

Lo Bianco, Joseph (2013). Innovation in Language Policy and Planning: Ties to English Language Education. In K. Hyland and L. L. C. Wong (Eds.) *Innovation and Change in English Language Education* (pp. 139-154). Hoboken: Taylor & Francis.  
<http://www.tandfebooks.com/isbn/9780203362716>

## **INNOVATION IN LANGUAGE POLICY AND PLANNING: TIES TO ENGLISH LANGUAGE EDUCATION**

**Joseph Lo Bianco**

### **Preamble**

This chapter introduces concepts and practices from language policy and planning, both the academic field of analysis and the practical field of action, to English teaching, and specifically to the idea of innovation and change in global English education. The first part of the discussion considers the sources of change and innovation in language education and discusses some differences between these notions. Both are considered in relation to the 'world events' which have bequeathed English its hegemonic position in contemporary global communication arrangements. The chapter next discusses language problems, a crucial construct in academic study of language policy and a crucial idea for planners, teachers, curriculum writers and teacher trainers. Language problems often appear to be straightforward when in reality what counts as a language problem is often contested. A large part of language policymaking consists of the struggle by different interests to have their interpretation of language problems prevail. The chapter then moves to discuss the role of innovation, rather than change, understood as different kinds of 'renewal' of English language education, prior to tying these various pieces together in a consideration of language planning for English language education today. Examples illustrate the points being argued, to highlight key arguments and to underscore the global scope of the enterprise of English language education.

### **Driving innovation and change**

In recent decades, the driving forces for more and better English language education have originated in wide and deep pressures within society, economy and politics, rather than from education concerns and interests. From empire to emporium, from Britain to America, English is sometimes construed today as a post-identity language, even as a basic skill (Graddol, 2006; Cha and Ham, 2008). Educators are increasingly called upon to incorporate new notions of variety in English, highlighted by English as Lingua Franca, ELF, (Seidlhofer, 2011) which is sustained by large corpora of spoken and written text samples, supporting its claim to be a distinctive entity whose communicative and sociolinguistic presence poses unfamiliar challenges for teaching. Innovation in English language education that derives from sources close to educational endeavours, such as curriculum design, teacher preparation, textbook writing, or classroom pedagogies, are also influenced by the wider envelope of change usually labelled globalisation. However, as English traverses new terrain, from local and national to international and global, to glocal and new iterations of each (Facchinetti et al., 2010) policymaking is also challenged and specialists and non-expert policymakers are required to develop new protocols and innovative conceptual and practical tools.

### **Standardisation of reasoning**

Most countries and major education jurisdictions are involved in language policy measures regarding English language education (Cha and Ham, 2008) and increasingly draw on more or less identical legitimations to do with national economic competitiveness and other kinds of commercial and neo-liberal concepts. In these systems of reasoning competitive ranking of universities and statistical ranking of school effectiveness (e.g., the OECD Programme for International Student Assessment, PISA, which surveys 15-year-olds in the 'principal industrialised countries' on 'knowledge and skills essential for full participation in society'), are the latest instalments in world standardisation that tend to favour English (PISA, 2011). All this trade, and talk of trade, reflects and intensifies the commodification of language and certified study (Tan and Rubdy, 2008) and poses ever sharper

challenges to traditional cultural, humanistic and intellectual legitimations for language study.

The rapidly escalating worldwide demand for more and better English education (Graddol, 2006) is differentiated according to sector and purpose. In universities, the prominent link is the concentration of scientific research and publishing in English with cross-border validity of certification (Lo Bianco, 2010). These characteristics position English learning needs around academic proficiency outcomes and have led to expansion in English as language of instruction, particularly in Asia (Tollefson and Tsui, 2004).

### **Language policy without planning: an example from Malaysia**

The increased demand for learning of and learning through English produces language policymaking, however, this increase in language planning has rarely involved the specialist input of professional language planners. This is an important point to grasp since it is a key argument of this chapter that language planning is a distinct field of academic and practical action, organised around a coherent body of concepts and procedures. Neglecting the concepts and methods of language planning relegates decision making about communication issues to government fiat, political pressure or market-based structural adjustments.

We can see precisely this dilemma in recent English education moves in Malaysia. In 2002, Prime Minister Mahathir Mohammad announced the policy of Teaching Mathematics, Technology and Science in English (PPSMI, in its Malay acronym) commencing in 2003 and disrupting the longstanding national project of replacing English with Bahasa Melayu (BM) as the primary medium of instruction.

