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# Revisiting Orientations in Language Planning: Problem, Right, and Resource as an Analytical Heuristic

## **Abstract**

In 1984, Richard Ruiz set forth three orientations to language planning: language as problem, language as right, and language as resource. Since that time, the orientations have only become more powerful, rising to the level of paradigm in the field of language policy and planning (LPP). In this paper, we revisit Ruiz's orientations. By drawing upon Ruiz's own work as well as the work of other scholars who have been inspired by him, we unpack the ideas aligned with each orientation in order to reflect upon the application of the three orientations as a heuristic for LPP. In contrast to critiques that the three orientations do not map onto the political reality of policy situations, we argue that they are analytically useful as both *etic* concepts that can be used by researchers to guide deductive analysis about the values that emerge from messy policy debate and negotiation and as (latent) *emic* concepts in situations when people express their beliefs about language.

## **Keywords**

bilingual education, discourse analysis, language planning, language policy, language rights, minority languages

## **Disciplines**

Bilingual, Multilingual, and Multicultural Education | Curriculum and Instruction | Curriculum and Social Inquiry | Education | Educational Administration and Supervision | Educational Assessment, Evaluation, and Research | Educational Methods | Educational Psychology | Language and Literacy Education

**Revisiting Orientations in Language Planning:  
Problem, Right, and Resource as an Analytical Heuristic**

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**Abstract**

In 1984, Richard Ruiz set forth three orientations to language planning: language as problem, language as right, and language as resource. Since that time, the orientations have only become more powerful, rising to the level of paradigm in the field of language policy and planning (LPP). In this paper, we revisit Ruiz's orientations. By drawing upon Ruiz's own work as well as the work of other scholars who have been inspired by him, we unpack the ideas aligned with each orientation in order to reflect upon the application of the three orientations as a heuristic for LPP. In contrast to critiques that the three orientations do not map onto the political reality of policy situations, we argue that they are analytically useful as both *etic* concepts that can be used by researchers to guide deductive analysis about the values that emerge from messy policy debate and negotiation and as (latent) *emic* concepts in situations when people express their beliefs about language.

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Few concepts in language planning have been elevated to the level of paradigm. Among these are the three orientations articulated by Richard Ruiz. He set forth these orientations while a brand new (and unknown) assistant professor at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, where at the time he was the only faculty member with an interest in language education policy issues. With his students Dianne Bowcock, Maria Dalupan, Nancy Hornberger, Julia Richards, and Joan Strouse, he formed the Language in Education Planning (LEP) research group to discuss their work in progress (Ruiz 2010, p. 167; 2011, p. 176-177). Professor Ruiz was not only a congenial and supportive adviser<sup>1</sup>, but a brilliant one, who inspired his students with his original and enduring ideas. Not least among these are his language planning orientations.

Ruiz had been teaching a course in language planning and policy<sup>2</sup> at UW since 1980, which he later took with him to University of Arizona, drawing on what literature in language

planning (LP) and bilingual education there was at the time – the same literature informing his 1984 Orientations piece, including Fishman’s various LP volumes, Haugen, Heath, Macias, Tollefson’s early writing, and others.<sup>3</sup> Sitting on his bookshelf in his Bascom Hill office was the series of five volumes entitled *Bilingual Education: Current Perspectives*, published by the Center for Applied Linguistics in 1977, taking up perspectives from Social Science, Linguistics, Law, and Education, with a final Synthesis volume. At that time, this was one of the best and only sources of scholarly perspectives on these topics, although Ruiz also drew broadly from political science, philosophy and other fields, as one can readily see from his reference list not only in his Orientations piece, but in all his writings. Nancy has a vivid memory of sitting with him in his office, as he explained that he could detect at least three ways language planners and policy makers tended to think about language and language diversity in relation to education and society – as problem, as right, and as resource.<sup>4</sup> In his characteristically humble and collaborative way, he went on to ask her what she thought about that idea. She was immediately inspired by his analysis and shortly thereafter incorporated it in her own dissertation and later writings, teaching, and mentoring up to the present day. It is an idea that has not worn out with time, but has only become more powerful.<sup>5</sup>

In formulating the orientations, Ruiz sought to draw attention to the values about language underlying policymaking. Specifically, he was concerned about the prevailing deficit perspective on linguistic minorities and sought to offer an alternative and empowering perspective that could draw attention to the positive aspects of individual and societal multilingualism (Hornberger, 1990, p. 24; Ruiz, 2010, p. 166; see also McKay & Wong, 1988 for a collection of papers). In this paper, we revisit Ruiz’s orientations by reflecting on their nature and how they can be used as an analytical heuristic.

### **Orientations in Language Planning**

Ruiz set forth the three fundamental orientations as a way to guide critical analysis and reflection about “what is thinkable about language in society” not only to facilitate examination of the *status quo* but also as a way to imagine policy possibilities (Ruiz, 1984, p. 16).<sup>6</sup> Any particular policy document or national policy situation may have tendencies that lean towards one or more of the orientations. Highlighting these tendencies raises awareness about what kind of policy development is needed in order to establish or maintain equity. In the following sections, we draw upon Ruiz’s own work as well as the work of other scholars who have been inspired by him in order to unpack and reflect upon the ideas aligned with each orientation.

