Developing a Language Planning Policy Model for the English Departments in Jordan

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Abstract

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There is a general feeling among academics and students (graduates and undergraduates) that the English departments in Jordan are not following a definite language planning policy, and hence are not achieving their supposed goals. This study aims at developing a language planning policy model for the English departments in Jordan. To achieve this goal, nine questions are sought to be answered by this study. These questions are:

1) What are the characteristics of good objectives?

2) To what extent are the objectives of the English departments in Jordan clear and appealing to the needs of the students, the market, as well as Jordan’s regional and international needs?

3) How adequate are the international, Islamic, and Arab roles of the English departments in Jordan?
4) What attitudes do students have towards the English language?

5) How adequate are the English departments’ courses to meet the needs of the students, the market, as well as Jordan’s regional and international needs?

6) How adequate are ESP courses to meet the needs of the students, the market, as well as Jordan’s regional and international needs?

7) How successful are the policies (admission, examination, and language policies) of the English departments in Jordan?

8) What are the components of a language planning policy for the English departments in Jordan?

9) Who is responsible for formulating a language planning policy for the English departments in Jordan?

In order to answer these questions, the researcher has developed a questionnaire based on these nine dimensions following Tollefson’s model (1989) and Al-Abed Al-Haq and Smadi’s (1996b). The questionnaire was distributed to 300 English major students in six public Jordanian universities to measure their attitudes towards the questions of the study. The researcher has also analyzed the explicit objectives and the course offerings of the English departments.
The findings of the study indicate that there is no language planning policy in the English departments in Jordan. The findings have also shown that the objectives, the courses, and the policies of the English departments have to be carefully reconsidered if the needs (of the students, the market, and Jordan) are to be met. The study concludes with a language planning policy model for the English departments in Jordan following Tollefson's model.