

Language management as a cyclical process: A case study on prohibiting Sorbian in the workplace*

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ABSTRACT: The aim of this paper is to re-examine the process model of LMT from theoretical as well as practical perspectives in order to harmonize it with other process models and widen its scope of analysis. In contrast to the 'classic' LMT process model, other process models on policy and management usually include a post-implementation stage. To examine the utility of this stage, a concrete case concerning the 'prohibition' of the use of Sorbian at an institution in eastern Germany with German and Sorbian employees is investigated. In this case study, a revised process model is applied in order to analyze the employers' attempts to regulate language choice in the workplace. Theoretical as well as empirical considerations suggest that the LMT process model could profit from including a post-implementation stage of feedback, which gives the process a cyclical character.

Key words: language management, process model, feedback, policy cycle, management cycle, policy evaluation, Sorbian, majority-minority relations

1. Introduction

Communication is a process. So it is natural that studies on communication focus on processes. One of the approaches in which the process occupies a central position is Language Management Theory (LMT). According to one of its initiators, Neustupný (1994: 9), in contrast to the modern research paradigm which posits its objective to be results in *categories*, the characteristic of postmodern social science is to emphasize *processes* rather than categories. Instead of explaining a language feature simply through categories like age, sex, position or ethnicity, actual usage should be examined. So, a process model was set at the core of the LMT.

The process model, however, has thus far not been compared with other process models of human activities. The aim of this paper is to re-examine the process model of LMT from theoretical and empirical perspectives in order to harmonize it with other process models and widen its scope of analysis. After introducing the LMT process model, we will compare this model with other process models on policy and management in order to clarify commonalities and differences. The comparison leads to the proposal to enrich the LMT model with a post-implementation stage. Then, a concrete case will be examined as a test case to apply the revised process model. This case is about the 'prohibition' of the use of Sorbian at an institution in the Sorbian region in eastern Germany. The case was chosen because it raises basic questions for the study of language management in a dual sense: how to deal with repeated management processes theoretically, and how to manage ethnolinguistic majority-minority relations practically.

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2. The process model in LMT

The ‘classic’ process model of language management is as follows (see for example Jernudd & Neustupný 1987: 75–76; Nekvapil 2009: 3):

- 1 Noting of a deviation from the norm
- 2 Evaluation
- 3 Adjustment design
- 4 Implementation

Figure 1: The ‘classic’ process model of language management

This process model begins with the noting of a deviation from the norm (or expectation) and finishes when adjustments to the deviation are implemented. Of course, the process does not necessarily include all the stages in every case. In some instances, the management process halts partway, and thus its existence may not appear on the surface. For example, a deviation can be noted without bringing about adjustment designs and implementation.¹ The basic significance of this model can be said to lie in presenting the various stages within the management process to which attention should be drawn. In analytical terms, it would be desirable to take a broad-ranging view of the entire process, but it is also possible to focus on one or several of these stages.

One of the basic characteristics of this process is that there is deemed to be no essential difference *with regard to the process* between various levels of language management – from that of the individual interaction to international policies. According to Neustupný, ‘the process of organized management is a complicated version of the basic simple management process’ (Neustupný 2002). The levels can roughly be listed as follows:

- The level of international organizations
- The level of central government
- The level of local government
- The level of educational organizations
- The level of the media
- The level of employers
- An ethnic or other level of social organization
- The level of local communities
- The level of the family
- The level of individuals that interact within discourse

Figure 2: Levels of language management (based on Neustupný 1997: 29–30)

While this figure simply lists different degrees of social organization, LMT stresses the importance of paying attention to the relationship between different levels, especially between simple management in concrete interactions on the micro level and organized

¹ Such cases are not directly observable, but can be elicited by follow-up interviews.

management on more macro levels. In analyzing these language management processes, each level can be treated using the process model.² This can be regarded as a basic ingredient of the integrative perspective of LMT linking the micro and macro levels. A combination of the process model with different management levels will make full use of LMT. In our case, however, we will concentrate on the process model, referring to the management levels only as far as necessary to understand the case to be discussed here.

3. A re-examination of the process model

This process model, however, has been re-examined in recent years. We could agree that the process model is, after all, a model, and must be treated flexibly so as to conform to the actual research objective. Nekvapil states generally:

‘Up to now, the point of departure has been that the management process model is essentially universal. However, it can be assumed that management processes take various forms in various genres, styles, and communicative situations.’