Over the years since Ruiz first presented the tripartite orientations, they have been widely used to inform the analysis of language policy and planning (LPP) situations on national (e.g., McKay & Freedman, 1990; Akinnaso, 1994; Evans & Hornberger, 2011; Horner, 2011) and community (e.g., Zéphir, 1997; Mora, Wink, & Wink, 2001; Cummins, Chow, & Schechter, 2006; Harrison, 2007) scales. He intended them to function as a heuristic in this way, explaining that the orientations “delimit the ways we talk about language and language issues, they determine the basic questions we ask, the conclusions we draw from the data, and even the data themselves” (Ruiz, 1984, p. 16). The fundamental characteristics, or (pre)dispositions (Ruiz, 2010, p. 157), of each orientation are inventoried in Table 1. In our discussion of each orientation below, we elaborate on these further and present key questions that emerge. Neither the inventory nor the questions that follow are meant to be exhaustive. Rather, they are starting points for LPP researchers and policy agents to use in guiding critical reflection, analysis, and discussion. More specific questions can be generated with respect to particular planning and implementation situations (see Lo Bianco, 2015). Questions such as these are relevant on or across different scales of space (e.g., national, regional, community, school, classroom) and time (synchronic and diachronic), and they can be applied to explicit

policy documents, implicit or *de facto* policy that has emerged from practice, media representations of policy situations, and the actions/statements of policy agents.

### *Problem*

As a start, it is useful to clarify the notion of *problem*. In LPP, scholars often refer to *language problems* that policy and planning are meant to address. Although, as Ruiz (1984, p. 18) points out, early LPP work was focused on solving societal *problems* engendered by linguistic conflicts in the nation-building efforts of developing countries, *problem* in the language as problem orientation is not concomitant with the object of focus in LPP. One of the most venerable journals in the field, for instance, is the *Journal of Language Problems and Language Planning*, now in its fortieth year. The journal's aim is to serve as a venue for research about "relationships between and among language communities, particularly in international contexts, and in the adaptation, manipulation, and standardization of language for international use."<sup>7</sup> Lo Bianco (2015, p. 70) notes that LPP researchers, whether conducting research about a policy situation or consulting on policy formation, seek to identify the scope of language and communication factors involved.

Table 1. (Pre)dispositions in the Orientations to Language Planning

Language as Problem	Language as Right	Language as Resource
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monolingualism in a dominant majority language is valued</li> <li>• Policies seek to limit or eliminate multilingualism</li> <li>• Linguistic diversity is a threat to assimilation and national unity</li> <li>• Minority languages are a threat to the status of the dominant majority language</li> <li>• Language problems are (falsely) equated with social problems</li> <li>• Speaking a minority language is a communicative disability to be overcome</li> <li>• Minority language speakers are defined based on missing linguistic abilities in the dominant majority language</li> <li>• Minority language maintenance is unnecessary; minority language loss is a solution to language problems</li> <li>• Language education aims at transition to the dominant majority language</li> <li>• Educational programs that facilitate bilingual language development exacerbate social divisiveness</li> <li>• Skepticism that bilingual programs in general may focus on the minority language to the detriment of majority language development</li> <li>• Bilingualism is related to cognitive difficulties and reduced academic achievement</li> <li>• Second language and mainstream immersion programs are favored over bilingual education (i.e., minority students are best served by as much exposure to the dominant majority language as possible)</li> <li>• Language learning is generally subtractive</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Language mediates access to society including, but not limited to, employment, healthcare, jurisprudence, voting, education, and media</li> <li>• Concern that linguistic inequality leads to social inequality</li> <li>• Rights to use one's language in specific domains, such as those above, are codified in <i>de jure</i> policy (positive rights)</li> <li>• Rights to non-discrimination based on language are codified in <i>de jure</i> policy (negative rights)</li> <li>• Rights may be framed in relation to international conventions and treaties</li> <li>• Speaking and maintaining one's language is a human right</li> <li>• Access to civil rights may not be denied due to linguistic ability</li> <li>• Language is related to personal freedom</li> <li>• Language rights may be limited to certain specifically defined individuals or groups</li> <li>• Rights may focus on opportunities to attain proficiency in a dominant majority language and/or opportunities to develop and maintain minority languages</li> <li>• Academic programs for linguistic minorities facilitate equal access to education; program types may vary</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Societal multilingualism and cultural diversity are valued</li> <li>• National unity includes linguistic diversity</li> <li>• Languages are resources for everyone, not only for linguistic minorities and their communities</li> <li>• Languages are both a personal and a national resource</li> <li>• Linguistic minority communities have unique linguistic expertise to contribute to society</li> <li>• Languages have extrinsic value for purposes such as national security, diplomacy, military action, espionage, business, media, public relations, among other possibilities</li> <li>• Languages have intrinsic value for purposes such as cultural reproduction, community relations, identity construction, building self-esteem, intellectual engagement, civic participation, among other possibilities</li> <li>• Rationales for language maintenance are aligned with extrinsic and/or intrinsic values</li> <li>• The interests and needs of a nation or of linguistic minorities themselves may be variously foregrounded</li> <li>• Bi-/multilingualism can enhance academic achievement</li> <li>• Awareness of different languages and cultures reduces ethnocentrism and xenophobia and enhances intercultural understanding</li> <li>• Linguistic minorities are resources for the multilingual development of a dominant majority</li> <li>• Academic programs focus on the development of life-long bi-/multilingualism; program types may be designed for linguistic minorities or both linguistic minorities and a dominant majority</li> <li>• Language learning is generally additive</li> </ul>

Likewise, the field of educational linguistics, which includes educational LPP, is often said to be *problem-centered*, meaning that it focuses on matters that need to be addressed in practice (Hornberger, 2001). *Problems* in this sense might best be characterized as issues or themes that emerge from practical needs and circumstances that are the object of focus in applied research (Hult, 2010b). Adding potentially further confusion, *problem-centered* is sometimes rendered as *problem-oriented*, which must not be confused with the language as problem orientation. It should also be noted, though, that some early LPP work has been criticized for taking a language as problem orientation to language problems (Ruiz, 1984, p. 18; cf. May, 2015, p. 48).

