Language and Neoliberal Governmentality

Against a background of the ongoing crisis of global capitalism and the fracturing of the neoliberal project, this book provides a detailed account of the ways in which language is profoundly imbricated in the neoliberalising of the fabric of social life.

With chapters from a cast list of international scholars covering topics such as the commodification of education and language, unemployment, and the governmentality of the self, and discussion chapters from Monica Heller and Jackie Urla bringing the various strands together, the book ultimately helps us to understand how language is part of political economy and the everyday making and remaking of society and individuals. It provides both a theoretical framework and a significant methodological “tool-box” to critically detect, understand, and resist the impact of neoliberalism on everyday social spheres, particularly in relation to language.

Presenting richly empirical studies that expand our understanding of how neoliberalism as a regime of truth and as a practice of governance performs within the terrain of language, this book is an essential resource for researchers and graduate students in English language, sociolinguistics, applied linguistics, linguistic anthropology, and related areas.

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Language and Neoliberal Governmentality

Edited by Luisa Martín Rojo and Alfonso Del Percio
Contents

List of contributors vii
Acknowledgements ix

1 Neoliberalism, language, and governmentality 1
LUISA MARTÍN ROJO AND ALFONSO DEL PERCIO

PART I
Language and the neoliberalisation of institutions 27

2 Linguistic securitisation as a governmentality in the neoliberalising welfare state 29
KAMILLA KRAFT

3 Producing national and neoliberal subjects: Bilingual education and governmentality in the United States 49
NELSON FLORES

4 Framing “choice” in language education: The case of freedom in constructing inequality 69
ELISA A. HIDALGO MCCABE AND NOELIA FERNÁNDEZ-GONZÁLEZ

5 Leadership communication “skills” and undergraduate neoliberal subjectivity 91
BONNIE URCIUOLI
Contents

PART II
Language and the neoliberal subject 111

6 Linguistic entrepreneurship: Neoliberalism, language learning, and class 113
JOAN PUJOLAR

7 Fabricating neoliberal subjects through the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme 135
ANDREA SUNYOL AND EVA CODÓ

8 The “self-made speaker”: The neoliberal governance of speakers 162
LUISA MARTÍN ROJO

9 Resetting minds and souls: Language, employability and the making of neoliberal subjects 190
ALFONSO DEL PERCIO AND SZE WAN VIVIAN WONG

Afterwords
Towards an ethnography of linguistic governmentalities 211
JACQUELINE URLA
Neoliberalism as a regime of truth: Studies in hegemony 222
MONICA HELLER
Index 229
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1 Neoliberalism, language, and governmentality

Luisa Martín Rojo and Alfonso Del Percio

Language and neoliberal rationality

Under current conditions of capitalism, neoliberalism has become much more than an economic policy, evolving into a form of governance which extends the logic of the market throughout public and private life. Principles such as globalisation, free markets, deregulation, quality, quantification, freedom, flexibility, and competition now permeate virtually all areas of social behaviour, including education, work, human rights, culture, the media, urban planning, migration, public administration, security, and health. These principles also affect language policies and speakers’ trajectories and practices.

Educators and students have witnessed how academic institutions are becoming increasingly responsive to business logic, in which the overriding priority is coming to be that of satisfying the needs of the market. As citizens, we are viewed as “clients” of services that are funded by our taxes but which at the same time are obliged to profit from our patronage. As researchers, we are called upon to produce knowledge at a pace that barely allows reflection, and to compete for resources, in accordance with a business logic that is turning us into entrepreneurial scientists. As workers, flexibility, mobility, and insecurity are our constant companions. As individuals, we strive to overcome these market conditions (although at times we barely survive) through the persistent accumulation of skills and certifications, maximising performance in our respective fields of competence.

What has made these developments possible, when for centuries the search for knowledge has been considered quite separate from economic concerns? To what extent is colonisation by business logic impacting on linguistic trajectories and practices? What role is played by discourse and language ideologies, and by linguistic disciplinary knowledge as a material resource in this economic takeover? How do economic principles affect the ways in which institutions and individuals view themselves and others, and how individuals present themselves in society? In everyday life, how are market principles colonising social life? How and why is this process
endorsed and reinforced (and also contradicted and contested) in the daily practice of social agents and individuals, each with their own agenda and occupying unequally-valued positions in our social order? What do these circumstances tell us about power and how it is viewed and exercised under the present conditions of capitalist expansion and of neoliberal principles, ideologies, and knowledge?