(Nekvapil 2009: 5)

Maybe the most remarkable example of this flexibility is the claim that the beginning of the management process need not be triggered by a deviation from a norm (see Marriott 2009: 174–175; Nemoto 2009: 240–241). There can be many bases for the noting of language phenomena.³

While this point concerns the beginning of the process, an interesting proposal on the end of the process was raised by István Lanstyák at a workshop on LMT in 2006. Examining the applicability of LMT, he compared it with Language Planning [LP] and Language Cultivation approaches. Among the 15 points he raised, the last one concerns the process model:

‘The processual character of LM [...] is not so different from that of LP, but lacks “deep concern” about the fourth phase, implementation. One more phase might be added: A fifth phase, feedback, which can be identical to the first phase.’

(Sherman 2007: 75).

There have already been attempts to move the LMT process model in this direction. To mention some examples: Saijo (1999) included questions on the evaluation of adjustment designs within follow-up interviews based on contact situations between learners of Japanese and native Japanese speakers. Fairbrother (2000) reconsidered evaluation within an analysis of interaction management, and proceeded to focus on situations in which re-evaluation takes place and incorporates this as a ‘reprocessing’ stage. But it seems that this point has not been taken to the level of a general discussion on the process model so far. So my aim here is to put forward the discussion on this issue.

² This is not to say that micro and macro levels should be regarded the same way. Nekvapil (2012) points out the dialectic relationship between micro and macro.

³ See the special issue Language Management Approach – Probing the Concept of ‘Noting’ (Marriott & Nekvapil 2012a). Kimura (2011) also focuses on this matter, emphasizing the role of language ideology as a precondition for noting.

The point made by Lanstyák can be illustrated by comparing the process model of LMT with other process models used in other areas such as political science, business or project management. Looking at examples of those models, though there are some basic similarities with the language management model, the most prominent difference is that the various process models usually do not end with ‘implementation’, but rather, proceed to a subsequent evaluative stage. This leads to the conception of the process as basically having a cyclical form rather than a linear one.

In policy research, the concept of ‘policy cycle’ has been used as an analytical and methodological device. A common model entails the following five stages: agenda-setting, policy formulation, decision-making, policy implementation and policy evaluation (Howlett & Geist 2013: 17).⁴ A rough correlation with the stages of the LMT process model can be made here, as shown in Figure 3. But it is striking that the last stage, a crucial ingredient in the policy cycle model, lacks an equivalent in the LMT model. In the policy cycle model, a ‘feedback loop’ is considered to be an inherent part of the policy cycle, even if it is not necessarily being operationalized (ibid.: 24).

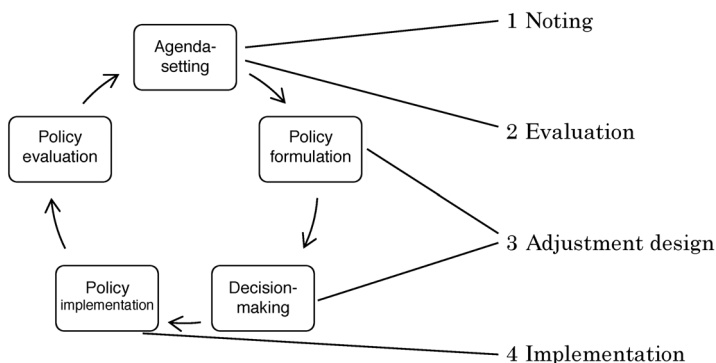


Figure 3: A prototypical policy process model compared to LMT process stages

Implementation is also not regarded as the end of a process in Language Policy and Planning (LPP). Kaplan and Baldauf (1997: 91) have argued for the necessity of evaluation at every stage,⁵ but especially after implementation. More recently, in the list of the eight elements of a ‘simple model of language planning’, Coulmas (2005: 187) lists three elements after the ‘actual implementation’ (which is the fifth element):

- monitoring the effectiveness of the measures over time;
- comparison of SLS₁ [initial sociolinguistic situation] with SLS₂ [expected outcome] and the actual outcome;
- modification of measures if grave disparities between actual outcome and SLS₂ are found.

⁴ There are much more detailed models proposed, but this model sums up the basic components also common to more complicated models.

⁵ In their ‘basic language planning model’ (Kaplan & Baldauf 1997: 107) the ‘feedback’ stage is connected to all previous stages.

