



Editorial introduction: Advocacy issues and research in language policy

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It is hard to deny that an advocacy lens, or advocacy work, is all too often missing in language policy work and/or applied linguistics research. However, given the complex dynamics of the current era, we are strongly convinced that we should engage more in advocacy work and reflect on the role of researchers as agents of advocacy. With this special issue we aim to contribute to this challenge. New research findings about the use of advocacy initiatives in language policy and their impact are being discussed. Each of the six papers exemplify how language policy researchers go beyond doing research on language policy issues by using these findings for creating social change. They show how researchers can be actively involved in advocacy actions and activism, and hence exploit their agency to change unjust systems, to reform policies, and address issues that bring about equity and social justice. Each of these papers are strong examples of how advocacy can be carried out.

Advocacy refers to types of acts or processes by stakeholders that aim at recommending, promoting, negotiating, and influencing policies in order to realize societal and educational changes. In language policy, advocacy groups attempt to influence education and social agendas. An example is the adoption of language policies to support refugees who face major challenges and difficulties in school due to proficiency in the new language, or a new multilingual policy to expand the language repertoire of the actors. Various agents are involved in language policy advocacy such as researchers who apply their research findings to benefit students' learning, policy makers, NGOs, or representatives of marginalized groups who seek equity and opportunities for immigrants.

As for the processes, language policy advocacy is about the dynamic interplay of gathering and sharing knowledge in collaboration with different stakeholders. Devel-

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oping analytical knowledge (episteme) is at the core of academia. However, the role of the researcher in language policy advocacy is also about developing practical knowledge, craft, art, tools and contexts (techne), as well as practical wisdom and ethics (phronesis). It is often about finding the balance between one's ethical stance/position and policy developments. It is also about finding the balance between our values with regard to language policy on the one hand, and practical considerations on the other.

Negotiating and influencing language policy processes to realize societal and educational changes implies a focus on the interplay and power dynamics of language management, language practices and agents' dispositions. Acts of advocacy are by all means not uni-directional processes (from researcher to practitioner/policy maker). In order to realize sustainable change, it is important to create contexts of shared ownership through co-creation. This implies cooperation, communication and professionalization.

Thus, language advocacy is not only dynamic and complex, it is also time consuming, messy and self-reflexive. It is more than feeding data findings to influential politicians and policy makers. It is about engagement based on ethically informed, solid, convincing and valid scientific research data. It involves intensive and sustainable *on-site* cooperation and engagement with different stakeholders; a co-creative process of developing tools, training, coaching, workshops, seminars with practitioners and government agencies who can support changed policies; and finally, language advocacy involves proactive engagement through media coverage, debates, and political engagement.

In addition, language policy advocacy is in some cases an intensive long-term interaction with policy makers, politicians, local communities, and schools instead of only a confrontational approach. Yet, at other times, advocacy work has to be of a more activist nature. Language advocacy is also about (re)framing the discourses of our research and our findings, and taking up an advocacy literacy approach (i.e., competencies in using strategies for effective advocacy work). And finally, advocacy is a continuous process where positive impact can never be guaranteed. There are contingencies, as the route is not linear and often depends on unknown variables or sometimes even coincidence. In sum, we argue here for an ecological approach to language policy advocacy, which implies that it is organic and intersectional in nature; an interplay of different features and actors; representing the combination of bottom-up and top-down factors.

In each of the articles, multiple features of the above framework are being used in different configurations. The researchers are engaged in advocacy activities targeting a variety of language policy issues in different contexts. While some papers are examples of how to do advocacy work (Hannes Carlsen & Lorenzo Rocca; Deygers; Or), others analyze advocacy work or further elaborate on the definitions of what advocacy work is (Spolsky; Flubacher & Bush; Tannebaum, Shohamy & Inbar-Lourie). Each article presents specific cases of motivations, agency, acts of negotiations with various groups, and some impact of documents.

The first article in this special issue was written by Bernard Spolsky, building on his former triangular model of language policy. In this paper, he focuses more on the actors and identifies two profiles of actors who are involved in taking part in

language policy advocacy. These include managers who have, and advocates who do not have, the authority to mandate changes. He demonstrates this by referring to cases of successful and unsuccessful language policies. The second article, by Iair G. Or, focuses on the concept of typographical advocacy. Taking the case of Spanish and Paraguayan Guarani, Or aims to raise the awareness of typographical issues in language planning and policy, both as part of broader multilingual awareness and as a tool for solving practical language problems in times of increased dependency on computing and mobile devices. The third paper, by Mi-Cha Flubacher and Brigitta Busch, reviews fifteen years of language advocacy work by an NGO based in Vienna, focusing on language rights of minorities and minoritized speakers in the Austrian context and challenging traditional assumptions in language policy. Based on this case, Flubacher and Bush discuss what language advocacy actually means in the context of increased neoliberalism, securitization and virtual linguistic citizenship. The next article is by Michal Tannenbaum, Elana Shohamy and Ofra Inbar-Lourie, who evaluate a series of advocacy strategies by language policy scholars in Israel that led to a proposal by the Ministry of Education for the development of a new multilingual language policy in Israeli schools. The paper details various advocacy strategies that led to the proposal for the new policy. The paper specifically focuses on the dynamic collaborative creation of a policy document submitted by a consortium of language policy experts and its impact on the Ministry of Education. The fifth article, by Bart Deygers, discusses the implementation of a collaborative approach to policy analysis in the context of language requirements for admissions at universities in Belgium. Based on this case, Deygers argues for a model that intertwines applied linguistics research and language policy impact, on the condition that researchers have a fundamental understanding of the policy-making context. In the last article, Cecilie Hamnes Carlsen and Lorenzo Rocca adopt a more activist definition of advocacy and introduce the concept of language test activism. They ask whether those who develop language tests should aim to remain neutral, or whether they have a moral and professional responsibility to act when their tests are misused. By taking the Norwegian and Italian language testing policies for immigrants, Hamnes Carlsen and Rocca showcase how language test developers have been advocates for justice and worked actively to prevent misuse of their tests.

Taken together, this special issue contributes new research findings about the use of advocacy initiatives in language policy and their impact. As we discussed above regarding the role of researchers as agents of advocacy, a major finding from the six papers is that language policy researchers not only do research on language policy issues but continue to use these findings for creating social change. The authors also show how researchers can be actively involved in advocacy actions and activism, and hence exploit their agency to change unjust systems, to reform policies, and address issues that bring about equity and social justice.

To conclude, we would like to acknowledge once more that in the past we were often inattentive to the ways that we have been part of the problem in our advocacy efforts. Also, as noted, our focus is on researchers and their advocacy role. In doing so, it does not center community and the need for their leadership/control in determining LP. We would like to emphasize that the dynamic interactions between researchers and community is key for continued research on these and related topics.

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