ORIGINAL ARTICLE

From the policymakers' desks to the classrooms: the relationship between language policy, language-in-education policy and the foreign language teaching-learning process

Michele Saraiva Carilo[1]

[1] University of Edinburgh.

ABSTRACT

This article aims to discuss the relationship between language policy, language-in-education policy and the foreign language teaching-learning process. In so doing, a critical review of relevant literature is offered with the purpose to clarify how the areas of enquiry related to language and language-in-education policymaking and enactment are intertwined to the practicalities of foreign language curriculum development and syllabus design. Such connection is represented by the politically-, ideologically- and socioculturally-driven choices of policymakers and policy enactors, as well as their influence on everyday foreign language practice. Criticality and authorship are advocated throughout this article as strategies on which teachers and students should rely in order to challenge predetermined and/or decontextualised directives concerning the foreign language teaching-learning process.

Keywords: language policy; language-in-education policy; policy enactment; foreign language curriculum development; foreign language syllabus design.

Das mesas dos formuladores de políticas públicas para as salas de aula: a relação entre políticas linguísticas, políticas para a educação de línguas e o processo de ensino-aprendizagem

RESUMO

O presente artigo visa discutir o relacionamento entre políticas linguísticas, políticas para a educação de línguas e o processo de ensino-aprendizagem de língua estrangeira. Para tal, é apresentada uma revisão crítica dos construtos teóricos relevantes com o propósito de esclarecer como as áreas de pesquisa relacionadas ao desenvolvimento e implementação de políticas linguísticas e para a educação de línguas estão conectadas às praticalidades do desenvolvimento de currículo para língua estrangeira. Tal conexão é representada pelas escolhas políticas, ideológicas e socioculturais feitas por aqueles responsáveis pelo desenvolvimento e implementação de políticas, bem como a influência dessas escolhas nas práticas diárias de língua estrangeira. Criticalidade e autoria são promovidas nesse artigo como estratégias com as quais professores e estudantes podem contar para questionar orientações para o ensino e aprendizagem de língua estrangeira que sejam predeterminadas e/ou descontextualizadas.

Palavras-chave: políticas linguísticas; políticas para a educação de línguas; implementação de políticas; desenvolvimento curricular para educação de língua estrangeira.

Corresponding Author:
MICHELE SARAIVA CARILO
<M.S.Carilo@sms.ed.ac.uk>

1. LANGUAGE POLICY AS AN IDEOLOGICAL INSTRUMENT FOR LANGUAGE PLANNING

Given that language and human experiences are implicitly and/or explicitly intertwined, an attempt to define language can also be considered an attempt to define human beings (Kumaravadivelu, 2006). For the purpose of this paper – which is to discuss the relationship between language policies, language-in-education policies and foreign language education – language is conceptualised, through a teaching-learning lens, as ideology. Thompson (1990) argued that ideology serves to institute, promote and maintain relations of power. Thus, language, from everyday utterances to complex and well-articulated verbal and non-verbal texts, is symbolically and/or literally constructed to convey the dominance of certain social groups over others. Kroskrity (2000) suggested that language ideologies are represented by a set of concepts consisting of overlapping sociocultural dimensions. Those dimensions convey, through ideologically-grounded discourses, (a) the promotion and/or protection of the political-economic interests of dominant sociocultural groups; and (b) the rejection of multiplicity in order to limit membership to those dominant sociocultural groups.

Kroskrity's dimensions of language ideologies echo Foucault's poststructural notion of discourse – within which language is only one aspect, alongside the actors who (re)produce knowledge and the arena(s) where such (re)production takes place (Foucault, 1972). In the context of language planning, socio-political structures, such as the government, determine standards for the language code through language policies while sociocultural apparatuses, such as the education system, are used to reinforce and naturalise those standards. Liddicoat (2013) argued that, with the main objective of influencing societal language practices, language planning intervenes in four interrelated core areas – status planning, corpus planning, prestige or image planning, and language-in-education or acquisition planning. Language policies, as a particular area of language planning, although presented as an attempt to represent the interests of the entire society, are often deliberate efforts to undermine the structure and the function of non-dominant language varieties (Baldauf, Jr., 2008; Jernudd and Nekvapil, 2012; Tollefson, 1981).