As in the general policy process model, this consideration of evaluation after implementation provides the LPP process model with a cyclical character. In a similar vein, Canagarajah (2006: 157–158) speaks of a ‘language policy cycle’ consisting of different stages before, during and after implementation.

The cyclical structure of the policy process models shares commonalities with other process models. With regard to management, several types of management cycles are proposed. While there are also quite simple ones consisting of just three stages (for example ‘Plan→Do→See’), here we will have a closer look at the *PDCA* [or *PDSA*] cycle (Plan→Do→Check [Study]→Act). In this model, which is also known as the ‘Deming Cycle’ after its disseminator and often utilized in management studies,⁶ the check-stage compares the plan and the results of the do-stage, and the act-stage seeks to correct the difference between the planned and actual results, as far as necessary (Evans & Lindsay 2002: 586–587). The LP model presented by Coulmas (see above) is strikingly similar to this model.

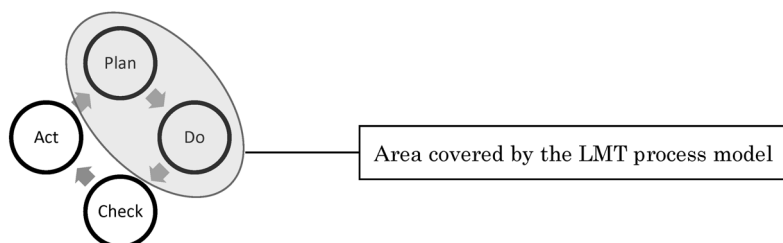


Figure 4: PDCA Cycle compared to the LMT process model

In comparison with this general management model, the LMT model seems to be mainly concerned with the circled part in figure 4 (Plan→Do), enabling a more precise focus on this part, which could be a strength of the LMT model. But it appears not to pay sufficient attention to the post-implementation stage(s). The same applies also in comparison to other models like the *ADDIE-model* (Analyze→Design→Develop→Implement→Evaluate), which is used for instructional design in (language) education contexts (Okamoto et al. 2004: 76). The process model of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (Council of Europe 2001: 90–92), which mentions three stages of communicative language processes (planning, execution and monitoring) equivalent to ‘plan, do, see’, is particularly relevant for LMT, because it is meant to be applicable to simple as well as organized management of communicative processes.

Apart from this and other standardized models of management, different individually elaborated models with varying complexity can be found. To take examples from textbooks on strategic management, one author (Morden 2007: 17) uses four stages, which seems similar to the LMT process model: ‘strategic analysis and planning’, ‘strategy formulation and strategic decision-making’, ‘strategy choice’ and ‘strategy

⁶ For recent studies from various contexts, see for example Doucek & Novotný 2007; Matsuo & Nakahara 2013.

implementation'. But the author adds an additional component of 'feedback and learning' to this 'decision process' and the whole is presented in cyclical form. Other authors (Lombriser & Abplanalp 2012 [2010]: 50) have structured a whole book according to a more complex process model with no less than eight stages, dedicating one chapter to each stage: strategic initial situation → environment analysis / corporate analysis → strategic analysis → vision → strategy development → strategy implementation → strategy control. The authors here also emphasize the cyclical character provided by the evaluative post-implementation stage ('strategy control').

These comparisons raise the question of whether adding an item of 'feedback' or 'post-implementation evaluation', which evaluates the implementation (and possibly also other stages) of the management process, to the LMT model can be useful. This would make LMT more compatible with other policy or management studies and also corresponds better to the claim that LMT is an approach not only confined to language but also able to comprise broader communicative and social processes (Nekvapil 2009: 8).

Of course, the current process model of LMT does not deny the possibility of cyclical recommencement.⁷ Notions such as 'pre-interaction management' or 'post-interaction management' (Nekvapil & Sherman 2009) can be utilized in this sense. But it should still be emphasized that a post-implementation stage that could serve as a link *between* the processes is not included as an integral part of the current LMT process model.