These questions are at the core of the present volume. They are the product of our concerns about contemporary regimes of power and control, and about their effects on the ways in which we understand language, subjects, and social life. The authors contributing to this volume seek a better understanding of the processes that make such colonisation possible, how it takes place, the role of language, and whether there exist any loopholes for resistance. They also examine the effects of this colonisation on speakers, on how they view themselves and others, and on their ability to acquire social, material, and emotional comfort.

We employ the term “neoliberal governmentality” as a conceptual lens for addressing these issues from critical, sociolinguistic, and discursive standpoints. Our objective is to grasp how neoliberal governmentality is constructed, reproduced, strengthened, and disseminated via discourse by means of daily institutional practices (accompanied by techniques of self-presentation and self-knowledge employed by institutions and individuals). As a further goal, we examine how this form of governance affects the ways in which language is seen, used, and governed, and consider the roles played around the world by language and communicative practices in the neoliberalisation of institutions, in diverse socio-political contexts. Finally, we consider whether any opposition to this rationality, despite the inescapable logic of neoliberalism (encapsulated by the motto “There Is No Alternative”), is emerging and, if so, what forms may be taken by such resistance and what alternatives are offered.

The understanding of neoliberalism put forward in this book is different from that prevailing in studies of language and political economy (for an overview, see Allan, 2018; Allan and McElhinny, 2017). Scholars of neoliberalism in the language disciplines have foregrounded how neoliberal ideology governs language (Block, Gray, and Holborow, 2012; Holborow, 2015), as well as how neoliberalism, inequality, and social class mediate language in societal issues (Block, 2018). In addition, scholars have sought to understand the circumstances through which shifting conditions of political economy have turned languages into economic resources, which then poses new/old questions as to what counts as legitimate language, who counts as a legitimate speaker, and who benefits from the linguistic resources produced (Duchêne and Heller, 2012; Park and Wee, 2012).

Departing from past theorisations of language and neoliberalism (see Allan and McElhinny, 2017; Dlaske et al., 2016; Flubacher and Del Percio, 2017), this volume propels the study of language and neoliberalism in a new direction. Drawing on a Foucauldian theorisation of the microphysics
Neoliberalism, language, and governmentality

of power and on more recent developments of Foucault’s concept of “governmentality”, we examine how language and communication intersect with all-encompassing regimes of power. Neoliberalism is then understood as a political rationality that informs the contemporary governance of populations, institutions, and practices, including language and subjects. This approach is related to recent contributions in sociolinguistics and linguistic anthropology to the study of governmentality by authors such as Urla (2012), who focuses on language policies; Flores (2013), Urciuoli (2010), and Gao and Park (2015), on education and language learning, and teaching; Barakos (2016), in private sector businesses; Urciuoli (2008), Dlaske et al. (2016), in the domain of work; Del Percio (2016), on the activities of nongovernmental organisations (NGOs); and Rampton (2014; see also Charalambous et al., 2015), on security and securitisation; McIlvenny, Klausen, and Lindegaard (2016), in discourse studies, among others. Within this frame, this volume places more decisively subjects at the heart of the analysis. Thus, we study not only how language becomes commodified but also how speakers can accumulate language and communication skills as a personal asset; and we not only address the question of how population is governed within a neoliberal frame but also how neoliberal rationality produces and transforms subjectivities. We share the conviction that understanding, rigorously analysing, and conducting a radical critique of how neoliberalism shapes subjectivities could be the first step in triggering resistance.

Thus, informed by eight empirical studies investigating the workings of neoliberal governmentality in diverse educational and work settings, in a variety of geographical contexts, the present volume makes several novel contributions.

