

Lisa Fairbrother

## Report: The Society of Language Management

DOI 10.1515/ijsl-2014-0048

The Society of Language Management (known as the *Gengo Kanri Kenkyukai* in Japanese) is a Japan-based forum for professional researchers and graduate students working in the field of Language Management Theory (LMT) to exchange their ideas and research findings and work towards the further development of the theory. The Society meets four to five times a year and at present has 80 members representing both Japanese and overseas institutions. It is run by Professor Hidehiro Muraoka along with Dr. Minjeong Ko and Chiharu Kon, from the University of Chiba, and Professor Sau Kuen Fan from Kanda University of Foreign Studies.

The Society's roots can be traced back to a research project founded by Professor J.V. Neustupný in 1998 entitled "Studies of Language Management in Contact Situations". The project was funded by the Graduate School of Humanities at Chiba University and initially run by Professor Hidehiro Muraoka. In the early days of the project there were only around 10 members, including the author, most of whom were working within the field of Teaching Japanese as a Second Language (TJSL). From the outset there was a strong emphasis placed on contact situations between L1 and L2 speakers of Japanese and the problems occurring within those interactions.

Although the researchers were each working on separate areas within the main project, they were consistent regarding their methodologies. Most researchers used methods from conversation analysis and discourse analysis along with interaction interviews (Neustupný 2003), reflecting the importance Neustupný placed on collecting data from naturally occurring interactions. In addition, the necessity of introspective data was emphasized, so all research using recorded discourse was supplemented with follow-up interviews (Neustupný 1990). Also, researchers in TJSL focused not only on narrow linguistic problems

but also gave attention to broader interactional problems including sociolinguistic and sociocultural elements.

In 2004, Professor Neustupný left Japan to take up a position at Monash University, Melbourne and in the same year The Society of Contact Situations and Language Management (*Sesshokubamen to Gengokanri Kenkyukai* in Japanese) was founded, with the aim of bringing together scholars working with LMT from all over Japan to continue and develop the various research activities started by Professor Neustupný. In 2006 the name was changed to the current Society of Language Management, in order to emphasize the group's commitment to the development of LMT and distinguish the Society's activities from other types of research being conducted in contact situations.

The Society holds four regular meetings each year and members present their research findings relating to the annual theme. A variety of themes have been selected so far, including the relationship between LMT and second language acquisition, methodologies in contact situation research, the language management of multilingual speakers, contact situation variation and, more recently, evaluation processes within LMT. In addition to the four regular theme-based meetings, an annual general conference is held, featuring workshops and general research presentations focusing on LMT.

Since 2009, the Society has been organizing its meetings in collaboration with the Intercultural Communication Institute (ICCI) at Kanda University of International Studies and thanks to financial support from the ICCI it has been able to invite guest speakers from related fields, whose work is considered to overlap with LMT. This has encouraged much lively debate and enabled members of the Society to keep abreast of the latest developments in concomitant research areas.

Today the Society includes as its members not only researchers working within the field of TJSL but also those working in general applied linguistics, sociolinguistics and language planning, covering language situations involving Japanese, English, Korean, Chinese, German, Czech, Sorbian and Japanese sign language. The Society represents a very broad range of research interests but researchers are united in their common focus on LMT. Reflecting the original project's basis in TJSL, there is still a strong body of research being conducted on the language and interactional problems of the different groups of immigrants and sojourners to Japan, with the aim of raising critical awareness of those problems. Topics of research range from micro-level discourse elements, such as turn-taking and speech acts in individual interactions to macro-level studies relating to language planning and language ideology. Some researchers focus on the individual stages of LMT; turning their attention specifically towards norms, evaluations or adjustments, while others focus on particular interactions or

groups of interactions and look at the whole language management processes involved. A wide variety of contact situations have been studied, including L1 speaker/L2 speaker interactions, L1/L1 speaker interactions, L2/L2 speaker lingua franca situations, pair and group interactions, first time meetings and interactions in established networks. Studies have focused on face-to-face, telephone or web-based interactions, as well as interactions with written script in the public domain. Research areas also cover a broad range of domains, from the educational, work and public, to the family, friendship and daily life domains.

Continuing the traditions of the original project, there is still a strong focus on methodologies from conversation analysis, discourse analysis and ethnography, with an emphasis placed on using naturally occurring data, often audio and video recordings supplemented with follow-up interviews, or interaction interviews. In addition, some researchers have used new technologies such as brain wave analysis and eye cameras in their work.

The Society publishes a selection of papers each year in *Language Management in Contact Situations* (known as *Sesshokubamen no Gengokanri Kenkyu* in Japanese), a research report published in association with the Graduate School of Humanities and Social Sciences at Chiba University and edited by Professor Hidehiro Muraoka. *Language Management in Contact Situations* started out as the official working papers of the “Studies of Language Management in Contact Situations” project started by Professors Neustupný and Muraoka in the late 1990s and is now the main publication of those working with LMT in Japan. From 2000 to 2006 *Language Management in Contact Situations* was published biennially, but since 2006 it has been published annually, enabling a more timely dissemination of the latest research developments.

The publication includes research articles, theoretical overviews and research notes on work in progress, records of presentations given at the Society of Language Management meetings, in addition to lists of recent publications relating to LMT. Articles are published in Japanese or English and English abstracts are available for all Japanese language articles. The scope of the publication reflects the broad range of research interests of the members of the Society. The 2014 edition, for example, focuses on the evaluation stage of LMT and includes papers relating to the language management of Korean and Chinese residents of Japan, the construction of identities in conversation, the evaluation of Japanese L2 writing and Japanese L1 speakers’ self-evaluations in contact situations (see Muraoka 2014).

In October 2011, the Society of Language Management hosted the Second International Language Management Symposium under the title “Norm diversity and language management in globalized settings” in collaboration with Waseda University, Tokyo (see Dovalil 2012).

More information about the Society of Language Management and its publication is available in Japanese on the Society's website, <http://lmtjapan.wordpress.com/>. Please direct enquiries to the Society's office at [muraoka@shd.chiba-u.ac.jp](mailto:muraoka@shd.chiba-u.ac.jp).

**Acknowledgment:** The author would like to thank Professor Hidehiro Muraoka for his helpful comments while writing this report.

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