Another point to be considered concerns terminology. As mentioned above, attention to various levels is an important element in LMT. According to LMT, the cyclical linkage 'Micro → Macro → Micro' can be regarded as an ideal form to link different levels. In some recent LMT literature, this linkage is referred to as a 'management cycle' (see Giger & Sloboda 2008; Nekvapil 2009: 5–8). It should be noted, however, that the above mentioned 'language policy cycle' by Canagarajah or the 'management cycle' already in use in general management studies essentially focus on the cyclical character of management *stages*. Undoubtedly, different levels can operate in different management stages, so there can be a correspondence between levels and stages. The PDCA cycle, for example, seems to presuppose an ideal 'Micro → Macro → Micro'-cycle to function adequately. But in fact, the correspondence between levels and stages may differ from case to case, as Giger and Sloboda (2008) demonstrate. So it would be analytically useful to distinguish between the levels and stages of management processes. To emphasize that the term 'management cycle' may include different dimensions (i.e. levels and stages), I propose to use a term such as 'management process cycle' or just 'process cycle' to denote the process model as understood in a cycle form of stages, and 'micro-macro management cycle' or just 'micro-macro cycle' for the micro-macro relation. This kind of distinctive terminology would increase the transparency of the notion and also accomplish better harmony with terminology in other disciplines.

⁷ 'The important thing is that language management can stop after any of the phases given above or recommence in a cyclical manner' (Marriott & Nekvapil 2012b: 156).

4. Test case: the controversy on “prohibiting” Sorbian in the workplace

As a test case of cyclical processes including feedback, or the evaluation of the implementation, we will now turn to a case in which repeated management processes can be detected. This case concerns the use of Sorbian in a workplace in the German-Sorbian bilingual area in the eastern part of Germany. The case is remarkable in that it shows the unease of the ethnolinguistic majority with a minority language, which can be regarded as typical for minority-majority situations. There are similar cases reported from different geographical contexts (e. g. Kontra 1999: 82; Mowbray 2012: 95, 105).

In order to understand the background of the conflict, we will first have a brief look at the current situation of the Sorbian language. Sorbs are a Slavic people traditionally living in Lusatia, a region in eastern Germany near the Czech and Polish borders. The southern part belongs to the state of Saxony, the northern part to Brandenburg. The main cities of the Sorbian region are Budyšin/Bautzen in the southern part and Chošebuz/Cottbus in the northern part.⁸ While there are no official statistics, the number of ethnic Sorbs is estimated at about 50,000, which is about one tenth of the population of the Sorbian area in Lusatia. This means that the Sorbs are usually in a minority situation even in their traditional area of residence.

Linguistically, Sorbian has two developed standard varieties, Upper Sorbian in the south and the Lower Sorbian in the north. These two standard varieties are closely related, but are usually regarded as distinct languages. In this article, we will not go further into this distinction, as in our case the focus is on the relationship between (Upper) Sorbian and German.

Politically, the Sorbian identity, culture and language are protected by the constitutions of the states of Brandenburg and Saxony and special Sorbian laws (1994 in Brandenburg, renewed 2014, and 1999 in Saxony). According to these laws, the Sorbian language has official status in the Sorbian region together with the German language and can be used by Sorbian speakers to contact with local governmental and administrative authorities. Sorbian is also admitted as a language to be taught as a school subject and as a language of instruction in schools. Additionally, the European Charter for Regional and Minority Languages is also applied to Sorbian, officially recognizing the freedom of its usage in private and public domains, including commercial sectors (Elle 2004).

With regard to actual language usage and transmission, however, in most parts of the traditional Sorbian region, the Sorbian population has come to be linguistically assimilated, such that the Sorbian language is used socially only on special occasions like gatherings of the speakers and cultural events. The only exceptions are the Catholic parishes in the southwest part of the Sorbian region, where Sorbian speakers are relatively concentrated and the language is maintained as a community language in everyday use.⁹ Our case took place in this area. The number of Sorbs and Germans in the local

⁸ The city names are given in the order Sorbian/German.

⁹ On the significant role of the local Catholic church to maintain the Sorbian language and identity, see Kimura (forthcoming).

community and also in the workplace in which the incident to be discussed below occurred, is roughly equal.

This numerical equivalence, however, does not mean that the Sorbian language is used equally with the German language. Also in this area, German is usually regarded as the common language between Germans and Sorbs. Sorbs speak German without any problem. On the other hand, the vast majority of Germans do not understand Sorbian. This may lead to disharmonious situations, as we will see below.