The language as problem orientation is a set of values that stem from a monolingual ideal and assimilationist mindset (Hornberger, 1990, p. 24; Evans & Hornberger, 2005, p. 94). In this view, linguistic diversity is a threat to national unity which is best achieved with a single, common language (Ruiz, 1984, p. 21; Akinnaso, 1994, p. 142). The vitality of linguistic *minority* languages<sup>8</sup>, in turn, weakens the status of a national language by competing with it in various domains of society (Ruiz, 1984, p. 19-20; Horner, 2011, p. 502). Policies following this orientation aim to limit or entirely eliminate multilingualism in society in favor of encouraging the development of the dominant majority language (Ruiz, 2010, p. 166).

Linguistic minorities are framed using a deficit perspective that emphasizes their lack of linguistic abilities in the dominant majority language rather than focusing on their bi-/multilingual repertoires (Ruiz, 1984, p. 19). Their languages are not seen as an asset, but as a disability that needs to be overcome (Ruiz, 1984, p. 19; Crawford, 1998, p. 52; Mora, Wink, & Wink, 2001, p. 438). It is a disability that is perceived as preventing their access to key domains such as education, employment, and civic engagement and that hinders national unity (Zéphir, 1997, p. 224-225; Harrison, 2007, p. 87). Language problems may be (falsely) aligned with social problems such as poverty or low academic achievement (Ruiz, 1984, p. 21; Crawford, 1998, p. 52; Cummins, Chow, & Schecter, 2006, p. 298). Educational programs that follow from the language as problem orientation seek to remedy this deficit with subtractive language teaching that emphasizes transition to the dominant majority language (Mora, Wink, & Wink, 2001, p. 438; Hult, 2014, p. 169). Indeed, minority language maintenance is deemed unnecessary because at best it contributes to linguistic marginalization of certain communities and at worst it contributes to splintering a nation (Ruiz, 1984, p. 20; Petrovic, 2005, p. 398-399; Ruiz, 2010, p. 166). It may be seen as a duty for linguistic minorities to learn a national language in order to prevent these possibilities (Horner, 2011, p. 503).

The educational program models informed by this orientation tend to be monolingual in structure, with the rationale that linguistic minorities are best served by as much exposure to the dominant language as possible in the interest of “inclusiveness” (Ruiz, 1984, p. 20). Programs may take the form of specialized second language courses focusing on the dominant majority language or of immersion in mainstream classrooms, which in extreme cases can become *submersion* as students are placed in classes with no structured support for language learning (Wong, 1988; Mora, Wink, & Wink, 2001, p. 439; Wright, 2014). There is often skepticism of bilingual programs as they may be seen as contributing to societal divisiveness by encouraging languages and cultures other than the dominant ones (Baker, 2001, p. 369). Poorly designed and implemented bilingual programs that do not lead to functional bilingualism may exacerbate such concerns and be used as examples to dismiss bilingual education entirely (Gómez, Freeman, & Freeman, 2005, p. 149).

There may also be concern about bilingualism itself. On the one hand, there can be folk beliefs and misunderstandings about relationships between bilingualism and cognitive

difficulties and reduced academic achievement (Baker, 2001, p. 368). On the other hand, monolingual dominant language speakers may feel threatened that their place in the social hierarchy is undermined by programs that foster bilingualism among linguistic minorities, a potentially valuable skill that monolinguals would not possess (Petrovic, 2005, p. 408-409; cf. Horner, 2011).

Key questions that emerge from the language as problem orientation are:

- How is linguistic diversity framed in relation to national unity?
- Which languages are positioned as problems?
- If any languages are prohibited, in what settings and for what functions are they not permitted?
- What social problems, if any, are associated with language problems?
- For whom is language a problem?
- What specific concerns are raised about individual and societal bi-/multilingualism?
- How is language framed in relation to assimilation?
- What challenges are linguistic minorities described as needing to overcome?
- How is the power relationship between the dominant national language and other languages framed?
- In what ways are other languages considered a threat to the status of the dominant national language?
- What resources (human, financial, symbolic, etc.) are provided for the dominant national language but not for other languages?
- To what extent do policies facilitate the elimination or reduction of societal multilingualism?
- How are language programs structured in order to facilitate transition to the dominant language?