The need to portray society as a homogeneous group of people is an ideologically-driven project aiming to silence non-dominant sociocultural groups by creating, rather than reflecting, and promoting an idealised national/regional culture, identity and language in a way that seems neutral. Political ideologies can become hegemony when they permeate everyday societal life as a requirement for the exercise of citizenship (Brookfield, 2005). In this sense, citizenship, as a status, a feeling and a practice, cannot be self-granted; rather, it must be earned through compliance with the government agendas. Language policies, in particular, are used globally as instruments through which citizenship can be shaped, as well as measured, and sociocultural membership can be granted or denied (García, 2012; Shohamy, 2006). Despite preceding the organisation of nation-states, the nationalist, usually disguised as patriotic, notion of national language has been used to manage linguistic codes within a determined territory (Lo Bianco, 2001).

Language policies, therefore, have the power to stigmatise languages and/or varieties that might occur more naturally within speech communities than that/those conventionally-agreed sets of linguistic choices.

Such standardisation process, motivated by an assumption or 'belief that there is a correct and desirable form of language, distinct from normal practice' might enforce correctness and encourage the adaptation, or even erasure, of speech communities whose language(s) and/or variety(ies) are not considered officially standard (Spolsky, 2004, p. 27). Within society, language policies involve language practices, language beliefs or ideology, and language intervention or management. In other words, they represent the disciplinary power of the state, who determines official varieties to specific functions and contexts, while establishing and expanding the dominant classes' privilege (Sonntag, 1995; Tollefson, 1993; Wringe, 1996). Given that legal, civil and socio-cultural rights are usually more easily, solely even, available in official national languages, full accessibility is only granted to the portion of society whose linguistic knowledge and/or abilities correspond to the standard variety(ies).

Access to education, for example, is a privilege of a few rather than a right of all when a language or language variety becomes the means for educational purposes. According to Liddicoat (2013), such policy combines language ideologies into a broad framework of beliefs about sociocultural and political aspects to be implemented in and through education. The next section discusses how language policies influence language-in-education policies to shape language teaching and learning into an apparatus through which access, participation and citizenship can be limited or expanded.

1.1 Language-in-education Policy

Ball (1990) suggested that policy documents should be analysed critically and in a differentiated way, while observing their connections, into ideological texts and discourses. As an ideological text, policy documents are contextualised by and within society and its relationships of power and inequality. As discourses, policy documents can be categorised as discourse, or the linguistic aspect of the document, and Discourse, or the interaction between the document and the sociocultural voices of the community within which its implementation is expected to take place (Liddicoat, 2013). Education, in turn, plays a twofold role, since it is object of language-in-education policy and the mechanism through which policy goals can be achieved. Thus, the school becomes the perfect arena for the advancement of language variety(ies) and the development of linguistic abilities which are considered economically, socially and culturally desired by the dominant class(es).

Language-in-education policies usually focus on the following dimensions:
(1) access: which language(s) and/or variety(ies) must be studied;
(2) personnel: teacher recruitment, development and standards;
(3) curriculum and community: what and how must be taught;
(4) methods and materials: determined methodologies and sets of texts;
(5) resourcing: decisions regarding funding that is allocated towards language education; and
(6) evaluation: how the impact and efficacy of such policies must be measured (Kaplan and Baldauf, Jr, 1997).

Those dimensions contribute to standardisation purposes of such policies; moreover, they equate language education to the process of mastering the officially-selected language(s) and/or variety(ies). For Spolsky (2004), despite aiming to reflect the homogeneity of an idealised one-nation-one-language construction, language-in-education policies can be perceived as evidences of political efforts to silence multilingual communities by imposing a monolingual model. Both the inclusion and exclusion of certain language and/or varieties in language-in-education policy documents as means of instruction are a political and ideological decision. Bagno (2007) argued that the absence of linguistic diversity within the Brazilian Education System, for example, promotes 'linguistic prejudice' since it allows the stigmatisation of "non-standard" language varieties and, consequently, the underrepresentation, or even exclusion, of the language communities where those varieties are used (p. 12).