The incident we will take up here was first reported in a local German newspaper, in an article previewing the monthly Sorbian language television program to be broadcast the following weekend. The article presented that the program will focus on ‘curious practices’ at a care center for people with disabilities in the region:

‘When speaking Sorbian amongst themselves, Sorbs almost always switch to German when a German enters the scene. At XX [name of the care center] this is not simply an act of politeness, but something that is carried out under strict instructions. (...) Those who violate this instruction will face the consequences under the Labor Law.’¹⁰

This text implies two aspects of the relationship between the two languages. On the one hand, German is accepted not only as the common language between Germans and Sorbs, but using Sorbian in the presence of someone who does not speak Sorbian is considered impolite (even if that person is not part of the conversation). On the other hand, the term ‘politeness’ implies that Sorbs basically have the right and freedom to speak Sorbian among themselves. The use of German is not stated as a duty. This concept of ‘politeness’ can be regarded as the equilibrium point of different interests in the region, performing as a basic language ideology shared by Sorbs and Germans (Kimura 2011).

As we will see in the next section, the case in question evolved into a remarkable conflict, because from the viewpoint of the Germans, the implicit expectation that Sorbian speakers should switch to German in the presence of non-speakers of Sorbian was violated, and from the viewpoint of Sorbs, what is performed as an act of politeness was declared to be a strict obligation, thus violating their language rights.

5. The management process: focus on the employers’ side

Let us now look at the management processes involved in the incident. The following is based on interviews with the people directly involved, German and Sorbian newspaper articles and other documents gathered by the author during his fieldwork. The case addressed here involves the developments surrounding three notices posted on a staff bulletin board at the care center for the disabled mentioned above. The sequence of these notices is as follows:

¹⁰ Original: Wenn Sorben sich unterhalten und ein Deutscher hinzutritt, wird meistens in die deutsche Sprache gewechselt. Im XX geschieht dies jedoch nicht nur aus reiner Höflichkeit, sondern auf strikte Anweisung (...). Wer sich der Anweisung widersetzt, dem drohen arbeitsrechtliche Konsequenzen.“ (*Sächsische Zeitung*, 5. August, 2004)

‘First notice’ (27th November 2003)

Instruction: This is a reminder that German is the everyday language that must be used during working hours in the presence of disabled persons and non-Sorbian speaking staff.¹¹

‘Second notice’ (7th June 2004)

Notification from the Center: Due to the occurrence of the situation in question, I [the director] would remind you that all staff must adhere to workplace regulations and particularly in relation to the direction issued on 27th Nov 2003. Any infringement on these relations will have consequences under the Labor Law.¹²

‘Third Notice’ (22nd March 2005)

Notice: We would like to add the following to uphold the content of the notification of 27th November 2003 and workplace notice of 7th June 2004 in full force and effect: ‘The everyday language of use during working hours should not directly or indirectly exclude any person present from communicating.’¹³

Though the expressions and format of the notices differ, all three effectively stipulate that German is the language of the workplace. After the issue of the second notice, the notices were covered in the Sorbian media (newspapers, radio and television) as the ‘Sorbian prohibition’ incident. This media coverage prompted a series of protests in the form of letters to newspapers, public letters, and demonstrations against the leaders of the center for disabled people that issued the notices. The first two readers’ letters on this matter published in the Sorbian newspaper show the indignation similarly expressed also in other letters. One of them wrote ‘I could not wonder enough, when I read about the prohibition of Sorbian. [...] I thought the Middle Ages were over.’ Another in a similar tone: ‘Joke or scandal? [...] After reading the article about this matter in our newspaper I have become convinced that it is a sheer scandal!’¹⁴

Also, the Sorbian national organization Domowina sent a letter to the state authorities in charge of Sorbian matters. The state authorities responded to this demand and sent a recommendation advising the center to reconsider the expressions used (February 2005), after which the center released the third notice. This only served to heighten the protests. After the third notice, the executive committee of the local branch of Domowina wrote a protest letter in which it posited the main arguments clearly: “We Sorbs

¹¹ Original: Belehrung Wiederholt weisen wir darauf hin, dass die Umgangssprache während des Dienstes im Gegenwart Behinderter und nicht sorbisch sprechender Mitarbeiter in deutscher Sprache zu führen ist.

¹² Original: Betriebsinformation Aus gegebenem Anlass weise ich darauf hin, dass Dienstanweisungen insbesondere die vom 27.11.2003 durch alle im Unternehmen tätigen Mitarbeiter zu befolgen sind. Verstöße gegen Dienstanweisungen ziehen arbeitsrechtliche Konsequenzen nach sich.

¹³ Original: Information Die Belehrung vom 27. November 2003 und die Betriebsinformation vom 07. Juni 2004 behalten inhaltlich weiter ihre Gültigkeit und werden ergänzt durch den folgenden Wortlaut: “Die Umgangssprache während des Dienstes darf keinen Anwesenden von der direkten oder indirekten Kommunikation ausschließen.”