### *Right*

Like language as problem, the language as right orientation is compensatory in nature, albeit with entirely different underlying premises. Whereas the language as problem orientation rests on the idea of compensating for a linguistic deficit by focusing on assimilation and transition to a dominant majority language, the language as right orientation seeks to address linguistically-based inequities using compensatory legal mechanisms. Although Ruiz (1984, p. 23) took into account the international scope of language rights in his original formulation of this orientation, it is worth noting that his perspective was particularly informed by the US policy context where language-related rights have been advanced with respect to civil rights rather than language rights *per se*. Although fundamental principles of language rights may transfer globally, how they take shape in practice will vary based on the legal system in which they are implemented (Kontra, Phillipson, & Skutnabb-Kangas, 1999).<sup>9</sup>

Language is a fundamental factor in one's ability to access the life chances afforded by a society through, *inter alia*, employment, healthcare, jurisprudence, voting, education, and media (Ruiz, 1984, p. 22). Legal theory identifies both positive and negative rights, corresponding to what sociolinguists have differentiated as promotion-oriented and tolerance-oriented rights (Kloss, 1971, 1977) or the "right to use your language(s) in the activities of communal life" and the "right to freedom from discrimination on the basis of language" (Macías, 1979, p. 89; cf. Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000, p. 511; Crawford, 1998, p. 62-63). Positive language rights may be set



forth in legislation guaranteeing that a person can use their language in domains of society such as those noted above. Positive rights advance the status of minority languages by expanding the functions for which they can be used while also ensuring equality of access for their speakers. Negative rights may be set forth in *de jure* policies of non-discrimination based on language. These rights interface with other rights. For example, article 14 of the European Convention on Human Rights (emphasis ours) specifies that

The enjoyment of the rights and freedoms set forth in this Convention shall be secured without discrimination on any ground such as sex, race, colour, *language*, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, association with a national minority, property, birth or other status.

Thus, other rights such as the right to a fair trial (article 6), the freedom of expression (article 10), the freedom of assembly and association (article 11), and the right to marry (article 12), among others may not be restricted based on one's language. Language is related to personal freedom (Ruiz, 1984, p. 22; Baker, 2001, p. 370). Specific language rights in a particular polity may also be framed in relation to international charters, conventions, covenants, declarations or treaties such as the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages or the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (Ruiz, 1984, p. 23; Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000, p. 512; Hult, 2014, p. 164).

In the United States, language-related rights have been asserted indirectly, particularly in relation to civil rights based on equal protection and due process in the 14<sup>th</sup> Amendment to the Constitution and various statutes (Crawford, 1998, p. 62-63; see Wong, 1988 for a thorough discussion). For instance, the landmark *Lau v. Nichols* case and the subsequent Lau remedies, which were instrumental in establishing educational support for linguistic minority students, did not grant language rights as such or necessarily signal support for mother tongue development; rather, they provided for compensatory programs that would facilitate equal access to education (Zéphir, 1997, p. 226; Ricento, 2005, p. 355). In practice, rights to language in education emerged from the codification of equal access to civil rights (Petrovic, 2005, p. 399; Ricento, 2005, p. 354-355). The distinction between civil rights and language rights notwithstanding, advocates for linguistic minorities in the United States invoke language rights to argue for equitable treatment in education and in society more widely (Ruiz, 1984, p. 25; Hornberger, 1990, p. 24; cf. Wong, 1988).

In a broad sense, language rights can be understood as what is legally codified about language use, often with special attention to the human and civil rights of minorities to use and maintain their languages (Hornberger, 1990, p. 24; Hult, 2014, p. 164). More cynically, in some polities legal rights to language might be related to advancing primarily the acquisition and use of a national/official dominant language rather than to protecting minority languages (Horner, 2011). Language rights can be expansive or limited in scope (Ruiz, 1984, p. 24). Certain rights may be limited to specific groups or types of speakers (Ruiz, 1984, p. 24-25; Zéphir, 1997, p. 229-230; Cummins, Chow, & Schechter, 2006, p. 298). In ratifying the European Charter for Regional or Minority languages, for instance, Sweden recognized Sámi, Meänkieli, and Finnish as territorial languages, thereby affording them more extensive rights to language in education, law, and government administration than Romani and Yiddish which were recognized as non-territorial languages (Hult, 2004). As another example, Zéphir (1997) notes that the linguistic needs of Haitian Creole speaking students in the United States have often been ignored by

educators who misguidedly identify them as African American, which effectively limits these students' equal rights to educational access because their linguistic needs are not met. Moreover, rights may fall along a continuum of prohibition, toleration, permission, and promotion (Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000, p. 512; cf. Kloss, 1977). At one end, prohibition aligns with the language as problem orientation and legislation would actively forbid certain languages with the aim of assimilation while at the other end, promotion would include legislation that allocates resources for language maintenance and guarantees the use of languages across multiple domains (Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000, p. 513-514). Even the overt granting of language rights may not necessarily guarantee the equitable treatment of linguistic minorities as there remains the possibility of covert resistance to those rights in practice (Ruiz, 1984, p. 24; Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000, p. 511).

