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# An introduction: Language Management Theory in Language Policy and Planning

**Abstract:** In these introductory remarks, the authors deal with the metaphors “top-down”, “bottom-up” and related concepts in the Language Policy and Planning research. Furthermore, they sketch out the position of Language Management Theory in this field of study and characterize “language management” in various research traditions. Afterward, the main features of Language Management Theory are presented with emphasis placed on the relationship between “simple” and “organized” language management. Finally, these features are illustrated on the individual contributions to this special issue.

**Keywords:** Language Policy and Planning, language management, Language Management Theory, simple management, organized management

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## 1 Introductory remarks

“Language Policy and Planning” (LPP) is currently often used as a label for various research traditions, in the context of which various aspects of “behavior-toward-language” (Fishman’s coinage, used in Fishman [1971]) are studied. This type of behavior can be delimited above all, though certainly not exclusively, by the fact that it is oriented toward change in the structure and use of language or languages. Change can be initiated by various actors, such as politicians, government officials or experts appointed to solve language problems. Following the end of the colonial system in the 1960s, theoreticians and practitioners of LPP devoted themselves primarily to changes of this type (Jernudd and Nekvapil 2012). However, it is also imaginable and in fact, not unusual, that even ordinary speakers in everyday interactions (or based on them) contribute to these changes in language(s) and their use. These changes began to be the object of study later, and only with them came the more extensive use of the metaphorical pair “top-down” and “bottom-up” in the discourse of LPP (cf. Kaplan and Baldauf

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1997: 196). The metaphors “top-down” and “bottom-up” refer primarily to the direction of the planned change (more precisely – to its starting and end points), but as we saw above, they also refer to the initiators of the change or the actors in it. The “top-down” direction tends to be associated with actors who possess significant power, while the “bottom-up” direction is associated with actors who do not have such a degree of power. It follows that actors working “top-down” often enforce their intended changes more easily than those working “bottom-up”. In LPP, however, the “top-down” and “bottom-up” metaphors are often connected to another metaphorical pair, that is, “macro” and “micro”. These metaphors were adopted from sociology, where their explanatory potential is the subject of an ongoing and often controversial discussion (cf. texts as early as Alexander et al. 1987). In LPP, the “macro” and “micro” metaphors refer primarily to a varying degree of complexity of social processes (one of their uses in sociology). The “top-down” impact is more complex and there is often the work of institutions behind it, which is why it is labelled as “macro”, while the “bottom-up” impact may be simpler, often the work of individuals, which is why it is understood as “micro”. We can thus state that the conceptual and terminological mini-system described above enables LPP scholars to talk about “macro-planning, taking place top-down” and “micro-planning, taking place bottom-up”, with both types of planning having typical actors endowed with varying degrees of power (this system could also include another sociological dichotomy, that is, “structure-agency”, which, however, is not commonly used in the context of the initial metaphors “top-down” and “bottom-up” in LPP).

We have thus far presented LPP as the explanatory potential of two separate sets of concepts, gained through the division of two (or, in fact, three) metaphorical dichotomies: on the one hand, top-down, macro (or, in some cases, “structure”) and on the other hand bottom-up, micro (or, in some cases, agency). The relationship between these two sets of concepts, i.e. what is indicated in the title of our issue – the *interplay* of bottom-up and top-down – are among the greatest challenges in researching empirical reality. The relationships between these dimensions or levels of LPP can vary greatly, so it is difficult to imagine their complex character even in the form of a model, which is certainly one of the reasons why the ethnography of language policy (e.g. McCarty 2011) has developed extensively of late. It is typical to come across statements such as that “top-down planning” need not be accepted in its entirety on the social “micro-level”, where it can encounter resistance, leading to its modification; in other words, one can witness “bottom-up planning”. Shohamy (2006) presumes an even stronger role of the “micro-level” and “bottom-up language planning”, emphasizing democratic processes in the formation of “(macro)-language policy”. Another type of these relationships can be the following: processes coordinated in various ways,

taking place on the micro-level, aid the formulation of “macro-LPP”, which is then successfully implemented on the micro-level. Or: processes coordinated in various ways, taking place on the micro-level aid the formulation of “macro-LPP”, which is then implemented *only partially*, which leads to the fact that other processes taking place on the micro-level aid the formulation of “macro-LPP”, which is then actually (“on the second try”) successfully implemented on the micro-level, and the like.