¹⁴ Original: „Njemóžach so dodžiwać, jako čitach wo zakazu serbšćiny [...]. Běch sej myslil, zo je srjedźowěk hižo nimo.“ (*Serbske Nowiny* 9. August 2004) “Žort abo skandal? [...] Čitajo na to artikl w našim dženiku wo samsnej naležnosći běch wo tym přeswědčeny, zo so tu woprawdže wo hotowy skandal jedna.“ (ibid.)

[...] protest against this kind of procedure, because as Sorbs we have the same rights to use the mother tongue as German residents to use their German mother tongue.”¹⁵

Finally, after several months the center removed the notices, while not officially renouncing their content. The tensions seem to have continued latently, but relaxed later on when the director of the center changed (2011). The new director, a German, made part of the first message in Sorbian, showing comprehension and sympathy toward the Sorbs. And in May 2013, almost ten years after the first notice was issued, the Sorbian newspaper reported on the front page as top news of the day that the prohibition of Sorbian was officially cancelled by a written announcement in the name of the director of the institution (*Serbske Nowiny* May 21, 2013). This incident thus officially became part of “history”.

Let us return to the issuing of three notices which are at the core of the conflict. Out of the various actors involved, including the state authorities, the directly opposing management processes of the employees on the one hand and the jointly protesting Sorbian individuals and organizations on the other, can be summed up as in figures 5 and 6. Here, we focus on the notices as concrete means of implementation by the employers, and on public actions as attempts by the protesters to change the organization’s language policy. The results of the implementation of management measures were unsatisfactory to both sides, leading to new management processes.

1. Noting
 - ▶ *the use of Sorbian in the presence of Germans*
2. Evaluation
 - ▶ *negative evaluation of that use as a problem*
3. Adjustment design
 - ▶ *designing notices containing official organizational policy*
4. Implementation
 - ▶ *posting notices 1, 2, 3 which put official organizational policy into effect*

Figure 5: Processes of LM: Employers

1. Noting
 - ▶ *prohibition of Sorbian in the workplace (notices)*
2. Evaluation
 - ▶ *negative evaluation of the prohibition as a problem*
3. Adjustment design
 - ▶ *planning protest actions supporting a change in the official organizational policy*
4. Implementation
 - ▶ *public announcement, protest letters, demonstrations demanding that the notices be abandoned and that the official organizational policy be revoked*

Figure 6: Processes of LM: Sorbian protesters

¹⁵ Original: „My Serbja [...] protestujemy přečiwo tajkemu postupowanju, dokož mamy jako Serbja runje tajke prawo na wužiwanju swojeje maćernejje rěče kaž němski wobydler na wužiwanju swojeje něm-skeje maćernejje rěče.“ (1. June 2005)

In the following section, we will narrow the focus on the language management process of the employers who posted the notices (Figure 5), and investigate the management process with a particular attention to the post-implementation stage.

In doing so, we can assume that there were four blocks of management processes. Let us look at the process leading to the first notice. According to interviews with the employees involved, the direct trigger was when a disabled resident (a German) of the center complained to the employer that Sorbian speaking staff members were speaking Sorbian in her presence. The use of Sorbian by staff was noted by the employers as a deviation from the norm, and evaluated negatively. Then an 'instruction' was issued against the deviation which constituted the adjustment design, and this was implemented using a notice (the first notice).

As it happens, after the notice was issued, a conversation in Sorbian took place again in the presence of a German. The trigger here was also a conversation between staff members conducted in Sorbian, which was reported by a disabled bystander to the center authorities. At this stage, the center authorities decided to issue another notice which was implemented (second notice).

Concrete conversations between Sorbian employees in the presence of Germans are identified as the trigger for these two management processes by the employer. A process then took place which proceeded from the noting of the deviation to implementation. However, the second process was not merely a repetition of the same kind of management process, but rather, it was based on the negative evaluation of the lack of efficacy of the first notice. According to the employer's explanation in the Sorbian newspaper interview, there were two different adjustments proposed. On the one side, there were opinions that the staff members responsible should immediately receive a warning, but there were also other opinions that such an action was too severe. Through consideration of these opinions, the measure of issuing an unspecified notice while using stronger language was taken, which alluded to 'consequences under the labor law'. In other words, we can view the evaluation of the management process of the first notice linking to the content of the second notice.