Although decisions about the means of instruction are often justified pedagogically in policy documents, language-in-education policies do not address solely linguistic matters. On the contrary, policymakers develop them, amongst other purposes, to convey sociocultural values, economic realities and political interests of those belonging to the dominant class(es) within a given society and/or influent/imperialist countries (Shohamy, 2006; Tollefson and Tsui, 2004). By assuming an egalitarian and democratic access to language through education, language-in-education policies tend to disregard the struggles for citizenship of those whose ethnolinguistic and sociocultural complexity is unrepresented by official documents. Walter and Benson (2012) argued that it is naïve to expect that policymakers would be interested in fighting inequality; moreover, the promotion of dominant language varieties, usually disguised as opportunities, deepens the educational and socio-economic gap.

The next section discusses how complex phenomena, such as globalisation, can be used generically as pedagogical and sociocultural rationale to justify linguistic choices as means through which representation and citizenship might be broadened.

1.2.1 The impact of globalisation on language-in-education policies

Defined by Ball (1998, p. 120) as "the globalisation thesis", globalisation became an explanation (or excuse) that is used by policymakers from dominated countries to (re)shape language-in-education policies using those of imperialist/dominant countries as models. Such (re)shaping is usually said to be a mandatory action in order to prepare the citizens of a certain nation to a less local and more global reality. Furthermore, globalisation is rarely problematised or perceived as a 'field of tensions in which cultures are more exposed to each other' (Delanty, 2000, p. 85). It seems important to acknowledge those tensions since they reflect the uneven relation of sociocultural and political-economic power between geopolitical units, within and outside nation-states, which result into unbalanced encounters. Although globalisation can invade, rather than destroy, local contexts and, therefore, develop intercultural identities, the impact of globalisation on policies which should be locally-based, such as language-in-education

policies, might cloud distinctions between local and global realities by encouraging sociocultural adaptation.

Byram (2008) argued that there are three functions on which national education systems tend to focus: (1) the creation of human capital to meet the country's economic needs; (2) the development and advancement of a sense of national identity; and (3) the promotion of a sense of equality. Global and globalising language education trends influence and are influenced by political-economic interests of the sociocultural dominant classes. It is a fact that globalisation helped to move the notion of citizenship beyond the exclusive connection to a geographically-delineated territory and/or to a monolingual speech community; however, the control that policymakers have over language education has not yet been diminished and cannot be overlooked. Guilherme (2014) argued that this 'new citizenship paradigm' involves a 'multicultural statehood framework encompassing an intercultural citizenry' which is neither recognised nor represented equally within and by society's institutions (p. 58).

Multiculturalism, multilingualism and interculturality seem to be, thus, desired and promoted by language-in-education policies if intercultural encounters occur amongst citizens from different nation-states. Local and national linguistic and cultural diversity can be portrayed as unwelcome, or even disregarded, by official policy documents. Although the exercise of citizenship as a result of the societal public engagements within the formal democratic participation is recognised and, commonly, favourite, self- and/or unofficially-granted citizenship can be obtained through resistance. Despite the policymakers' efforts to standardise and promote sociocultural and linguistic values belonging to the dominant class(es), those directly involved in the teaching-learning process – practitioners and students – should not be expected to accept passively those policies. The next section discusses policy enactment as a possibility to (re)write contextualised language-in-education policies.

2. LANGUAGE-IN-EDUCATION POLICY ENACTMENT

The gap between the policymakers' perspectives on education and the practitioners' viewpoints and realities can be a result of the practitioners' underrepresentation in the decision-making processes; moreover, it is one of the factors that contributes to the development of two opposite reactions from practitioners towards policy: (1) complete disengagement; or (2) uncritical implementation (Fullan, 2007; Nudzor, 2009). Excluding the practitioners from the policymaking stages, while relying on their work to put policies into practice, characterises a top-down implementation of decontextualised measures. In other words, policymakers and, as a consequence, policies disregard the 'different culture, histories, traditions and communities of practice that co-exist in schools' by paralleling standardisation to equality (Ball et al., 2012). The construction of an idealised homogenisation, therefore, does not provide practitioners with different policies for diverse contexts, since it encourages passive implementation rather than critical enactment.

