

4. Conclusion

Based on the discussion analyzed above, language policies and planning are usually made by the language agencies, and the language agencies mainly consist of the government and the language academies. Because the language agencies are state-centric, so the government should collect the professional suggestions from the academies as many as possible to make the polices and planning effective.

LPP research and practices mainly belong to the subbranch of sociolinguistics or applied linguistics, and it can be divided into following four categories including status, corpus, language-in-education, and prestige planning. This paper mainly focuses on the ideology and ethnography of language policies and planning, and illustrates the relations between the government and language academies.

Compared with the developing process of language policies and planning in western world, although the process of LPP in China is slightly different, there still exists a common point that the LPP is affected by the language agencies containing the government ant the language academies. Those two elements are a binary opposition, and the government impacts the making of the language policies and planning. For further research and planning, the agencies should pay more attention to the individual level of LPP, and the nation should also make the national language policies and planning adjust the international language environment.

Acknowledgements

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