The third notice was issued due to the protests caused by the second notice, and the intervention of the state authorities. Here we can also interpret the situation such that the implementation of the second notice was evaluated, and the readjustment of that notice and implementation of the third notice was connected to this feedback. However, because the third notice caused even greater problems, the management process as displayed in and connected to the third notice was evaluated, and a fourth management process began, in which all three of the notices of concern were removed from the bulletin board, and the usage of notices itself was abandoned.

In the third and fourth management process, there was no complaint about a concrete conversation which was noted and evaluated to violate the norm. But the feedback to the previous processes constituted the 'noting' and 'evaluation' stages of the following process. We can thus comprehend them as cases where the fifth (post-implementation) stage is identical to the first stage(s) of the following management process, as Lanstyák imagined (see section 3 above).

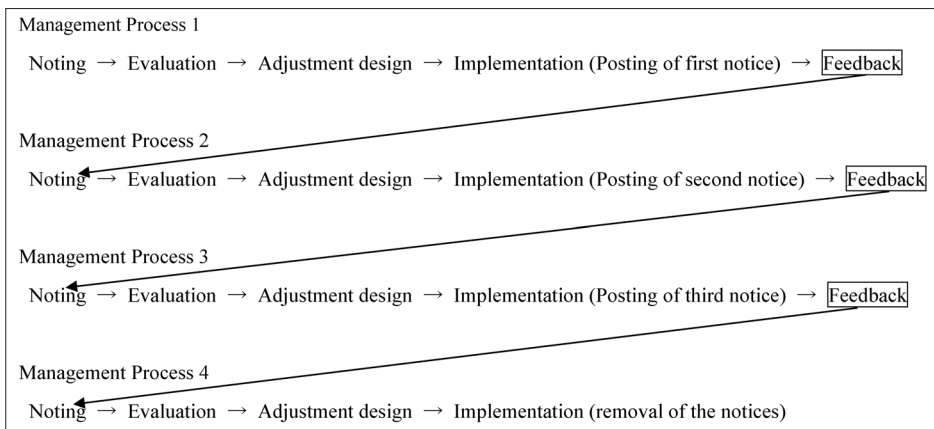


Figure 7: Four Management Processes (adjustments and readjustments) at the employer level¹⁶

So we can assume a stage of feedback in each case (Figure 7). Here, the incorporation of the post-implementation stage allows us to ascertain the mutual relations between the management processes. Rather than being mutually independent, management processes are thought to be based on the evaluation of previous processes, which turned out to be unsuccessful, and this perspective enables us to understand the processes as interconnected. In our case, by adding notices and explanations, the center tried to control the situation. But it only accelerated the protests. Thus, the inadequate anticipation of the effect of the implementation seems to be at the heart of the problems here.¹⁷

Incorporating the stage of feedback into the language management model can therefore be regarded as crucial in handling the processes of language management in the case at hand. The processes can be summed up as a cycle (Figure 8). In our case, feedback causes re-adjustment. And it is directly connected to the preceding implementation stage. But in other cases, feedback could certainly be related to other stages as well as a result of monitoring communicative processes.

6. Conclusion

This paper has reconsidered the LMT process model through a test case that indicates the significance of incorporating feedback, i.e. the evaluation of the implementation, or of the management process as a whole, into the discussion of language management. There are both practical and theoretical arguments for the merit of including such a fifth stage.

¹⁶ Chronologically, the occurrence of feedback became evident after the commencement of the next management process, but as a model it is logically located at the end of each process.

¹⁷ In the case here, an integration of the employees' perspective would show that the manner of communication – using one way 'notices' while avoiding direct dialogue was part of the problem itself (Kimura 2007).

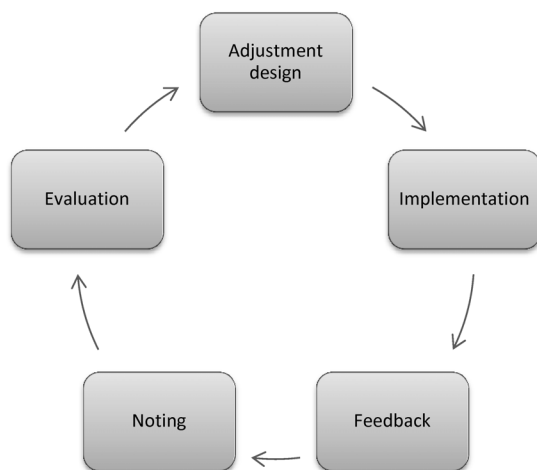


Figure 8: Language management process cycle

Including a post-implementation or meta-management stage can strengthen ‘deep concern’ (Lanstyák) about implementation among actual language management practitioners. For researchers, it can contribute to a better understanding of the link *between* management processes. In our case here, the relationship between repeated management processes could be understood as recurrent readjustments. But even if it is a single management process without cyclical recommencement, drawing attention to the possibility of feedback could provide a more profound understanding of the management itself. Indeed, feedback or post-implementation evaluation can be a regular part of the management process, as it is something we do normally in our daily interaction and communication practices.