In 1957, on the occasion of its independence from Britain the new state that would become today's Malaysia was a multiracial and multilingual compact. Current population and language data reveal a continuation of the broad ethnicity distributions with a significant consolidation in language claimants for BM (Malaysia, 2011): at independence about 54 percent identifying as 'Malay', 26 percent as Chinese, 12 percent as 'indigenous' and about 8 percent as Indian (Gill, 2007; Azirah, 2009). In the immediate aftermath of independence, English persisted as a convenient language of administration and preserved its link to domains of market prosperity and opportunity but only a small number of people, mainly in urban areas, actually spoke it. While language planning acknowledged a pragmatic pluralism the clear preference was for consolidation and assimilation to BM as the unifying and symbolic national language (Gill, 2007). From 1967 BM was adopted as the medium of instruction in all government maintained and funded schools, with partially funded Chinese and Tamil language primary schools required only to teach BM as a subject, while secondary schools would convert to exclusive use of BM as medium, with English reduced to a timetabled subject.

These arrangements were ultimately disputed by minority language interests, perceiving themselves to be disadvantaged in curriculum access, employment opportunities and social participation. From the late 1990s, concern was raised by business interests about labour market access and portability of qualifications stimulating Dr Mahathir to begin innovations in language education, expressed, in an interview quoted by Gill, as requiring a move away from 'nationalism' towards pragmatic acceptance of English's domination of science and technology fields, to ensure Malaysians were not 'working as servants to other people' (Gill, 2007: 119). The new language policy was therefore a new economic policy, often the case when language issues are recruited to serve wider socio-political and economic agendas.

From its inception PPSMI was controversial, practically as well as symbolically, provoking both embrace and rejection and conflicting claims about what the real and urgent language problems of Malaysia should be taken to be, which groups of students were in greatest need, and what the appropriate language policy for them, the nation and the economy should be (Azirah, 2009). Because PPSMI was adopted with little input from specialist language planners it lacked an informing language ecology model, i.e. a sense of what realistic communication aims against current communication realities could be, and so it accumulated an ongoing baggage of problems. In turn, poor conceptualisation aggravated the ultimately insurmountable problem of practical delivery. Despite provision of guidelines, resources and often highly innovative professional development programs,

buttressed by financial incentives and rewards, the fundamental absence of an ecological communication strategy hampered implementation, and on July 8, 2009 (Chapman, 2009), PPSMI was terminated. From 2012, instruction in the nominated subjects reverted to BM.

PPSMI became a source of controversy, not only for substantive questions of defence of the national language but also because of hasty implementation; even the precise nature of its termination is unclear, it has either been abandoned, or simply modified to allow more English organised differently, according to rival perspectives of various participants (see Chapman et al., 2011). Nevertheless, protests such as those led by defenders of the national language, culminating in a large hostile public demonstration on March 7, 2009 in Kuala Lumpur, suggest that language education is difficult to quarantine from wider symbolic and practical questions of identity and opportunity. Behind the pragmatic capacity to efficiently deliver PPSMI were complicating questions of equity and opportunity, since access to English is influenced by disparities according to rural/urban, social class and ethnic/racial divides (Bemama, 2009).

The reasoning behind the initiative is evident in the selection of subjects to be taught in English. It draws on a long-standing desire in post-colonial nations of seeking to quarantine two types of curriculum orientation; a utilitarian externally oriented one, from an intrinsic internally oriented one. Separating curriculum content that is concerned with national formation and the cultivation of national citizens, on the one hand, from content presumed to be solely about instrumental links to global trade and international competitiveness (Lo Bianco et al., 2009) on the other; a distinction increasingly tenuous and difficult to draw.

One way in which this distinction is tenuous can be seen in Gill's (2004) study of higher education language policy in Malaysia. Gill isolates the question of 'bifurcation' in higher education pathways, a structural change that undermined the country's ability to complete its project of replacing English with Malay. Bifurcation refers to legislative reforms that permitted private universities to operate through the medium of English alongside public institutions operating in Malay-medium. These reforms were the catalyst for a wider dismantling of the post-independence Malay-only policies and were eventually to seep down to school level, due to the marketplace advantages of English-proficient bilinguals destabilising the position of the majority population, mostly educated mono-lingually in Malay.