Ball et al. (2012) argued that, unlike policy implementation, policy enactment allows practitioners to interpret policies while contextualising them to their communities, schools and classrooms. Policy enactment, in this

sense, captures the sociocultural and ethnolinguistic diversity, complexity and dynamism within a classroom whereas policy implementation confines practice to a forged homogeneity and linearity that are portrayed as equal opportunities. This (re)contextualisation process through which language-in-education policies must go in order to be enacted in a manner that addresses educational goals and agendas within specific realities is usually carried by practitioners. Given that language-in-education policies must be enacted alongside other education policies – which might compete with each other, enactors might have to compromise so that the documented idealised contexts can be adjusted to represent their everyday realities.

Taking into account the different levels of contextualisation that might be required to enact policies, Ball et al. (2012) suggested a framework for policy enactment based on four overlapping and interconnected contextual dimensions: (1) situated contexts (e.g. local and historical aspects); (2) professional cultures (e.g. teachers' values and commitments); (3) material contexts (e.g. physical aspects of the school); and (4) external context. It is important to highlight that such framework offers a starting point, instead of strict guidelines, to practitioners who choose to make sense of policies rather than implementing them uncritically. (Re)contextualising policies involves (a) interpretation, or retrospectively- and prospectively-guided decoding while considering the four contextual dimensions within the education setting; and (b) translation, or assuming an inter-place between policy and practice (Ball et al., 2012).

Considering that policy enactment occurs constantly, the following eight distinct policy actors have been identified amongst those involved in policy enactment:

(1) narrators, who interpret, filter and explain policies to fellow enactors;
(2) entrepreneurs or policy advocates, who (re)structure policies by combining several aspects of different policies and assure critical engagement of other enactors;
(3) outsiders, who, without being practitioners, contribute to the school community and share their interpretations of policies;
(4) transactors, who are responsible for policy accountability, monitoring, supporting and/or facilitating;
(5) enthusiasts or models, who translate and enact policy while practicing;
(6) translators, who offer guidance to fellow enactors;
(7) critics, who provide enactors with a counterdiscourse to those of enthusiasts and translators by problematising and/or resisting to policy enactment; and
(8) receivers, who rely on other actors' interpretation and translation of policy (Ball et al., 2012).

Despite the identified categorisation, policy enactors tend to assume more than one role within the policy enactment process and, therefore, multiple actions might be developed by the same actor – which reflects the multidimensionality of change in practice and the need for collective authorship regarding policy to avoid lack of criticality (Fullan, 2007). Amongst the many manifestations of language-in-education policy enactment, curriculum development, syllabus design and the in-class teaching-learning process are emphasised in the next sections for their potential in nurturing teachers' and students' participation.

2.1 Curriculum Development

The process of developing curriculum for foreign language education might be one of the first stages of language-in-education policy enactment; moreover, it may be the first stage in which foreign language teachers participate. Nevertheless, the definition of curriculum and its purposes have been extensively problematised, since attempts to conceptualise curriculum rarely consider it in its fullness (Marsh, 2004). Barnett (2000, 2009) acknowledged the multidimensions of a curriculum by defining it as an educational project aiming to produce subjectivities, a pedagogical vehicle via which change might occur through specific encounters between human beings and knowledge. Furthermore, Barnett (2009) advised that all the complex and different dimensions of a curriculum should be both justifiable and problematised in a critical, educational and democratic fashion in order to avoid turning the curriculum into a content table. Despite not covering the entirety of the curriculum, Barnett's definition recognises the fundamental characteristic of a curriculum – that it is unfinished, a "work in progress".

Moore (2000) argued that a curriculum cannot be developed without being intertwined to the sociocultural contexts in which it is expected to be implemented and, thus, it cannot represent neutrality or unchallenged theoretical assumptions. Rather, a curriculum must be the result of communal debates around desired social changes which influence the teaching-learning process so that education can be transformational while encouraging social agency and democratisation of knowledge (Moore, 2000). Foreign language curriculum development, in turn, can be described as the efforts to identify and combine (1) the knowledge, skills, and values that students should learn; (2) the experiences with which students should be provided; and (3) the processes through which teaching and learning should be managed (Richards, 2001). In other words, foreign language curriculum development is a sort of writing and rewriting exercise during which processes, sub-processes and different sets of elements must be considered.