First and foremost, this volume examines the processual nature of this political rationality, that is, how and with what effects neoliberal governmentality is exercised, and by means of which power techniques. Second, we consider the practices and circumstances in which neoliberalism as a political rationality is constructed and circulated through discourse. Our analysis focuses on the concrete practices adopted in education and in the workplace whereby economic principles associated with neoliberalism, such as competitiveness, freedom, quality, flexibility, and internationality, are reinforced, naturalised, and inculcated into people’s minds. The successive chapters in this volume show that the implementation of these new practices and processes is transforming our understanding of language and speaking. Third, we study how neoliberalism as a political rationality produces specific subjectivities, that is, specific ways of understanding the self, that affect the ways in which individuals exert control on their own (linguistic) conduct and monitor that of others. Thus, we study how these neoliberal subjectivities are actually produced, that is, how and via which practices individuals are interpellated by specific personae and invited to socialise themselves into specific modes of being and speaking. Fourth, this
book presents a new understanding of how neoliberalism as a global rationality becomes entrenched with local, longer-standing histories of colonialism, modernity, and capitalistic exploitation and dispossession. Finally, we study how institutions and actors dialectically engage this political rationality, and to what extent this logic is reproduced and challenged by their peers with different (linguistic) agendas.

In summary, this edited volume provides both a theoretical framework and a significant methodological “tool-box”, one that is offered to “users” rather than “readers” (Foucault, 1994: 523–524), enabling them to critically detect and understand the impact of neoliberalism on everyday social spheres, particularly in relation to language.

In the following sections, we first define the concept of neoliberal governmentality, understood as a specific form of political rationality, focusing on the kinds of knowledge and discourses it generates, and on the techniques of power that it mobilises. We then explain the rationale for the volume, and how the two parts in which it is organised respond to two of the main processes by means of which neoliberalism is colonising other areas of our social and personal life, beyond the economy, that is, the neoliberalisation of institutions and the production of neoliberal subjects. To do so, we reflect on the production of neoliberal rationalities that shape our current understanding of languages, skills, and competences, and how this is affecting social classes and ethnic groups in social fields such as education and the labour market. In the final section of this chapter introduction, we consider the extent to which the expansion and naturalisation of neoliberal rationalities is changing forms of subjectivity, thus producing neoliberal subjects who are also neoliberal speakers, trained to accumulate language skills and capital in order to survive in a world of competition, strenuous life-long education, and increased productivity.

Neoliberal governmentality

In this volume, neoliberalism is seen as both a practice and a form of governance, and so the first contribution presented seeks to understand how this governing happens and how it is conceived (Foucault, 2008: 319), approaching these questions from the standpoint of language. In order to develop this approach, we take as a starting point Foucault’s “governmentality”. This concept first appeared in two of the courses imparted (Security, Territory and Population, 1978; Naissance de la biopolitique: Cours au Collège de France, 1979) as part of a series of public lectures given between 1970 and 1984. These lectures advanced his work in this field, and were later edited and summarised from audio recordings by Michel Senellart. Unlike other concepts, which, either as “discipline” or as “biopolitics”, can be precisely located at the heart of his main books, the notion of neoliberal governmentality is sometimes fuzzy and its place within the Foucault universe is not always apparent.
The concept of governmentality was broached in *Security, Territory and Population* in 1978, when its author professed the ambition to abandon “institutional analysis only to be enjoined to enter into another type of institutional analysis in which, precisely, the State is the stake” (Foucault, 2007: 164). Subsequently, governmentality was held up as representing “to the State what techniques of segregation were to psychiatry, what techniques of discipline were to the penal system, and what biopolitics was to medical institutions” (Foucault, 2007: 166). In the 1978 course, the concept of governmentality was developed in a precise, historically determinate sense, referring to the techniques of government deployed in the eighteenth century, underpinning the formation of the modern state and enabling the question of the State to enter the scope of analysis of micro-powers (see Senellart in Foucault, 2007: 494).

As Senellart explains, subsequent to 1979, the concept came to be viewed in more abstract terms. It “no longer only designates the governmental practices constitutive of a particular regime of power (police state or liberal minimum government)”, but “the way in which one conducts people’s conduct”, thus serving as an “analytical perspective for relations of power” in general (Senellart, 2007: 495). The framework for studying governmentality in the 1979 course was that of liberalism around the world, including an overview of the latest developments. This shift in the understanding of governmentality is the source of frequent confusion: although the term “governmentality” has been applied to a variety of historical periods and to different regimes, it is often used (by other scholars and by Foucault himself) in reference to “(neo)liberal governmentality”. In other words, it is used to refer to a particular type of governmentality that characterises advanced liberal democracies, one that has displaced other forms of governance like sovereignty and discipline.