The educational programs and related objectives that follow from a language as right orientation may vary depending on where rights fall along the aforementioned continuum and how they are implemented in practice (Mora, Wink, & Wink, 2001). In the United States, when bilingual education is offered or specified in state educational policy, it is often transitional in nature. Academic development of English rather than minority language maintenance or life-long bilingualism tends to be the primary objective (Mora, Wink and Wink, 2001, p. 438). As such, educational policy in the US can be said to be potentially tolerant of minority languages on state and local scales. Even if the national No Child Left Behind policy tended towards a language as problem orientation (Evans & Hornberger, 2005), flexibility in program implementation meant that anything ranging from immersion and English as a second language to transitional and even developmental bilingual education was possible as long as the acquisition of English was a core educational goal (Mora, Wink, & Wink, 2001; Johnson, 2010).<sup>10</sup> A distinction can be made, then, between right to education via language support and right to language (Akinnaso, 1994, p. 141). Compensatory programs may facilitate equal access to education by way of providing linguistic support (whether through second language or transitional bilingual education), but they do not establish education as a mechanism for developing life-long bi-/multilingualism as would the strongest form of promotional language rights (Zéphir, 1997; Crawford, 1998; Baker, 2001, p. 370; Mora, Wink, & Wink, 2001). Key questions that emerge from the language as right orientation are:

- What specific functions for which languages are codified in law or other *de jure* policy?
- In relation to what domains of society are language rights granted?
- What personal freedoms are associated with language?
- What positive language rights are promoted?
- What negative language rights are granted?
- Are language rights granted directly by legislation that explicitly focuses on language or indirectly by legislation that focuses on equal access to other rights or opportunities?
- Where do the granted language rights fall on the prohibition ← → promotion continuum?
- What restrictions or limitations are placed on the granted language rights?
- For whom are language rights granted (i.e., which individuals or groups)?
- How are recipients of language rights defined?
- What intertextual references are there to international charters conventions, covenants, declarations or treaties?

- For what language rights do advocates for linguistic minorities argue?
- What resources (especially human and financial) are allocated to the implementation of language rights?
- What covert or implicit resistance is there in practice to *de jure* language rights?
- What legal foundations exist to facilitate equal access to education for linguistic minorities?
- What language education programs are possible in light of how language rights are specified?
- What opportunities are there in seemingly restrictive policies for offering education in the spirit of language rights principles?

### *Resource*

The main purpose of his 1984 Orientations piece was to offer a counter-narrative to the dominant deficit perspective in the United States (Ruiz, 2010, p. 166). In articulating the language as resource orientation, Ruiz envisioned it as both descriptive and aspirational (Ruiz, 1984, p. 16). He outlined a number of ways in which linguistic diversity could be viewed as a resource rather than as a problem. A heightened awareness of language as resource could be used to draw attention to places in policies, what Hornberger (2005) refers to as “ideological and implementational spaces,” that can be used to leverage multilingual education. Similarly, it could be used to identify schools and programs making use of such implementational spaces. In addition, it could be used to envision future policy and practice that promotes societal multilingualism by expanding individuals’ linguistic repertoires.

Fundamentally, language as resource is the antithesis of the language as problem orientation. Multilingualism and cultural diversity are valued and seen as fully compatible with national unity (Hornberger, 1990, p. 25, 2002, p. 32; Ruiz, 2010, p. 162). Rather than agents of divisiveness, speakers of minority languages are seen as a source of specialized linguistic expertise that is useful for themselves, their communities, and society as a whole (Ruiz, 1984, p. 28). It is thus an inclusive orientation in which linguistic diversity is good for everyone in society, not only linguistic minorities (Cummins, Chow, & Schechter, 2006, p. 299). It is ultimately an additive perspective in which languages are not pitted against each other in an *either* minority language *or* majority language conflict; rather, the ability for speakers to develop advanced bilingualism in *both* a national language *and* another language is considered desirable (Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000, p. 50; Hult, 2014, p. 169). A nation’s social, cultural, economic, and strategic potential is enhanced when its citizens have well developed linguistic repertoires including the national language as well as minority languages and other modern languages (Ruiz, 1984, p. 27; Hornberger, 2002, p. 32). To that end, the orientation encompasses the development and expansion of new multilingual resources as well as the conservation (i.e., language maintenance) of existing resources (Ruiz, 1984, p. 26; Hornberger, 1990, p. 24).

In sum, language is both a personal resource and a national resource (Ruiz, 2010, p. 159). A critical question that follows, then, is how the concept of *resource* is framed. Fundamentally, linguistic resources are different from natural resources. As Ruiz explains,

We can leave the oil in the ground, and it will still be there to use in a hundred years; the more we use it, and the more we use it unwisely, the less we have of it later. Just the opposite is true of language and culture. The more we use these,

the more we have of them; but the longer we neglect their use, the closer we are to extinguishing them. That has already happened for some languages, and we may be starting to see the consequences. The world will one day end, but the overriding cause is more likely to be a shortage of human resources like language and culture than a shortage of physical resources like coal and oil. (1983, p. 65)

As a resource, language may have intrinsic value in relation to cultural reproduction, community relations, inter-generational communication, identity construction, building self-esteem, and intellectual engagement, among other possibilities (Crawford, 1998, p.52; Ruiz, 2010, p. 164). Language may also have extrinsic value with respect to, *inter alia*, national security, diplomacy, military action, espionage, business, media, and public relations (Ruiz, 1984, p. 27; Ricento, 2005, 359).