Based on the multiplicity and complexity of the foreign language classroom, Nation and Macalister (2010) proposed the model presented in Figure 1.

The model's inner circle represents the syllabus and conveys "goals" in the centre – which promote foreign language teachers' reflection upon their students' general and specific, common and individual goals – related to content and sequencing, format and presentation, and monitoring and assessing. The processes comprising the syllabus design connect the outer circles – which represent the other fundamental items that need to be considered for the development of curriculum for foreign language education. In this sense, Nation and Macalister's model attributes a great importance to the goals circle; however, the process of syllabus design is not equated to that of curriculum development but intrinsically connected to it alongside the factors that form the environment and needs circles. For Richards (2001b), because it is a comprehensive process, foreign language curriculum development must consider fully the needs of the group of students in order to address those needs.
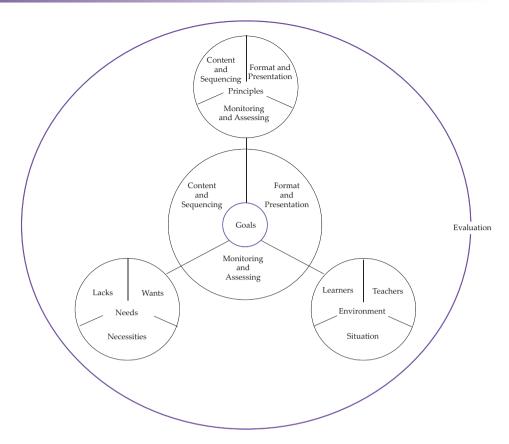
Figure 1. Nation and Macalister's Model for Foreign Language Curriculum Development.

Although Richards' argument is valid and corroborates Nation and Macalister's model, a group of foreign language students will, most likely, present individual educational needs as well as collective. However, external factors – such as time allocated to foreign language classes within a school – can encourage the disregard for individual needs. Richards (2001b) argued that the emphasis on the students' needs and the influence of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) on foreign language education contribute to the development of a communicative-driven curriculum – which means, the curriculum organising principles aim to promote communication in the target language. Mickan (2013) highlighted that the development of more current and effective foreign language pedagogies did not diminish the influence of CLT on foreign language education.

Several advantages and disadvantages of the most common types of foreign language curricula – task-, genre- and text-based – have been presented by Mickan as follows:

(1) the task-based curriculum promotes negotiation through the use of the target language to perform assorted tasks with palpable results; however, it does not move away from a grammar-driven measurement and assessment of the students' language abilities;

(2) the genre-based curriculum encourages the foreign language students to analyse patterns and recurrences within discourse genres, but it generalises genres by portraying social discourses as predictable and normative;

(3) the text-based curriculum, which presents similar disadvantages of those related to the genre-based curriculum, focuses on the contextualised social aspect of language use practices (Mickan, 2013).

The inadequacy of those and other single-method-based curricula lies on the constant development of new goals, technologies, approaches by researchers and practitioners who are committed to advance the field of foreign language education. The multiple dimensions of the foreign language curriculum development process need to be considered fully. Some frameworks address the complexity and multiple dimensions on which curriculum developers can rely to develop foreign language curriculum (see Mickan, 2013; Nation and Macalister, 2010). Nevertheless, such frameworks, as any other guidelines for curriculum development, should be perceived as theoretically- and/or empirically-based suggestions that need to be interpreted, adapted and, mostly, contextualised critically. Amongst the foreign language curriculum dimensions, the syllabus design, which involves planning the course content and structuring it into a self-contained learning sequence, can be the most concrete reflection of the pedagogical goals.

2.2   Syllabus Design

Nation and Macalister (2010) divided twenty principles of foreign language education into the three key processes around which the inner circle – the syllabus design circle – of their model for curriculum development has been placed. Figure 2 presents the categorised principles.