Although neoliberalism is currently generating more privatised, marketised, and increasingly dispersed modes of governmentality than any envisioned by Foucault (Fraser, 2003: 166), the liberal frame explored by this author has made the concept of governmentality particularly appealing and useful for authors in the fields of social sciences, political economy, and political theory. As the present volume shows, it is now also used in the fields of sociolinguistics and linguistic anthropology as a means of understanding neoliberal forms of government.

The first definition of “governmentality” provided by Foucault refers to:

> the body of institutions, procedures, analyses, reflections, calculations, and tactics that facilitate the exercise of this very specific (albeit complex) form of power, which has the population as its target, political economy as its principal form of knowledge, and the ‘apparatuses of security’ as its essential technical instrument.

(Foucault, 2007: 144–145)
In order to understand how governmentality operates, we now examine the key elements involved in its definition: “population as a target”, “political economy as its principal form of knowledge”, and the “apparatuses of security”.

“Population”, “political economy”, and the “apparatuses of security”

Foucault observed a significant shift in the eighteenth century, from sovereignty over the territory to the regulation of populations. Population, which in the 1978 lectures was associated with the theme of “biopower”, was understood as a set of procedures, or relations, that manipulate the biological features (for example, the birth rate and fertility) of the human species and thus shape a political strategy for governing an entire population. The concept of population was presented as a novel and key concept to understand the functioning of political power. According to Sokhi-Bulley (2014), “population” in this sense refers not simply to “people” but also to phenomena and variables, such as birth rate, mortality, and marriage. As Foucault highlights population gives rise to a mass of juridical, political, and technical problems that have a disruptive effects in the field of economic reflection and practice (Foucault, 2007: 107). Population needs then to be analysed by the field of economic theory and be managed by the government’s economic-political action within liberalism and neoliberalism. Individuals and the series of individuals, who were the target of disciplinary power, are no longer pertinent as the objective, but simply as the instrument, relay, or condition for obtaining something at the level of the population (Foucault, 2007: 55; see also Castro-Gómez, 2010: 76). Thus, the term “population” encompasses then the whole field of “the social”, and describes both the network of social relationships and also the site at which political power operates. By this means, political power becomes omnes et singulatum – “of all and of each”.

Moving further towards the concepts involved in Foucault’s definition, the issue of population is related to security, in the sense of techniques specific to the management of populations, which Foucault considers a feature of modern liberal society. In relation to security, Foucault sees a very important change within liberalism and neoliberalism. The problem within neoliberalism is:

no longer that of fixing and demarcating the territory, but of allowing circulations to take place, of controlling them, sifting the good and the bad, ensuring that things are always in movement, constantly moving around, continually going from one point to another, but in such a way that the inherent dangers of this circulation are cancelled out.

(Foucault, 2007: 93)

These mechanisms (for example by restricting mobility through the control of borders), do not tend to a nullification of phenomena in the form of
the prohibition, “you will not do this”, nor even, “this will not happen”, but in the form of a delimitation of phenomena within acceptable limits, rather than the imposition of a law that says no to them (see Castro-Gomez, 2010: 73ff.). The goal of security is then to protect the collective interest against individual interests. For Foucault, the “apparatuses of security” are exercised to provide society with a feeling of economic, political and cultural well-being, particularly through the control of risk, for example by calculating probabilities with statistical instruments.

Finally, under Foucault’s definition of the term, the principal form of knowledge informing governmentality is political economy. In the current phase of capitalist expansion, political economy as a body of knowledge postulates the predominance of market mechanisms and restricted action by the State. It emphasises the logic of pure competition within the economic terrain, and seeks to extend the rationality of the market to domains hitherto considered to be non-economic (as manifested in the theory of “human capital”) (see, in Foucault, 2008, an analysis of the different kinds of neoliberalism). Among the elements of this regime of truth of political economy, Foucault includes the *homo oeconomicus*, that is, he analyses as part of political economy the economic behaviour of producers and consumers.

If we focus now on the interplay of all the elements examined earlier and encompassed by Foucault’s definition, we will then understand how, since neoliberal rationality is about increasing the production effectiveness, it targets the managing of large populations, of life and society, and the managing of huge information databases, surveillance techniques, and statistical management by the state, as well as by corporations and civil society actors, and finally it also targets individuals to act in a particular way, as a form of action of the “self on self”.