Concerns have been raised that for reasons of potential political expediency, there has been a tendency among advocates of multilingual education, especially those making the case for heritage language learning, to favor extrinsic arguments (Ricento, 2005; Petrovic, 2005). Ricento (2005) analyzes documents produced by institutions advancing multilingual education such as the Center for Applied Linguistics, the National Foreign Language Center, and the University of California Los Angeles, finding that they tend to highlight the economic and national security benefits of language learning. In doing so, he argues, language is framed as primarily a resource for serving national interests rather than the needs of individual speakers and their communities (Ricento, 2005, p. 363). Furthermore, a language is positioned as having value only in the extent to which it can be marketized; language maintenance is only beneficial if it also serves the needs of the nation, which is potentially morally and ethically problematic (Petrovic, 2005, p. 400; Ricento, 2005, p. 361). Such arguments, Petrovic and Ricento note, are potentially dangerous because they may perpetuate a power imbalance between minority and majority language users whereby the value of minority languages depends upon whether they also serve the greater interests of society as a whole and not only a linguistic minority community (Petrovic, 2005, p. 405; Ricento, 2005, p. 363).

In contrast, Ruiz (1984, p. 27) holds that intrinsic and extrinsic values are both important components of the language as resource orientation. It is naïve, he argues, to exclude economic considerations because they are central to contemporary social life, and he asserts that it is reasonable to advance multilingual education by making positive arguments about the economic value of minority languages provided that such arguments are tempered with the recognition of their intrinsic values as well (Ruiz, 2010, p. 160-162). Indeed, a number of scholars have identified ways in which the language as resource orientation can be applied beyond military-industrial and economic interests. Cummins, Chow, and Schecter (2006), for example, report on a K-5 school in Canada where teachers and university researchers have collaborated on action research projects aimed at promoting biliteracy as an academic resource. Similarly, Mora, Wink, and Wink (2001) point out that enrichment bilingual education can serve as an important resource for academic achievement. Hornberger (1998) documents Indigenous teachers in Brazil for whom their languages are professional resources that they use for creating teaching materials and for interpersonal communication with other teachers to establish co-membership during professional development sessions. Also in relation to professional practice, Harrison (2007) found that bilingual social workers in Australia viewed their bilingualism as a resource for raising their own awareness about the role of language in mediating social work and for relating to clients who are linguistic minorities. On a social dimension, Leung (2014) remarks that

Chinese American speakers of Hoisan-wa use the expression of humor as a resource for strengthening a positive self-image and disarming more widely circulating negative ideologies about this linguistic group. Thus, even if extrinsic value has been used by some advocates of multilingual education, as Petrovic and Ricento point out, the scholarly application of the orientation has been more robust. Rationales for multilingual education and language maintenance, then, can draw on both the intrinsic and extrinsic value of languages. As Ruiz (2010, p. 164-165) concedes, a broader spectrum of intrinsic and extrinsic values within the language as resource orientation could be used to greater effect in sociopolitical advocacy.

A related question that emerges is for whom language is a resource with respect to intrinsic and extrinsic rationales. The interests and needs of a nation or of linguistic minorities themselves may be variously foregrounded. While extrinsic rationales for multilingual language education policy may serve both the interests of linguistic minorities (i.e., enhancing the status of certain languages by promoting them for specific functions) and the interests of society (i.e., by leveraging languages for strategic and economic gain), it is national interest that is the deciding factor (Ruiz, 1984, p. 25-26). Although it could be a win-win proposition in which the needs of minorities are aligned with society as a whole, there is also a potential risk that linguistic minorities will be exploited for the benefit of the dominant elite who stand to benefit most from national strategic and economic gains (Petrovic, 2005, p. 404; Ricento, 2005, p. 362; cf. Ruiz, 2010, p. 160). It is also possible that linguistic minorities could be excluded from a language as resource orientation, as has happened in national contexts where dominant majority speakers are encouraged to learn modern languages while minority language speakers are discouraged from maintaining and developing their languages (Ruiz, 1984, p. 27; Horner, 2011). Alternatively, linguistic minority speakers may be asked to serve society by helping speakers of dominant majority languages learn the minority language, either as interlocutors in language-related internships or as peers in dual-language bilingual programs (Ruiz, 1984, p. 28). In fact, dual-language programs in which both majority and minority language students learn both languages together are becoming increasingly popular among majority language parents who see bilingualism as a potential asset for their children. While it may be a political boon in that such a state of affairs creates a favorable climate for bilingual education, one must still ask the potentially uncomfortable question of whether linguistic minority students are becoming part of the curriculum for dominant majority students (Petrovic, 2005, p. 411, cf. Valdés, 1997; Flores & Schissel, 2014).

Tempering extrinsic rationales with intrinsic ones, as Ruiz (2010) suggests, can mean raising awareness about linguistic minority communities among members of the dominant majority. This is not about focusing on what the linguistic minority community can do for society as a whole, but about building greater understanding and compassion for the lives and experiences of minority communities (Ruiz, 2010, p. 162). In this way, dominant majority language speakers may gain a deeper appreciation of how minority languages serve important functions for identity construction, community relations, and cultural continuity (Ruiz, 2010, p. 164). Going a step further, Ricento (2005, p. 364) asks how far we can develop the principle that national unity includes diversity: can an alternative discourse be advanced in the United States wherein languages other than English are considered intrinsically American rather than “foreign”? A similar question could be asked about minority languages in other contexts around the world. At the very least, greater awareness about different languages and cultures has the potential to reduce ethnocentrism and xenophobia as well as to enhance intercultural understanding (Ruiz, 1984, p. 28; Gómez, Freeman, & Freeman, 2005, p. 146).