Content and Sequencing	Format and Presentation	Monitoring and Assessment
Frequency: provide the best possible coverage of language in use through the inclusion of items that occur frequently	Motivation: learners schould be interested and excited about learning the language and value this learning	
Strategies and autonomy: train learners in how to learn a language and how to monitor and be aware of their learning	Four strands: include a roughly even balance of meaning-focused input, language-focused learning, meaning-focused output and fluency activities	Ongoing needs and environment analysis: the selection, ordering, presentation, and assessment of the material in a language course should be based on a continuing careful consideration of the learners and their needs, the teaching conditions, and the time and resources available.
Spaced retrieval: providing learners with spaced, repeated opportunities to retrieve and give attention to wanted items in various contexts	Comprehensible input: provide substantial quantities of interesting comprehensible receptive activity in both listening and reading	
Language system: focus on the generalisable features of the language	Fluency: provide activities aimed at increasing the fluency of already known language receptively and productively	
Keep moving forward: ciover useful language item, skills and strategies	Output: push learners to produce language in various spoken and written discourse types	
Teachability: take into account the most favourable sequencing of these items and learners' readiness to learn them	Deliberate learning: include language-focused learning regarding the sound system, spelling, vocabulary, grammar and discourse areas	
Learning burden: help learners to use previous knowledge effectively	Time on task: spend as much time as possible on using and focusing on thee second language	Feedback: learners should receive helpful feedback which will allow them to improve the quality of their language use.
Interference: sequence items in order to make them provide positive effect on each other for learning so that interference effects can be avoided	Depth of processing: learners should deeply process the item to be learnt	
	Integrative motivation: learners should be encouraged to have positive attitudes to the language, its users, the teacher's skills and their own chance of success in learning the language	
	Learning style: provide learners with opportunities to use the materials in ways that suit their individuality	

Figure 2. Nation and Macalister's twenty principles of foreign language education

The first group of principles, categorised under content and sequencing, is related to the content and the order in which language items are planned to be presented during the foreign language course – or "the what". The second group of principles, in turn, focuses on the development of strategies on which foreign language teachers can rely to organise and present what has been planned – or "the how". Finally, the third group of principles is dedicated to monitoring, assessing and, to a certain extent, evaluating the "what" and the "how". Thus, not only is the foreign language syllabus a statement of content but also a specific description of (1) the linguistic resources and abilities which are planned to be developed; (2) the contexts in which the target language and its varieties might be used; and (3) the sociocultural purposes intrinsic to the teaching-learning process (Nunan, 1988; Rajaee Nia et al., 2012; Richards, 2001a; Wait, 1990).

Mickan (2013) argued that a syllabus should be a well-thought set of aims – focusing on the foreign language programme social purposes; objectives – describing possible social participations and practices for the students; and outcomes – the students' progression within the programme and in real-world experiences. Those aims, objectives and outcomes, can reflect impractical and, above all, unrealistic expectations when the syllabus design process does not include the participation of the foreign language teachers. Internally-designed syllabi can offer foreign language teachers the autonomy to tailor the focus of the programme according to the classroom specificities (e.g. students' language needs). Including the foreign language students in the discussion and considering their individual as well as their collective needs might allow the students to take their place, as enactors, within the teaching-learning process. Rajaee Nia et al. (2012), however, warned that the foreign language students' needs should not constrain the students' learning experiences or opportunities of interaction in the target language. Expanding, rather than limiting, teaching and learning opportunities is a pedagogical and ideological choice which an internally-designed syllabus must address.

Amongst the most common foreign language syllabi, Wilkins (1976) highlights the (1) analytical syllabus, that focuses on the learning purposes and performance; and (2) the synthetic syllabus, around which language resources are arranged to be taught/learned separately and accumulatively. Nunan's (1988) process-oriented syllabus and product-oriented syllabus are paralleled to those of Wilkins, since the first is based on learning experiences whereas the latter focuses on the students' acquired knowledge and skills as an instructional outcome. In this sense, while a synthetic and product-oriented foreign language syllabus is structural and situational, an analytical and process-oriented foreign language syllabus is task- and content-based, procedural and negotiated. Since a task-based foreign language syllabus tends to be a realisation of CLT, the students' language needs and the teachers' pedagogical goals might be equated, respectively, to communicative needs and the recognition of grammatical and interactional patterns which can be replicated across contexts.

