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Language Politics and Policies

Tensions and conflicts related to linguistic identity and security are inevitable – even necessary – in liberal democracies. However, if conflicts related to language and identity negatively impact democratic participation, and lead to social fragmentation, civic withdrawal, and lack of trust in societal institutions, then the political system itself may become suspect and unstable. Written by experts from the fields of sociolinguistics, bilingual studies, political science/philosophy, and education, this volume provides a comprehensive picture of the current political, cultural, and social factors impacting language policy in the United States and Canada. The chapters cover many aspects of social life in North America, such as immigration, bilingual education, heritage languages, and linguistic identity, and explore the challenges and set-backs, along with the many positive steps taken in recent years to advance the values of inclusion amidst diversity in a variety of contexts and domains in the United States and Canada.

THOMAS RICENTO is Professor and Research Chair Emeritus at the University of Calgary, Canada. He has published widely in the field of language policy and on the politics of language in North America. His recent publications include *Language Policy and Political Economy* (2015), *Language Policy and Planning: Critical Concepts in Linguistics* (2016), and *Language Policy and Political Theory: Building Bridges, Assessing Breaches* (2016).

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For Barbara Burnaby

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Preface

In 1998, Barbara Burnaby and I co-edited the book *Language and Politics in the United States and Canada: Myths and Realities*, consisting of fourteen contributions by American and Canadian scholars from various academic disciplines. That book contributed to the emerging field of comparative language policy, and the findings and frameworks articulated in that collection remain relevant to the present day. Yet, it seemed a worthwhile idea to revisit the terrain of language politics and policies in the United States and Canada to consider how well those earlier views and findings applied to the current situation in both countries, and to highlight some new research perspectives that could yield interesting insights on the same issues that animated the earlier book. This led to the planning of the Banff Symposium that took place on June 8–10, 2017 in the town of Banff, Alberta, funded by my Research Chair in English as an Additional Language at the Werklund School of Education, University of Calgary. I invited sixteen scholars, three of whom were unable to attend the meeting, to prepare papers related to their particular interests in advance of our gathering in Banff. I provided a rationale for the meeting and a general framework that would guide our collective intellectual collaboration. The papers were circulated among all of the participants well in advance of our meeting together in Banff, and everyone was given the opportunity to provide written comments on all of the papers. Therefore, when we finally did convene in June, the discussion had already been well underway and our time together in Banff was more fruitful than it might otherwise have been. Those who were unable to attend the symposium contributed to this volume, and were able to read the papers and comments as they prepared their contributions. In the course of those three days at the Kinnear Centre for Creativity and Innovation on the Banff Centre Campus, conversations begun during our formal sessions continued during meals, coffee breaks, and (especially!) during cocktail hour on the veranda in full view of the magnificent Rockies. The final product, i.e., the book you now hold, reflects the many changes in individual thinking and argumentation that occurred in the wake of our co-deliberations, and the result is a coherent and integrated volume that is far better than it might otherwise

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have been had we simply prepared chapters without the benefit of the hard work and input of the participants before, during, and after our June meeting. This book is truly a collaborative project, not a collection of individual articles on an assigned topic. As you read the chapters, you will find cross-references to other chapters, along with commentary that contributes to a cohesiveness and coherence among the constituent parts that is rare in edited volumes.

I'd like to acknowledge Jim Tollefson for his insightful and constructive comments on earlier versions of this book that have improved the final product in many ways, large and small. I'd also like to thank Sam Sonntag for her comments and suggestions on aspects of my Introduction to the book. Brian Jansen, my editorial assistant, provided detailed comments, corrections, and queries on all of the chapters, and I know that the contributors are deeply appreciative of his important contribution to this project over many months and through a myriad of e-mail exchanges. Lawrence Kan, Conference Services Manager, Banff Centre for Arts and Creativity, made planning for our event in Banff a breeze, and, once we arrived, Lawrence made sure that everything worked smoothly down to the smallest details. I appreciate the support I have received from my editor at Cambridge University Press, Helen Barton, who recognized the potential of this project from the very beginning and provided support, suggestions, feedback, and encouragement throughout the entire process. I also want to acknowledge the generous support of the Werklund School of Education, University of Calgary. Over the past decade, as Professor and Research Chair in English as an Additional Language, I have had the good fortune and privilege of being able to organize a number of conferences on language policy and linguistic diversity, including the annual Multidisciplinary Approaches in Language Policy and Planning conference, that have brought together scholars from around the world to convene in Calgary and engage in spirited conversations and debates on a wide range of topics in the field of language policy and planning. It is important to note here that the Research Chair I held from 2007 through 2017 was supported by local philanthropy (institutional and individual), a testament to the commitment of community stakeholders to support research that can deepen our understanding of social problems and controversies that, in turn, can lead to the development and promotion of policies to enhance democratic inclusion and participation and, thereby, promote the common good for all citizens in Canada and beyond.

I have dedicated this book to Barbara Burnaby, who passed away on February 2, 2018. Barbara was for many years a professor at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, University of Toronto, and later professor and dean, Faculty of Education, Memorial University of Newfoundland. I first met Barbara in Toronto in 1994, but I had worked with her previously as a contributor to a book she co-edited with Michael Herriman, *Language Policy in English-Dominant Countries: Six Case Studies* (1996). The collaboration on

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our 1998 co-edited book *Language and Politics in the United States and Canada* was an optimal professional and personal experience for me; although I had conducted research on the Canadian language context prior to my work with Barbara, her own impressive research and insights on language matters in Canada broadened my understanding and influenced my thinking on many important topics dealing with language, culture, and society. She was an inspirational colleague, a valued friend, and she will be missed.

Finally, I'd like to express my deepest gratitude and appreciation to all of the contributors to this book. Their commitment to the highest standards of scholarship, along with a common desire to enhance social equity and democratic inclusion in societies riven by divisions and hierarchies related to social class, race, gender, ethnicity, language, and the political and historical structuration that maintains such divisions, has made our work together as a collective both possible and enjoyable. As members of linguistically and culturally diverse communities and societies, we scholars of language are no different from other human beings who, for better or worse, are both united and divided by our/their linguistic and cultural differences. While we may (as dispassionate scholars) succeed to some degree in accounting for the reasons for these divisions and hierarchies, and suggest ways of mitigating them, we cannot discount our own investment and participation in the worlds we inhabit. Our tools – language and reason – inform our scholarship and shed light on matters we care about as human beings. Of course, we also recognize that language and reason are not sufficient unto themselves to understand and deal with our linguistic and cultural differences. The title of Francisco Goya's iconic 1799 etching, 'El sueño de la razon produce monstruos' (The sleep of reason produces monsters), can mislead us if we fail to recall the complete caption for his work: "*Imagination* [italics added] abandoned by reason produces impossible monsters; united with her, she is the mother of the arts and source of their wonders." We certainly need to imagine a better world if we hope to change the current one, relying on reason, empathy, and imagination; the work presented in this volume by these outstanding scholars offers some ideas on how we might move in the direction of a better, more just, more inclusive world, one that all of us can easily imagine, and one that we can work collectively to achieve if we so desire.

THOMAS RICENTO, Calgary, June 2018