This example highlights how language planning operates as a kind of ecology, since the total communication resources of a speech community are interconnected and planners cannot hope to effectively quarantine their decisions from system wide repercussions. This complication calls into question the likely effectiveness of innovation in English education which ignores existing communicative realities. These realities refer to the existing communication abilities of a population and sociological realities of class, ethnic and regional disparities in the acquisition of English. Internal social stratifications, especially in post-colonial settings, are invariably connected with disparities in social opportunity, and so acquisition, especially of prestige forms of speech and literacy, can never be isolated to what institutions do, but must be understood as part of the hierarchy of how opportunities are distributed within societies. Prestige kinds of talk are not only fostered in education, but in the social circles and networks of communication in which speakers are immersed. If government authorities had drawn on concepts and methods devised by language planning specialists they could have grounded their new policy in analysis of the communication ecologies pertaining across the ethnic, cultural, economic and institutional domains of the society, increasing the likelihood that the eventual policy would have been both innovative and feasible.

A related situation typifies Sri Lanka (Lo Bianco, 2011) where language policy and planning in a multilingual and stratified social context provoked immense dislocation and ethnic conflict. The originating language policy, the Official Sinhala Act of 1956, despite later ameliorative measures, was a significant contributor to the deterioration of social relations between the nation's main ethnic groups. Today, at the conclusion of decades of armed conflict, the nation has embarked on exactly the same tri-lingual policy, Sinhala, English and Tamil, which was one of the policy options discarded in 1956.

A critical lesson of these examples is that innovation in language policy and planning for English language education must be sensitive to how an existing communication order aligns with social opportunity, ethnic and racial backgrounds, geography and social class. This is reinforced by ELE innovation writing. In a comprehensive survey, Waters (2009) addresses the overall scene of

innovation theory, and its specific connections with the 'current state of the art of managing innovation in ELE' (p. 451).

This reveals a burgeoning literature on innovation design and management, much of it fostering improved practice and reflective implementation. However, despite wider geographic coverage, contexts, innovation types and a variety of design and management processes, work in English language education innovation appears to lack tight and evident connection to concepts and procedures within the innovation management literature, and especially to the body of experience accumulated by the 'science' of language planning.

### **The Inheritance of history: 'world events' and English today**

In much of the world, whether in post-colonial settings such as those cited above, and similar cases in Africa, as well as in settings in which English was never directly or indirectly a colonial language, such as in Eastern Europe and most of Latin America, English prevails as the naturalised choice of preferred foreign language. Often this choice for English accompanies adoption of English as language of instruction. This convergence of choices suggests that English is perceived to offer greater returns on investment than other potential language choices, and so the apparently ubiquitous presence of English is sometimes perceived as an ancient condition of global communication arrangements. However, even a cursory look at recent communication choices shows that the prevalence of English is recent and can be attributed to dominant economic, political and military conditions and world events of the past 50 years. This is a unique conjunction in history, in that recent world events and conditions: US centred military, economic and cultural sway, has not overturned the pre-existing linguistic order (British colonial spread of English), as happened throughout the world's longer-term linguistic history (Ostler, 2005), but has consolidated it.

Survey research conducted by Cha and Ham (2008) documents historic patterns of foreign language preferences. During 1875-1899 only six percent of secondary school curricula worldwide nominated English as the first foreign language, a figure which increased to 70 percent of primary and 80 percent of secondary curricula by 1990-2000. Across Asian settings, English was represented in only 33 percent of primary curricula during 1945-1969; growing to 83 percent in primary and 100 percent for secondary by 2005. However, by 2006 practically all instances in which foreign languages were employed to teach mainstream subject matter in Asian settings involved English as the First Foreign Language.

The pattern of growth in English is independent of whether countries were British colonies or under American political influence at any time in the past. Instead, it is tied to the dominant world events of the past century, World War One, World War Two, the Cold War, the Fall of the Berlin Wall, and the commencement of economic liberalisation in China from the mid to late 1980s which effectively meant the emergence of interlinked financial-services and goods markets.

This world produced in the twentieth century is also of that century. In ideologies of the right and left it is both a 'borderless world' (Ohmae, 1999) and a 'runaway world' (Giddens, 2003). In Ohmae's confident prescriptions of a future fit for commerce and untrammelled international trade, there is uncritical acceptance of universal English as facilitator and producer of this world-as-economy, above and beyond nations.