Nunan (2004) argued that a task-based syllabus may consist of a set of tasks grouped randomly into topics or themes with the purpose to present and/or develop language functions and grammar. Such organisation can be easily offered by externally-designed foreign language syllabi presented as

table of content in textbooks and/or assessment criteria informing proficiency examinations. Richards (2001c) stated that foreign language course books or textbooks 'serve as the basis for much of the language input (…) and language practice that occur in classroom' and, therefore, without those resources, worldwide foreign language education would not be possible (p.251). Although Richards' statement generalises the use of such instructional materials and overestimates their role by disregarding teachers' and students' criticality, the influence of published textbooks on foreign language education is irrefutable; however, it is not wholly positive.

Challenging foreign language textbooks means to analyse critically their linguistic and sociocultural representations of the target language, since they usually legitimise certain kinds of knowledge in order to be accommodated to as many educational contexts as possible (Canale, 2016; Forman, 2014; Gray, 2010). Furthermore, culture, when addressed by foreign language textbooks, is often presented in a selective manner with the purpose to satisfy the consumers of those materials by promoting specific ideologies rather than focusing the pedagogical lens into the diverse sociocultural fabric of society. Kramsch (2014) explained such tendency by connecting CLT and task-based syllabi to (1) the commodification of language teaching materials; (2) the presentation of culture similar to travel agency brochures; and (3) the superficial representation of diversity. Canale (2016) rightly compared the publishers' strategies of simplifying sociocultural phenomena in the name of a pseudo-neutrality to a hide-and-seek game during which deliberate and ideologically-driven choices are made regarding what is and what is not presented.

Proficiency examinations, in turn, influence both instructional materials and syllabus within the foreign language education field. According to Buttjes (1990), proficiency examinations have the potential to constrain teaching and learning experiences and, at the same time, to certify, within society, one's linguistic abilities in a foreign language. Although several proficiency examinations are claimed to simulate real-world interactional contexts, they usually require foreign language students to perform determined types of tasks during which transferable knowledge and skills must be (re)produced in exchange for an official standardised certification (Kramsch, 2005). In other words, what is not covered by or considered relevant to the completion of the tasks in a proficiency examination – such as issues concerning sociocultural diversity, identity and citizenship – might not be included in the foreign language syllabus due to the washback effect (Shohamy et al., 1996).

3. FINAL REMARKS

Amongst the many agents of enactment, the role of teachers and students must be emphasised since (a) it is in the classroom that actual enactment takes place; and (b) teachers and students are both subjects to and objects of policy (Ball et al., 2012). Although language-in-education policy might present and/or promote standardisation as a path towards equality, foreign language teachers may not share the same pedagogical goals, sociocultural agendas and/or theoretical assumptions of those of policymakers. Each foreign language student, in turn, can also have different learning needs

and/or expectations, which means that a foreign language classroom may present as many educational contexts as individuals involved in the teaching-learning process. It is in the teaching-learning process itself that already (re)contextualised language-in-education policies are (re)written in order to address specificities. It is in the classroom and through critical foreign language teachers and students that policies, curricula and syllabi are (re)enacted to advance foreign language education to beyond the classroom.

Nevertheless, foreign language teachers and students are usually those whose representation can be disregard, denied even, during the policymaking process. In fact, the participation of teachers and students in the such process does not necessarily mean that their interests and input are being considered; rather, it might be used to promote a sense of democracy within the group of practitioners (Cury, 1996; Fávero et al., 1992). Byrne and Ozga (2008) and Ozga and Jones (2006) argued that the relationship between educational research and policymaking is often used by policymakers to justify the prioritisation of researchers' perspectives over those of practitioners. Although researchers might consult with practitioners and/or conduct their research in foreign language classrooms, policymakers can rely on researchers to present policy to practitioners while convincing them to adopt it. In this sense, a relevant question should be raised: does research about foreign language education inform language-in-education policy or is research tailored to fit in policymakers' agendas?

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