Educationally, a language as resource orientation is advanced through programs that support additive language learning. In a weaker form, some speakers would receive support for additive language learning while others do not. Such might be the case when proficiency in a national language together with international languages (i.e., elite bilingualism) is desired, and educational programs focus on helping dominant majority language speakers learn major languages like Arabic, Chinese, French, and Spanish rather than on supporting the members of local minority communities in developing and maintaining their languages (Ruiz, 1984, p. 27; Horner, 2011). In its strongest form, language as resource is aligned with program models that foster the development of life-long bi-/multilingualism (Gómez, Freeman, & Freeman, 2005; Cummins, Chow, & Schecter, 2006; Hult, 2014, p. 169). Such programs may be designed specifically for linguistic minorities (e.g., enrichment and developmental bilingual education or indigenous language nests) or for both linguistic minorities and dominant majorities (e.g., two-way immersion bilingual education) and with additive language learning as a core objective (Crawford, 1998; Baker, 2001; Mora, Wink, & Wink, 2001).

Key questions that emerge from the language as resource orientation are:

- How is linguistic diversity framed in relation to national unity?
- What languages are represented as resources?
- For whom are what languages resources?
- For what are which languages resources (e.g., cultural reproduction, identity construction, academic achievement, cognitive development, intercultural understanding, trade and commerce, national security, among many other possibilities)?
- Who decides which languages are what kinds of resources?
- Who benefits from which linguistic resources?
- What differences might there be between how the dominant national language and minority languages are considered as resources?
- What special linguistic expertise are linguistic minorities identified as having?
- How is language maintenance among linguistic minority communities facilitated?
- How is the revitalization or expansion of declining languages facilitated?
- What resources (human, financial, symbolic, etc.) are provided for supporting which languages?
- Who is the target population for language education (i.e., linguistic minorities, linguistic majorities or both)?
- What “ideological and implementational spaces” are present in policies that allow for the development of educational programs that expand students’ bi-/multilingual repertoires?
- How do educational programs facilitate the development of life-long bi-/multilingualism?
- How is the development of intercultural understanding included in educational programs and curricula?

### *Orientations in Juxtaposition*

The language as resource orientation is often taken to be the most desirable, particularly among scholars in the United States. This is, perhaps, understandable because Ruiz’s original aim in presenting the orientations was to argue in favor of language as resource and because of

the way rights to language are treated in the US system of jurisprudence. Indeed, Ruiz has been criticized for being dismissive of language rights (Kontra, Phillipson, & Skutnabb-Kangas, 1999, p. 5-6; Petrovic, 2005, p. 409). He did express some reservations about the language as right orientation, in particular noting that focusing on language rights could have the opposite of the desired effect by pitting linguistic minorities against linguistic majorities and by framing minority languages confrontationally in relation to “compliance, enforcement, entitlements, and protection” (Ruiz, 1984, p. 24; cf. Horner, 2007, p. 88).<sup>11</sup> In contrast, Kontra, Phillipson, and Skutnabb-Kangas (1999, p. 6) suggest that establishing language rights for minorities is a way to prevent them from being framed as problems to begin with while also providing the legal foundation for their languages to become resources (cf. Cummins, Chow, & Schecter, 2006, p. 299). Expressing a similar sentiment albeit with a different directionality, Ruiz also emphasizes that the language as right and language as resource orientations can be thought of as complementary in nature: “one might see language as resource as a precondition for language as right... unless one sees language as a good thing in itself, it is impossible to affirm anyone’s right to it” (Ruiz, 2010, p. 165; cf. Akinnaso, 1997, p. 147). These two orientations in concert represent a potentially powerful combination of top-down planning such as *de jure* policy in the form of language rights and bottom-up planning such as community-based initiatives that promote situated linguistic resources (Hornberger, 1990, p. 25). Orientations may be co-present in policy situations in other ways as well. Akinnaso (1994), for example, describes tensions on two different scales of top-down planning where national policy in Nigeria frames multilingualism as a problem by emphasizing linguistic unity as a factor in national unity whereas regional policies emphasize multilingualism as a resource by stressing the local importance of community languages. As Ruiz points out, the full range of all three orientations is useful in analyzing policy situations (Ruiz, 1984, p. 18).

As an aspiration for language planning, the language as resource orientation must be used thoughtfully and with sociopolitical awareness. Critical voices such as Ricento (2005) and Petrovic (2005) demonstrate that it is possible for the resource orientation to be applied in such a way that it reifies power inequities and serves the interests of the dominant majority more so than the needs of linguistic minorities. The language as resource orientation, though, is not necessarily meant to represent an easy, conflict-free solution; rather, it prompts critical thinking about linguistic relations as they are and as they could be, which facilitates analysis and discussion that can lead to social transformation (Hornberger, 1997, 1998, p. 440).

### **Orientations as a Heuristic for Language Planning and Policy Analysis**

It has been suggested that the three orientations have limited utility as an analytical heuristic because in practice LPP is often shaped by an amalgamation of forces including extralinguistic social issues and political expediency such that “pure” orientations may be difficult to divine (Crawford, 1998, p. 53). We contend, however, that the orientations are useful as *etic* concepts that can be used by researchers to guide deductive analysis about the values that emerge from messy policy debate and negotiation. In addition, they can be potentially salient as (latent) *emic* concepts in situations when people do express their beliefs about language (see Harrison, 2007 as an example). Even if other factors are involved, the orientations to language held by policy agents can be of great importance in mediating how they make decisions so it behooves us as LPP researchers to attend to them (Hornberger, 1990, p. 24; Compton, 2013; Johnson & Johnson, 2015). Moreover, the orientations of language as right and language as resource *qua* aspirations have potential usefulness in guiding policymakers and program developers in serving

the needs of linguistic minorities and fostering sustainable societal multilingualism. Accordingly, it is in this spirit that we hope our revisiting of the orientations to language planning might serve as a guide to applying them heuristically.