Giddens's notion, by contrast, is of how tradition is required to explain itself, to account for its claims on people, and peoples, whose nations would once have taken those traditions completely for granted, whether they were the idea of national allegiance or the uncontested place of national official languages, notions seen as indispensable to citizenship and belonging.

Language planning and policy was born into and of that same world of secure bounded nations with distinctive and official or at least dominant national languages, and mostly monolingual populations. These standard national languages and internally oriented education systems were assumed to be the sole jurisdictions of how languages were organised and transmitted, in their literate and educated forms, for citizenship, national culture and political loyalty to national states.

However, since global English is both recent and contingent, the apparently tenacious hold it has in education globally can be neither inevitable nor unalterable. All past 'empires of the word', as Ostler terms global communication regimes, have met disruption and been dismantled due to changes in the underlying economic, military, technological and intellectual order of things. In Ostler's own view (2010), a future reorganisation of communication is already gathering pace and will foster the 'return of Babel', an unprecedented world multilingualism powered by cyber-techno communication possibilities. These emergent technology-enhanced communication arrangements will render obsolete the need for a lingua franca function through the use of sophisticated multilingual technologies, instantaneous translations and speech processing.

The consequences of such speculations represent a major challenge for an invigorated and innovative language planning. Unanticipated language planning challenges arise when we do acknowledge the relative recency of the prominence and the predominance of global English.

### **Language problems and diverse modes of language planning**

The activity of writing and implementing policies on language and education is usually seen by government agencies such as education departments as just another kind of policy making. However, making policy and undertaking planning around sensitive issues of communication and language is different in important ways from general public policy. We can see policy and planning in the context of more general issues of social change, innovation and development, including criticisms of how language planning has traditionally been enacted and understood (Lo Bianco, 2010).

A key focus of language planning historically has been the nature of language problems and how and why some communication problems come onto the agenda of public authorities, while others remain marginalised or ignored. Many societies with multilingual populations seek to regulate the role and function of languages in institutions, such as government offices, law courts and procedures, hospital and medical procedures, public administration, signage, commerce, and other fields beyond education.

Describing how different societies and diverse actors regulate the roles and status hierarchies that are established for different languages and language varieties is an increasingly important dimension of language policy research.

### **Teachers as language planners**

The very acts of classroom management, communication and teaching are a zone of semi-autonomous language planning in the hands of teachers (Lo Bianco, 2010). In the sovereign space of the classroom, teachers enact, as do countries and education departments in their distinctive realms, language plans. These reveal their underlying view about what language problems exist and which are elevated to attention and what will be the desired and implemented solution. Interactive classroom communication is replete with choices from the available communication forms, those of the students, those authorised by school and education authorities and those favoured and known to the teacher, all exposing the often unexpressed operations of teacher language planning. We can observe this in the micro-interactions between single students and teachers in coaching and explaining or in classroom oriented communication. What teachers model in their own speech and what they favour or discourage from students, what they praise and what they discourage, what they facilitate for reading or for online and web-based authoring, are all instantiations of an underlying theory of language problems and a set of choices about language solutions.

### **Analysis of language planning**

Alongside the growth of real-world language policy and planning, whether in institutions or in the choices and patterns of communications of individual teachers in classrooms, there has been a related expansion in academic analysis, description, teaching and theorising about the field of language policy and planning. Today, language policy and planning represents a significant part of all applied linguistics, and although the 'ideal' state is one in which specialists trained in language

apply their skills and knowledge to help public authorities solve problems of language and communication in society, for the most part actual language policymaking ignores professional language planning theory.

While education is a major focus of language policy and planning activity there are many other domains of intervention to direct and shape language and communication. These include trade and commerce, social questions such as the integration of minority populations into mainstream institutions or the labour market, and diverse aspects of society and culture.

Because language is a sensitive area that connects with the identity and other symbolic resources and self-view of a community, and at the same time influences the life chances, economic and educational opportunities of individuals, language planning can be a controversial activity.

### ***Language politics***

Language planning is never conducted in a social, political or economic vacuum, instead it occurs in culturally and historically specific circumstances, in which the interests and language of dominant groups sometimes collide with the interests and languages of minority, dominated or otherwise excluded populations. A key innovation in the policy and practice of language planning in recent decades has been the emergence of awareness of how language planning has often been used by state agencies, or powerful groups, to entrench their social, economic or political domination over others. A key example is the history of language in South Africa.