Additionally, at the macro-level it can incorporate the evaluation stage, which is a well-established stage in political and management processes. In instances where no policy or management evaluation is performed, or the evaluation is misguided (as in the case above), this can be pointed out as part of the problem. This inclusion of policy and/or management evaluation strengthens the applicability of LMT to macro processes. While LMT was proposed to be more integrative than the study of LPP that inclines towards investigations of the macro-level only, research in language management has thus far tended to focus less on policy processes at governmental level which are usually the subject of LPP studies of the traditional type (see Kimura 2013: 73).¹⁸ Thus, it is possible to gain the impression that LMT is an approach complementary to the study of LPP rather than being more comprehensive. The revised process model would improve the ability to analyze macro political levels and contribute to making LMT truly integrative.

¹⁸ For an example of a study based on LMT dealing also with governmental policy, see Giger & Sloboda 2008.

The theoretical merit of a process model that includes meta-management evaluation is that it makes the cyclical character of the management process more visible. It would also increase the compatibility with other process models and facilitate a dialogue with these approaches in LPP and other disciplines concerned with management processes. The LMT process model can be enriched by incorporating the post-implementation stage, which is usually a crucial component of management cycle models. In short, the inclusion of the fifth stage would contribute to the three strategies of LMT which Neustupný (2004) proposed in searching the position of LMT among other theories, though in our context we should omit the word ‘language’ in the citations for the sake of addressing broader approaches to management of human activities:

- (1) To develop common networks with other theories of [language] management.
- (2) To actively search for the possibility to utilize components of other [language] management theories.
- (3) To uphold the General Theory of [Language] Management unless evidence becomes available that some other theory better performs the role of a general theory.

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ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Sprachmanagement als zyklischer Prozess: Eine Fallstudie zum Verbot des Sorbischen am Arbeitsplatz

Als Alternative zu üblichen Forschungen zur Sprachenpolitik, die die Makro-Ebene bevorzugt thematisieren, wurde die Sprachmanagement-Theorie als umfassender Ansatz vorgeschlagen, der die verschiedenen Ebenen integriert behandeln kann. Das Ziel dieses Beitrags ist, das Prozessmodell der Sprachmanagement-Theorie kritisch zu beleuchten. Ein Vergleich des Sprachmanagement-Prozessmodells mit Prozessmodellen aus Politik und Wirtschaft zeigt, dass dem herkömmlichen Sprachmanagementmodell eine reflexive Phase nach der Durchführung, die rückblickende Evaluation (*feedback*), fehlt. Um diese theoretische Erkenntnis zu überprüfen, wird eine Fallstudie durchgeführt. Es handelt sich um ein typisches Beispiel, bei der sich die Mehrheit durch eine Sprache der Minderheit, die sie nicht verstehen kann, verunsichert fühlt. So wurde an einem Arbeitsplatz im traditionellen sorbischen Siedlungsgebiet in der Lausitz im Osten Deutschlands die sorbische Sprache de facto verboten. Es sollte in einer Sprache kommuniziert werden, die alle verstehen, in diesem Falle Deutsch. Dagegen kamen Proteste auf. Die Analyse der Reaktionen des Arbeitgebers auf die wiederholten Proteste weist eine rückblickende Evaluation der eigenen Handlungen auf, die jeweils zum nächsten Management-Prozess führte. Durch die Fokussierung auf diese evaluative Phase kann der Zusammenhang zwischen den einzelnen Prozessen verdeutlicht werden. So zeigen theoretische und praktische Überlegungen, dass das Hinzufügen einer rückblickenden Phase nicht nur für eine bessere Integration des Ansatzes des Sprachmanagements in die größere Forschungslandschaft vorteilhaft ist, sondern auch das Verständnis konkreter Vorgänge vertiefen kann.

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