Governmentality is then understood as the “art or practice of government” in a broad sense, referring not only to political structures or to the management of States, but also to the ways in which the conduct of individuals or groups might be directed – that is, the government of children, of souls, of communities, of the sick … (Foucault, 2007: 126 and ss.). To govern, in this sense, is to control the possible field of action of others (Foucault, 2002: 341). Thus, in Nosál’s words, governmentality encompasses “a wide range of control techniques, and that applies to a wide variety of objects, from one’s control of the self to the ‘biopolitical’ control of populations” – in other words, the control of customs, habits, health, reproduction and many other aspects of society (Nosál, 2009: 117). Furthermore, and this is one of the most significant features of (neo)liberal governmentality, this “conducting of conduct” is not enforced by violent means but often acquires the compliance and even agency of social actors and institutions, the very objects of governmentality.

Foucault’s understanding of power is based on the assumption that it is exercised only over free subjects, and only insofar as they are free. As we see
in the following fragment from Foucault’s The Subject and Power, it is precisely this complex relation what gives also place to resistance:

By this we mean individual or collective subjects who are faced with a field of possibilities in which several ways of behaving, several reactions and diverse comportments, may be realized. Where the determining factors saturate the whole, there is no relationship of power; slavery is not a power relationship when man is in chains. (In this case it is a question of a physical relationship of constraint.) Consequently, there is no face-to-face confrontation of power and freedom, which are mutually exclusive (freedom disappears everywhere power is exercised), but a much more complicated interplay. In this game freedom may well appear as the condition for the exercise of power (at the same time its precondition, since freedom must exist for power to be exerted, and also its permanent support, since without the possibility of recalcitrance, power physical determination).

The relationship between power and freedom’s refusal to submit cannot, therefore, be separated (Foucault, 2002: 77).

However, as Lilja and Vinthagen (2014: 121) note, while so far several researchers have explored how power mechanisms are exercised within a neoliberal governance, it is less clear what are the options or ongoing practices and their effective application to avoid this managing of population policies and institutions. Resistance in this case tries to avoid the managing of population by acting differently, in subcultures, and by cultivating a different set of values, practices, and institutions, and take on the challenge and develop non-productive forms of life and biological existence. At this point the ability of governmentality to generate knowledge and discourses, and mobilise techniques of power is revealed. An ability that can be always neutralised by resistance, given that, as Dean (2010) notes, knowledge, discourse, and power mechanisms can always be reversed. All of this will be approached in the next section.

Neoliberal governmentality as a political rationality

Beyond laws and rules, what makes (neo)liberalisation possible is a “mentality” that becomes hegemonic and rationalises the exercise of this kind of government (Foucault, 1997: 74). Under this mentality, for example, it may be considered that a necessary and foreseeable ambition for an educational institution is that it should be economically profitable; or that a cost-benefit logic should be applied to education and language learning, to make individuals competitive in their subsequent careers. In the view that neoliberalisation is both the origin and the effect of a ruling mentality, we assume that there is no single founding act of reason or a unique “rationality”, but instead that there are specifically political rationalities, which
emerge in particular times or spaces. The neoliberal order has acquired a global outreach, but there are significant differences in how it has taken root in different contexts, and in the circumstances and knowledge that have contributed to this process. The present volume highlights similarities, but also identifies and discusses how neoliberal rationales become intertwined with longer, locally-anchored histories of colonialism, modernism and capitalist exploitation. In this respect, the authors examine how social life and policies in institutions are re-presented or re-cast in market terms, and how “enterprise” is held up as the model that all institutions and individuals should follow. Languages, too, are strongly involved in these processes and have become an object of attention for neoliberal rationality (in this volume, see Flores, 2017 and Ural, 2012; see also Martín Rojo, 2017; Codó & Patiño-Santos, 2018; Gao & Park, 2015; Relaño-Pastor, 2018). Finally, the social effects of this rationality are examined, via questions such as how it produces new forms of inequality and reproduces old ones, how it leads people to live within an illusion of social mobility, thus forestalling challenges to the system, and how it redefines the hierarchies of languages, compelling people to accumulate them as part of social completion.

From this standpoint, neoliberal rationality is just another rationality. In order to highlight the relevance of neoliberal rationality to the goals established for the present volume, in the next section we will steer a course guided by the Foucauldian triad of discourse-knowledge-power. We consider how governmentality is constructed in discourse, what knowledge is generated thereby and what technologies of power are employed to do so. And we will illustrate these powerful dynamics by reference to several processes taking place within the current neoliberal order, which are also analysed in this volume.