Ruiz clarifies that an orientation is “a set or configuration of dispositions or predispositions that can be disembedded from policy statements” (2010, p. 157) and that they “determine what is thinkable about language in society” (1984, p. 16). These notions echo closely Gee’s (1999, p. 13) definition of *discourse* as the way that language relates to “ways of thinking, acting, interacting, valuing, feeling, believing, and using symbols, tools, and objects... [in order to] give the material world certain meanings, distribute social goods in a certain way, make certain sorts of meaningful connections in our experience, and privilege certain symbol systems and ways of knowing over others.” As such, the orientations are compatible with a discourse analysis of language policy approach which seeks to identify and interrogate the discourses that mediate policy and its implementation (e.g., Hult, 2010a, 2015; Johnson, 2011, 2015). We have presented here an inventory of (pre)dispositions and questions that together can aid in the deductive analysis of policy texts, curricular documents, media sources, and participant statements, among other kinds of discourse data. The inventory and questions are by no means comprehensive, but rather are meant as starting points to supporting analysis that could be further fleshed out in relation to specific policy situations by applying inductive analysis in conjunction with deductive analysis (cf. Sipe & Ghiso, 2004). In this way, the heuristic use of Ruiz’s language planning orientations will continue to bring to light situated understandings of “what is thinkable about language in society” in diverse multilingual policy contexts around the world.

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<sup>1</sup> Nancy recalls: One of the great good fortunes of my life was being assigned to Richard Ruiz as my adviser when I started my Ph.D. in Educational Policy Studies (EPS) at the University of Wisconsin-Madison in January 1980. My husband and I, with two small children in tow, were just back from several years living and working in Cusco where we had learned and used Quechua and also experienced firsthand the symbolic power of the 1975 Law making Quechua an official language alongside Spanish in Peru. That and my earlier master's degree specializing in bilingual education led me to an interest in the experimental Quechua-Spanish bilingual education projects being implemented in Peru at that time, interests I brought with me to my Ph.D. studies and which surely led to my assignment to Professor Ruiz.

<sup>2</sup> Nancy joined him in offering a language planning and policy seminar of her own at University of Pennsylvania starting in 1986, which she continues to teach. For a long time, they were to their knowledge the only ones in the U.S. teaching such a course.

<sup>3</sup> It was not until the mid-1990s that scholarship in language planning and policy really started to take off; and the year 2000 marked the launch of three new journals in the field: *Language Policy*; *Current Issues in Language Planning*; and the *Journal of Language, Identity, and Education*.

<sup>4</sup> He generously credits Nancy and a few of his other Ph.D. students for inspiring him to modify his original problem-resource dichotomy to a three-part model including language rights (Ruiz, 2010, p. 167; 2011, p. 176-177). If that is the case, Nancy was unaware of it at the time.

<sup>5</sup> Google scholar shows 975 citations of Ruiz's 1984 Orientations piece, a rich array of articles, books and dissertations, spanning the globe and the decades.

<sup>6</sup> Ruiz himself was always careful in his writings and his teaching to point out that these were not the only three possible orientations; indeed, he prefaced his introduction of the three orientations with a discussion of language-as-means (Tauli, 1974) and language-as-sentimental attachment (Kelman, 1971) orientations. Yet it is fair to say that his admonition has not been taken up by those who have followed.

<sup>7</sup> The aims of the journal are specified on its website: <https://beta.benjamins.com/#catalog/journals/lplp/main>

<sup>8</sup> The term *minority* here connotes not numerical size, but "observable differences among language varieties in relation to power, status, and entitlement" (May, 2003, p. 118), a meaning perhaps more accurately conveyed by the term *minoritized* (McCarty, 2005, p. 48). We here use *minority* to maintain continuity with legal terminology in international instruments (Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000, pp. 489-490).

<sup>9</sup> Language rights is a field unto itself, and a full accounting for it is beyond the scope of this paper. For overviews see de Varennes (1996), Skutnabb-Kangas (2000), May (2012), and Kochenov and de Varennes (2015). See Del Valle (2003) for a treatment of language rights in the United States.

<sup>10</sup> The successor to No Child Left Behind, the Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015, appears to continue this tendency. Policy research that closely examines the new legislative text using the orientations as a heuristic would be a valuable contribution.

<sup>11</sup> Others have since offered further critical perspective on language rights, arguing, for example, that they represent a simplistic view of language that ignores linguistic hybridity in favor of protecting linguistic purity, that they may be used politically to offer the impression of addressing the needs of linguistic minorities without providing sufficient human and financial resources for implementation in a meaningful or practical way, that they paternalistically encourage linguistic minorities to continue using their languages when they might ostensibly prefer the dominant majority language (for further discussion and responses to such critical perspectives see Wee, 2010; May, 2012 as well as Makoni, 2012 and a response by Phillipson and Skutnabb-Kangas, 2012). On his part, Ruiz did recognize the growing significance of language rights in his original Orientations piece, noting that "the language as right orientation in language planning can only gain in importance," which it has certainly done (1984, p. 23).