Under the racist assumptions of Apartheid, which operated until 1994, language policy played a central role. On June 16, 1976, student protests broke out contesting the compulsory use of Afrikaans as a joint medium of instruction with English, for arithmetic and social studies, in public schools. The violent suppression of the protests represents the beginning of the end of the overall policy of Apartheid. The student protestors opposed the second class education they perceived in the bilingual program, describing it as 'gutter education', intended to entrench the economic inferiority of black children. As '*the immediate cause of the ... Soweto uprising*' (Juckes, 1995: 147-149) a language education policy measure provoked widespread and ultimately decisive social protest. Because large numbers of students were killed, 16 June is today commemorated as Youth Day. The post-Apartheid constitution recognises eleven official languages, including Afrikaans and English, but language policy, and bilingual education, and the roles of English and Afrikaans in the society and education system of South Africa remain controversial.

This example highlights the wide array of activities, and the deeply socially and politically situated nature, of language planning realities. Because language planning is linked to the interests of various groups in society, it is tied to politics and the play of interests and power in social groupings.

### **Categories of language policy and planning**

In this section, three categories of language policy and planning are discussed, (see Lo Bianco, 2010).

#### **Actions that formalise or elevate the status of language or varieties**

The formal status of a language, dialect or other variety refers to the legal standing and public functions envisaged by constitutional arrangements in a particular setting. Status is typically ascribed via public texts, such as constitutional provisions, and is undertaken within the realm of exclusive state sovereignty. However, sub-national groupings, such as regions or provinces operating under autonomy statutes, can modify or elaborate or even contradict public texts and laws issued by authorities with overlapping sovereignty. Supra-national groupings, whether governmental or non-governmental, such as the European Union, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, or the African Union, the Red Cross or the World Trade Organisation, can also attribute and formalise

status to languages or they can utilise pooled sovereignty to issue language influencing decisions.

### ***Actions that modify the corpus of a language or variety***

Policy actions to impact on the status of languages are usually undertaken by politicians and policy makers working within official domains, as described above. Actions that modify the corpus of a language are more specialised, usually taken forward by professional linguists, for technical innovation, and occasionally for adoption and dissemination, in collaboration with a community of speakers. Corpus planning involves modifications to the internal meaning making resources of a language, such as writing reforms, terminology development, standardising translation, or disseminating the use and adoption of new norms.

### **Actions that promote the learning of languages or the acquisition of literacy**

A variety of agents undertake actions to facilitate learning of additional or extended language skills or literacy, through a process involving interaction between teachers, researchers, curriculum writers, assessment agencies, credentialing authorities and learners and their families.

### **Innovation as renewal**

Innovation is ultimately about renewal of organisations, practices or technologies. Innovation emerges from responses to internal criticism, from failure of methods or understandings to grapple with language problems, from interaction with other disciplines and openness to their ideas and operations, from new problems and possibilities in technology, economics and culture. Open innovation refers to those processes of innovation in which a field is engaged in dialogue with external actors and disciplines, while closed innovation refers to planned change that comes from internal processes, including criticism or contest. The need for greater efficiency and effectiveness can lead to innovation, because this feedback about the need to change is from commissioning agents and others with power to offer consultancies and contracts to language planning specialists.

The knowledge economy of recent decades, in which economic competitiveness is seen to reflect the degree of investment in education, has stimulated a great deal of language planning on behalf of English. This is evident from science publishing and technology innovation. If knowledge is seen as a stimulus to economic growth and expansion, then language barriers to accessing this knowledge come under pressure.

The field of language policy and planning is still developing and isn't yet sufficiently coherent and unified to allow a smooth spread of innovations. The journals that exist, especially *Current Issues in Language Planning*, *Language Policy* and *Language Problems and Language Planning*, are niche publications but the notions of language ecologies, overlapping domains of language use, the relation between learning language and its use in differentiated social domains, linked to patterns of bilingualism in society are language planning and sociolinguistic concepts that are beginning to shape innovation, education and English teaching.

Renewal of English language education to embrace the presence of English in spoken interaction as well as its presence within classrooms is underway in South Korea's ambitious creation of immersion villages and towns and in Content and Language Integrated Learning schemes in non-English speaking parts of Europe. Such initiatives seek renewal and innovation for English learning by systematically linking formal learning with informal acquisition. These sociolinguistic insights open classroom teaching to the lived presence of languages in community domains.