**Economicist discourses, knowledge, and governmental power**

The visions of competition and self-interest as a guarantee of success, and of cooperation as a procedure prone to failure, are part of the knowledge production within a neoliberal rationality. This knowledge, as we will see, not only becomes hegemonic or dominant, but it also “counts as truth” or enter the “game of truth”. Furthermore, this first element of the knowledge-discourse-power triad extends and reinforces, in this case, the prevalence of an economic outlook that permeates the discourse of educational institutions and workplaces, which is addressed in the chapters of this volume. The second contribution of this volume is precisely to show how this knowledge is constructed and circulated in discourse, that is, an “economicist discourse” that evokes the neoliberal principle of the law of supply and demand. Discourses, the second element of the knowledge-discourse-power triad, encompass certain terms (such as quality, profitability, surplus), lexical collocations (“the need to compete”) and mottos or slogans (“Compete or die” in the case of schools, or “Compete to be profitable”, in the case of individuals) that are constantly
evoked by social actors and institutions in accounting for their practices and trajectories. Furthermore, given the changes brought about by global capitalism in the role played by languages in the economy and in enabling the mobility of capital, goods and people, competition frequently mobilises the accumulation of linguistic resources (such as languages and registers), to “make a success” of people’s lives, or to achieve their “objectives”. Therefore, terms and concepts such as “language as capital”, “language as economical resources”, “language investment”, and “language accountability” form part of the discourses analysed in this volume.

Taking into account these considerations, and in order to articulate forms of resistance, we seek to understand how the neoliberal discourse has infiltrated society to a hitherto unknown degree, to the point that there appears to be no good alternative. This profound transformation is partly explained by the success with which neoliberal discourse has parasitised culturally-rooted terms such as “freedom”, “quality”, “effort”, and “lifelong learning”, via a gradual process of semantic slippage. Hence, the meaning of the term “freedom” (of action, of thought, of ideas, of creation) has now become tightly restricted, and it is commonly used to refer to “neoliberal freedoms” (individual ones such as freedom to choose schools, doctors, etc., and the individual freedom to conduct their own behaviour conforming to economic principles), based on competition; “quality” has come to be measured, not by the support of the state towards its institutions, but by the results presented in rankings; and “training” has mutated into the perpetual obligation to accumulate skills and certificates.

These considerations bring us to the third element of the knowledge-discourse-power triad, i.e., the question of what kind of power regime results from the knowledge produced by neoliberal rationality. The concept of “governmentality” embodies the potential of Foucault’s understanding of power, encompassing not only the top-down power of the State, but also the ways in which social control is exercised in disciplinary institutions (such as schools, hospitals and psychiatric institutions), and how knowledge and discourses are produced and subsequently internalised by individuals to guide the behaviour of entire populations (in a process that Foucault describes as the “conduct of conduct”). These forms of behaviour are those which tend to be promoted by corporations and by careers advisers: they represent specific forms of knowledge and practice that individuals are encouraged to adopt. The outcome is a more efficient form of social control, with individuals using this knowledge for self-governance.

As shown in some of the chapters in this volume (see Del Percio & Wong, Kraft, Sunyol & Codó, Martín Rojo, and Pujolar), “the conduct of conduct” is a kind of power which links the normalising objectives of neoliberalism – profitability, competitiveness, flexibility and mobility – to the subjects’ self-created ideals (Hook, 2004: 262). But also, as Foucault claims, it links them to freedom. As Dardot and Laval explains this government requires liberty as its condition of possibility:
to govern is not to govern against liberty, or despite it; it is govern through liberty – that is, to actively exploit the freedom allowed individuals so that they end up conforming to certain norms of their own accord.

(Dardot & Laval, 2014: 11)

Thus, contemporary forms of governance make use of “self-governing” strategies based upon particular constructions of “subjectivity”. It is on this point that our volume highlights the decisive role played by the existence of “models of success” of individuals and of speakers, in relation to the mechanisms of power. As part of this second contribution of this volume, we show how an entrepreneurial model is configured as one of success par excellence, for governments, institutions and individuals, who all rely on the knowledge that is produced by neoliberal rationality and that circulates via hegemonic discourse to choose among their options.

