

HOW DO YOU ASSES THE MARKET VALUE OF A LANGUAGE?

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This presentation explores economic considerations in language policy as proposed by François Grin in “English as economic value: facts and fallacies” (2001), ‘Using Language Economics and Education Economics in Language Education Policy’ (2002), “Language Planning and Economics” (2003) and “Economic Considerations in language Policy” (2006). This is a reflection paper on the ‘economics of language’ or on how economic processes influence linguistic processes in education and culture. These articles, among other research in the same field, throw light on the advantages and drawbacks of public and institutional policies regarding linguistic policies and how they can affect economic return on language skills. I am particularly interested in exploring Grin’s economic theory application to education policy in what concerns foreign language education in Portuguese higher education institutions, its aims, its economic value and its potential impact for finding a job or getting a higher salary. My reflection and discussion of the ideas contained in these scholarly articles also aims at calling attention to the need for linguists, foreign language teachers and providers of foreign language services to engage with interdisciplinary research and practice that may help them design and implement appropriate institutional language policies in times of societal change and in societies deeply dominated by the economic paradigm. It is my conviction that policies on foreign language teaching in higher education institutions, despite involving language rights (eg. The right to speak your mother tongue for learning) and cultural rights (eg. supporting publication), also involve economic implications that need to be taken into consideration, such as which options (of foreign language provision) are available, what types of effects they will have, or what gains and losses are associated with changes in the linguistic environment, given that we increasingly operate in a global world.

Keywords: Language economics, language policy, cultural analysis of language policy

Biographical Note:

Margarida Morgado, BA, Ma, PhD in English Literature by the University of Lisbon, is Coordinating Professor of English Cultural Studies at the Higher Education College for Education, Castelo Branco Polytechnic Institute, Portugal. She has researched extensively on intercultural education through children’s and YA literature and published a book on intercultural education and children’s fiction on Portuguese children’s literature (*Vivemos num Mundo sem*

Esconderijos, Lisboa: Colibri. 2011) on how to explore fiction with children in year 4 through the National reading Plan fictional works. She is also director of CILCE (Centro Interdisciplinar de Línguas, Culturas e Educação) at the Castelo Branco Polytechnic Institute, where she currently coordinates projects in CLIL (Content and Language Integrated learning) for RECLIS; intercultural education (ALPHAEU), and school dropout prevention (School Safety Net). She has recently published three articles on CLIL in connection with language policies for Higher Education institutions and their Language Centres in Portugal.