In many EFL settings, English use is encountered in quarantined form, since more extended presence of second languages in society can give rise to resistance and concern on behalf of the discourse range, social functions and communicative domains of national languages. This means that effective long-term renewal of English language education in EFL and even ESL settings requires comprehensive language planning involving status, corpus and acquisition actions that are

multilingual, building English into strongly other-language promoting measures. This kind of wide-ranging language planning is rare, as the PPSMI example in Malaysia shows. Some public policies rhetorically affirm the value of multiple languages, but in effect privilege only dominant languages in curriculum time, teacher support and public promotion, failing to see that the ultimate success of the very policy itself is influenced by taking language planning concepts seriously.

### **Innovation in language planning for English**

For these reasons, innovation in language policy and planning is necessarily different in kind from innovation in English language education in general. Even when language policy and planning is directed to some aspect of English language education, as it is so often today, what counts as innovative practice in language policy making, in language planning processes and content, cannot be directly compared to the object of its efforts, i.e., English language education. Instead it will need to look at the wider communicative situation of a given community. This characteristic will distinguish language planning innovation from innovation in English education in other contributions to this volume, in that it deals with a practice for decision making around and about English language education rather than aspects of English teaching, learning, assessment or curriculum per se.

### **First and second order change**

Innovation in language education can be usefully divided into change of two broad types, or orders, according to their depth of penetration and effect. Scholars often distinguish between a more superficial order of change, *first order change*, which seeks to improve efficiency and effectiveness of what is currently done without disturbing basic organisational features. By contrast, *second order change* seeks to alter the fundamental ways in which organisations exist, including new goals, structures, and roles (Fullan, 2004). The wider or surrounding context determines whether language education policy is first order or second order change, and involves sensitivity to and awareness of the roles and value of other semiotic and linguistic systems.

For example, in settings in which there is poor or absent English language education, given that the most effective second language education outcomes require both socialisation and education, immersion and study, and new cultural knowledge, skills and habits, effective English language education requires second order change. The language policy innovation required is deeper and more extensive than traditional second language designs allow.

To succeed, innovation must not give rise to changes that counter the aims of the innovation, such as social pressures and concerns that rival or contest the aims of the innovation. Although in one respect all innovation involves change, innovation differs fundamentally from change, which can be random, undesired and undirected. By definition, innovation contains a certain element of intentionality, a willed change that is desired by those planning the future of an enterprise, a school system, a language teaching enterprise or any other project. The rise in the historic fortunes of English have come about at macro and micro levels, in first order change and second order change, through change in world events of great magnitude, for the most part, rather than innovative practice in pedagogy or in cultural esteem. However, innovations are critical to all educational process. In the review of innovations that Fullan canvases in his writings, he notes that governments can effect change in one or more of three broad modes: through the imposition of accountability measures on the various actors involved; through applying incentives (pressure or support); and through capacity development, which essentially involves 'reculturing' and assuming that internal professional motivations will contribute to effecting shared and negotiated change (Fullan, 2004).

The PPSMI example highlights the essentially ecological nature of education innovation extended even further than Fullan's categories allow, into the wider communication networks of the society, to see teachers, schooling and teaching as integrated into social and national interests. English language education innovation therefore, in many world settings, requires sensitivity to wider symbolic and practical issues bound up with communication, national identity and political and economic independence. Unlike more inert innovation and change schemes, such as the introduction of computers or web-based teaching, language planning changes are less containable in their effects and meanings and require processes of debate and research which include actors and interests well



beyond those located in schools or universities.

Fullan's insights have been derived from observing failed and successful innovations within education systems, and include a commitment to seeing education as part of wider cultural systems. However, languages are more than normally present within wider ecological systems, they are often symbols of those very systems, including nations and national identities, and so languages are comparable to Fullan's ideas about overlapping and mutually constituting systems, but even more deeply so. Top-down language planning, as discussed above in relation to PPSMI, is an unproductive first order change, ultimately made vulnerable by its failure to engage with deep social questions of the wider communicative culture and the professionalism of teachers and other educators.

### **University instruction and language planning**

A critical domain for long-term English language education planning is its role in university instruction. Here, too, context and ecology are critical notions for deliberate language planning innovation.