Individuals, as entrepreneurs of the self, discipline their tongues to produce the languages of economic dominance, which they prize as giving them an edge in a globalised labour market. Through self-care and self-reflection, they compare their own skills and resources with those presented in a model of success that in turn is defined by the enterprise model, according to which there are only winners or losers, and where only the former are valued, valuable and profitable. Furthermore, when individuals attempt to make themselves profitable by the application of self-reflection, self-knowledge and self-examination, this brings about what Foucault termed “technologies of the self”. In his words, these technologies

... permit individuals to effect by their own means or with the help of others a certain number of operations on their own bodies and souls, thoughts, conduct, and way of being, so as to transform themselves in order to attain a certain state of happiness, purity, wisdom, perfection or immortality.

(Foucault, 1988)

As Lemke points out, the internalisation of dominant discourses imposes a high degree of responsibility on subjects, making them view social risks such as illness, unemployment and poverty not as the responsibility of the State, but as residing in the domain for which the individual is responsible and transforming the problem into one of “self-care” (Lemke, 2001: 201). In this respect, the practice of lifelong education, of accumulating skills and languages, can be seen as one outcome of responsibilisation, of the expression of our own responsibility to find a job, to work and to create security for our dependents. Rankings, surveys, curricula and a vast body of discourses create a framework for the functioning of institutions. This framework is then internalised to generate a power-knowledge regime and hence a neoliberal rationality (Dean, 1994: 181–187). However, power techniques, such
as internalisation, can be also be reversed. People will be then also able to modify themselves differently and/or resist the processes of internalising power through alternative modes of self-making.

**Language and the neoliberalisation of institutions**

In their consideration of contemporary forms of governmentality, the authors in this volume address three of the essential tasks which, according to Fraser (2003: 167), should be performed in order to understand neoliberal rationality. First, the initial chapters highlight the transnational character of neoliberal governance: despite differences in the historical, socio-political and economic processes present in the various contexts studied, it is apparent that a similar strand of logic is applicable to institutions in different countries. Secondly, the chapters examine the ways neoliberalism relies on increasingly dispersed and marketised modes of governmentality, that is, through intermediation different types of institutions and actors. Finally, the contributing authors analyse the key elements that might define this kind of political rationality, including its characteristic objects of intervention, modes of subjectification and technologies of power.

In order to explain how neoliberal economic principles colonise other spheres of social life and how this rationality becomes a form of governance, most of the chapters consider, as the first step in their analysis, the neoliberalisation of institutions. They go on to show how this process particularly affects institutions in the fields of education and employment, and emphasise the resemblance observed between the forms of logic that currently govern educational institutions and work places. This proximity, in part, arises from the transformation of education, which now more than ever serves the interests and needs of the market, particularly those of the labour market. Both education and work serve as crucial spaces for the inculcation of neoliberal principles as well as sites of production of the type of worker needed for a neoliberalised economy.

The hallmarks of neoliberalism, “deregulation, privatisation, and withdrawal of the state from many areas of social provision” (Harvey, 2005: 3), are undoubtedly present in the contexts studied in this volume. Institutions have not only become amplifiers of these principles, but also, in their implementation, construct social and political environments that actively encourage neoliberal rationality.

One of the contexts that most affected by neoliberalisation is the labour market. This is of course due to the central role of work in a society governed by principles of quality, competitiveness and entrepreneurship. The chapter by Kamilla Kraft shows, in this respect, how neoliberal logic is present and influential in the Norwegian construction industry. In particular, neoliberal principles of deregulation impact on staff flexibilisation, whereby workers are leased on temporary contracts rather than hired permanently. Flexibilisation and employment liberalisation are presented as inevitable for an industry
that competes internationally. Flexibilisation and liberalisation however are risk factors and the causes for accidents and insecurity at work. It is at this point that language enters the scenario: the workers who are hired permanently are Norwegians whereas most of the temporary, flexible workers come from Poland. In order to create the conditions for the securitisation of a neoliberal model that relies on flexibilisation and deregulation, language regulation becomes object of regulation and control. All work sites are required to have just one official language, preferably Norwegian. Linguistic homogeneity is considered a key resource to resolve the tension between reducing labour costs and maintaining job security. Kraft concludes that welfare and neoliberal logics co-exist in the Norwegian context discussed, and that security practices actually legitimise the existence of flexibility in the industry, by creating a form of “safe flexibility”. However, the internalisation of this rationality by contractors, who systematise and severely restrict language in the workplace, drastically reduces (Polish) temporary workers’ access to professional mobility and recognition, and compels them to expand their linguistic competences.

In this context of neoliberalisation, after the labour market, the social field of education is of particular importance. The neoliberal principle that Fraser termed “desocialization” is transforming the Fordist welfare state into a post-Fordist “competition state”. This evolution is manifested in efforts to privatise social services, either shifting them onto the market or devolving them to the family, thus destructuring the zone of “the (national) social” (Fraser, 2003: 166). One of the main effects of desocialisation is that funding cuts are imposed on public education, thus obliging institutions to search for strategic alternatives. Among these, external funding, market-applied research and the sale of teaching materials are often employed in order to generate additional revenue (Saunders, 2010). Changes are taking place in the discourse of institutions, which now reflect a neoliberal logic, summarised in entrepreneurial slogans featuring “competition”, “quality”, “efficiency”, “innovation”, “quality”, and “flexibility” (Wilkins, 2012). Thus, the humanist separation between education and work is being eroded, and a previously hidden curriculum, focused on meeting the needs of capital, is now voluntarily exposed and embraced (Aronowitz, 2000; Saunders, 2010: 61). Education institutions are of primordial importance in shaping and preparing a future elite workforce for a flexible, delocalised labour market, by assuring future employers of their international and multilingual orientation (see Hidalgo & Fernández-González, Martín Rojo, and Urciuoli in this volume). Educational institutions are however also important as producers of the working class subjects who are able to cope with the flexibility and precarity produced by the neoliberal economy. These subjects are willing to accept the idea that lifelong learning and processes of continuous self-development are crucial for social mobility and individual freedom. Among the main strategies employed to meet the needs of the labour market, and expected to increase the institution’s competitiveness, are those of designing
applied language programmes (dual or bilingual), providing training in language register and developing degree programmes for mobile workers.

In this particular context, although authors have observed a common orientation in schools, certain differences are also apparent. With respect to the United States, Nelson Flores presents a genealogy of the neoliberalisation of language education, analysing the initiatives adopted, and showed that while some US States banned bilingual education in 1998, others promoted it in 2016. This analysis reveals a very significant shift from a “nationalist framing”, in Flores’s terms, which positions bilingual education as a threat to the production of national subjects, towards a “neoliberal framing”, according to which bilingual education is part of a broader project producing neoliberal subjects to fit the political and economic needs of global capitalism. This shift explains why, in the United States, language programmes often present bilingualism as a skill that can make the speaker more competitive in the global marketplace. Such programmes have grown exponentially over the past 15 years.

In this same context of the neoliberalisation of education, Elisa Hidalgo McCabe and Noelia Fernández-González analyse the ways in which the ideologies and the discourses of language policies respond to new economic principles that have transformed public education and schooling, foregrounding risk and fluidity in a framework that resembles the flows of markets. These authors focus on the neoliberal principle of individual and market freedom – by means of which “competitiveness” is transforming schools’ policies and practices to make them profitable. Linked to notions such as quality and democratic freedom, parental choice is presented as accessible to all without exception and is largely formulated as a right of families, entitled to choose any school within a wider zone. Within this competitive context, many schools and teaching staff in Spain implement Spanish-English bilingual programmes (BP). This choice is presented in interviews as the result of a conscious calculation of possibilities, risks, cost and benefits. However, for the teaching staff this transformation is also based on the assumption that there is no real alternative: in order to compete, adopting a BP is the only way for their schools to survive. In this case, the extension of parental choice acts as a neoliberal principle giving rise to a new model by which school practices, programmes and activities are organised. The analysis by Hidalgo and Fernández-González goes on to reveal some distinctive features of neoliberal freedom, which is viewed only in terms of consumer choice, among specific, predetermined options. The authors show that this parental choice in fact heightens inequality in access to education. In modern-day Spain, however, only social movements and activists defending public education continue to uphold the ideal of education as a universal right, and to argue that quality should not be judged by inter-school rankings or competition but derived from the sustained allocation of resources and from high-quality training.

A far-reaching effect of “desocialization” and of the “competition order” in education is the implementation of new communicative training