It is evident that there are significant advantages for English-language based authors and institutions compared to those operating in other languages (database costs, products and resources, closer experience in editing and housing journals and procedural advantages in peer review and academic writing), advantages not exclusive to American or British settings, but also shared by academics in English medium institutions in settings such as Hong Kong and Singapore. Acquiring competitive status can involve prohibitive cost barriers for developing country institutions, compounded by pervasive, subtle operations of linguistic advantage in preferred rhetorical style, argument modes and diverse academic disciplinary traditions. Language planning innovation is required to dislodge unfair advantages and pluralise modes of expression that retain rigour of scholarship without entrenching inherited advantages accruing to certain transactional styles, expressive modes or rhetorical power. In Altbach's (1998) analysis, China and India represent 'gigantic peripheries' to American and other English-centred academic globalisation. In both settings English has a long and differentiated history of presence, rejection, and embrace but in the past decade there has been immense investment in public education in and through English in each of these giant systems.

Especially marked is China, where in 2001 the Ministry of Education required 5-10 percent of undergraduate instruction in foreign languages (MinEd, 2001), stimulating great expansion in university level English-Chinese instruction. A proliferation of course types and language teaching combinations has emerged raising dilemmas about the role, purpose and consequences of mass and required English (Lo Bianco et al., 2009).

### **Deliberation and language planning**

The most critical language policy and planning innovation in contexts such as these is process based deliberation. Language problems which public authorities 'resolve' through top-down rules, laws, regulations and accountability, fail the test of innovation if they provoke reaction and rejection by professionals responsible for their implementation or students and the wider community affected by their adoption. PPSMI in the Malaysian case strongly suggests this weakness in innovation design.

Deliberative, professionally informed language planning innovations can secure more multilingually sensitive English language education innovation that can be supportive of pluralistic language futures as well as providing opportunity and portable valid qualifications for students.

Future development in English language education innovation management and research should also pay attention to the wider communicative context within which English language education occurs and, in dialogue with language planning literature, evolve new models of innovation that incorporate insights on language and communication ecologies from language planning and policy studies.

## Key readings

- Lo Bianco, J. (2010), Language Policy and Planning, in Nancy H. Hornberger and Sandra Lee McKay (eds.), *Sociolinguistics and Language Education*, Bristol, UK: Multilingual Matters, pp. 143-176. This article traces the origins and development of the field of language policy and planning. It addresses the kinds of language planning that exist at a national level with celebrated case studies discussed. However, the key emphasis of the article is to widen the classical definition of what counts as language policy and planning to include the specific role of teachers and teaching, arguing that language modelling in classroom, and teachers' language behaviour within multilingual and multicultural contexts, are micro but critical kinds of language planning.
- Lo Bianco, J. (2004), Language Planning as Applied Linguistics, in A. Davies and C. Elder (eds.), *Handbook of Applied Linguistics*, Blackwell: London, pp 738-763. This article discusses the difference between applied linguistics and linguistics applied, tracing the disciplinary history of language planning as an emblematic kind of applied language studies. The latter is distinguished from 'linguistics applied' since the focus is 'real world problems' featuring communication problems rather than the application of an academic discipline. The article traces the intense criticisms of language planning of the 1990s and early 2000s and shows how its reinvigorated contemporary life can be traced to the population mobility and denser interconnectedness produced by globalisation.

## References

- Altbach, P. (1998), Gigantic Peripheries: India and China in the World Knowledge System, in P. Altbach (ed.), *Comparative Higher Education*. Greenwich, CT: Ablex, pp. 133-146.
- Azirah, H. (2009), Not plain sailing: Malaysia's language choice in policy and education. *AILA Review*, 22: 36-51.
- Bernama, (2009), *Teaching of Science and Mathematics back to Bahasa Melayu*, July 8. Retrieved November 2, 2011 from <http://www.bernama.com/bernama/v5/newsgeneral.php?id=423799>.
- Cha, Y-K and Ham, S-H. (2008), The Impact of English on the School Curriculum, in B. Spolsky and F. M. Hult, *Handbook of Educational Linguistics*. Malden, MA: Blackwell, pp. 313-327.
- Chapman, K. (2009), *It is Bahasa again but more emphasis will be placed on learning English*. July 9. *The Star Online*. Retrieved November 10, 2011 from <http://thestar.com.my/news/story.asp?file=/2009/7/9/nation/4286168&sec=nation>
- Chapman, K. et al., (2011), *PPSMI policy should be carried on for many generations* Sunday November 6. *The Star Online*. Retrieved November 10, 2011 from <http://thestar.com.my/metro/story.asp?sec=nation&file=/2011/11/6/nation/985056>.
- Facchinetti, R., Crystal, D., and Seidlhofer, B. (eds.), (2010), *From International to Local English - And Back Again*. Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang.
- Pullan, M. (2004), *Leading the Way from Whole School Reform to Whole System Reform*. Jolimont, Vic.: IARTV.
- Giddens, A. (2003), *Runaway World: How Globalization is Reshaping our Lives*. London: Routledge.
- Gill, S. K. (2004), Medium of Instruction Policy in Higher Education in Malaysia, in J. Tollefson, and A. B. M. Tsui (eds.), *Medium of Instruction Policies*. Mahwah, N.J.: Erlbaum Publishers, pp. 135-152.
- Gill, S. K. (2007), Shift in language in policy in Malaysia. *AILA Review*, 20: 106-122. Graddol, D. (2006), *English Next*. London: The British Council.
- Juckes, T. J. (1995), *Opposition in South Africa*. Praeger, Westport, CT.
- Lo Bianco, J. (2004), Language Planning as Applied Linguistics, in A. Davies and C. Elder (eds.), *Handbook of Applied Linguistics*. Blackwell: London, pp. 738-763.
- Lo Bianco, J. (2010), Language Policy and Planning, in Nancy H. Hornberger and Sandra Lee McKay (eds.), *Sociolinguistics and Language Education*. Bristol, UK: Multilingual Matters, pp. 143-176.
- Lo Bianco, J. (2011), A Friendly Knife? English in the Context of Sri Lankan Language Politics, in L. Farrell, U. N. Singh and R. A. Giri (eds.), *English Language Education in South Asia: From Policy to Pedagogy*. Cambridge University Press India, pp. 36-60.
- Lo Bianco, J., Orton, J. and Yihong, G. (eds.), (2009) *China and English: Globalisation and Dilemmas of Identity*. Clevedon, UK: Multilingual Matters.
- Malaysia (2011), *Department of Statistics, Population and Housing, 2010*. Retrieved November 10, 2011 from <http://www.statistics.gov.my>.
- MinEd, (2001), *Standard of English Courses for 9-Year Compulsory Education and General Senior High Schools*. Retrieved November 2, 2011 from <http://www.tefl-china.net/2003/cal3821.htm>.

- Ohmae, K. (1999), *The Borderless World: Power and Strategy in the Interlinked Economy*. Harper Collins: New York.
- Ostler, N. (2005), *Empires of the Word: A Language History of the World*. London: Harper Collins.
- Ostler, N. (2010), *The Last Lingua Franca: English Until the Return of Babel*. Allen Lane/Penguin: London.
- PISA (2011), *OECD Programme for International Student Assessment*. Accessed November 2, 2011 from [http://www.pisa.oecd.org/pages/0,2987,en\\_32252351\\_32235731\\_1\\_1\\_1\\_1\\_1,00.html](http://www.pisa.oecd.org/pages/0,2987,en_32252351_32235731_1_1_1_1_1,00.html).
- Seidlhofer, B., (2011), *Understanding English as a Lingua Franca*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Tan, P.K. W. and Rubdy, R. (eds.), (2008), *Language as Commodity*. London and New York; Continuum.
- Tollefson, J and Tsui, A. (eds.), (2004) *Medium of Instruction Policies*. Mahwah, N.J.: Erlbaum.
- Waters, A. (2009), Managing innovation in English language education. *Language Teaching*, 42, 4: 421-458.



Minerva Access is the Institutional Repository of The University of Melbourne

**Author/s:**

Lo Bianco, J

**Title:**

INNOVATION IN LANGUAGE POLICY AND PLANNING: TIES TO ENGLISH LANGUAGE EDUCATION

**Date:**

2013-01-01

**Citation:**

Lo Bianco, J. (2013). INNOVATION IN LANGUAGE POLICY AND PLANNING: TIES TO ENGLISH LANGUAGE EDUCATION. Hyland, K (Ed.). Wong, LLC (Ed.). INNOVATION AND CHANGE IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE EDUCATION, (1), pp.139-154. ROUTLEDGE.

**Persistent Link:**

<http://hdl.handle.net/11343/112285>

**File Description:**

Accepted version