Our point of departure in this thematic issue is the assumption that some approaches in LPP as an academic discipline are more appropriate for capturing this dynamic than others. We would like to show that Language Management Theory (LMT), the construction of which is based directly on this dynamic, and the application of which thus provides interesting perspectives on the interplay of bottom-up and top-down (to cite from the title of our issue), is among the most appropriate. Let us first sketch out the position of LMT in LPP.

## 2 Language Management Theory as one approach in LPP

LPP is currently a significantly diversified research area, which is attested to by the existence of such differing collective works such as *The Cambridge handbook of language policy* (Spolsky 2012) or *An introduction to language policy: theory and method* (Ricento 2006). It is thus very difficult to transform this diversity into a common denominator and define basic approaches within it. Richard B. Baldauf attempted to do so in his recent overview, differentiating between four basic approaches (see Baldauf 2012). These are (1) the classical approach, (2) the language management approach, (3) the domain approach and (4) the critical approach. It is apparent, as we will see shortly, that these approaches are not sharply delineated, i.e. that there are overlaps between them.

The classical approach – a better term would be, perhaps, “neoclassical” – continues in the tradition of language planning from the 1960s and 1970s, and Baldauf also includes his own work within it, including the popular volume Kaplan and Baldauf (1997), but also, for example, the integrative framework of Hornberger (2006).

The language management approach for Baldauf is the approach initiated by J. V. Neustupný and B. H. Jernudd. This approach brought a number of innovations to the theory of language planning at the time (e.g. the detailed analysis of concrete interactions or emphasis on the differing interests of various actors in language planning). A classic text which also introduced the concept of language

management is Jernudd and Neustupný (1987). This approach, called Language Management Theory/Framework/Model, was developed in numerous texts which emerged above all in Japan, Australia and Central Europe (see, e.g. Nekvapil and Sherman 2009a; Marriott and Nekvapil 2012), and is the topic to which this issue of the *International Journal of the Sociology of Language* is devoted.

The third approach designated by Baldauf is the domain approach. The main representative of this approach is, in his opinion, Bernard Spolsky. Though Spolsky uses a number of summarizing labels (including “language management”) for his approach, or rather, approaches, the concept of the domain (in a universally understood sense) is decisive for his expositions (see Spolsky 2009). Spolsky’s approach will also be discussed below in relation to the concept of language management.

The last approach mentioned by Baldauf is the critical approach. Critical approaches draw attention to the social inequalities connected to LPP. Unlike the “politically neutral” theories of the 1960s and 1970s, they place questions of power, social struggle, colonization, hegemony, ideology and resistance in the forefront (Tollefson 2006). Tollefson’s book *Planning language, planning inequality* (Tollefson 1991) is symptomatic for this approach.

### 3 “Language management” as a central concept in various approaches

As we stated above, LMT in the vein of Neustupný and Jernudd was the first theory to systematically and programmatically use the term language management. Today, however, it is by far not the only one using this term. Ozolins (2013) notes that since the beginning of the 21st century, there has been an observable shift away from the use of the term “language planning” and toward the use of the term “language management” and, citing Nekvapil (2006), he admits that this may signal a paradigm shift in LPP. Mwaniki (2011) sees essentially the same process as an emerging discourse of language management, differentiating between three traditions therein: (1) Israeli/American tradition, (2) European/Asia-Pacific tradition and (3) African tradition. We will utilize his classification categories below (their detailed characterization, however, is ours).

The Israeli/American tradition is represented above all by two books by B. Spolsky (2004, 2009), in which, among others, he uses the term language management. In Spolsky (2004), the term is also employed as a mere synonym of the term language planning (terminological fluctuation being characteristic for Spolsky’s work), but essentially, language management, for Spolsky, is, in addi-

tion to language beliefs/ideology and language practices, one of the three components of the language policy of a speech community. Language management is defined as “any specific efforts to modify or influence language practice” (2004: 5). Spolsky (2009) places the concept of domain in the forefront instead of the concept of community, and accordingly, defines language management as “the explicit and observable effort by someone or some group that has or claims authority over the participants in the domain to modify their practices or beliefs” (2009: 4). While Spolsky ignores LMT in the vein of Neustupný and Jernudd in the first book, in the second book he attempts an extensive integration of this theory. This integration, however, is very selective and testifies to the eclecticism of Spolsky’s approach, congregating the incongruous (for critical perspectives on this, see Sloboda [2010] and Dovalil [2011]). Thus, for example, the concluding questions of Spolsky’s book, i.e. “Can language be managed? And if it can, should it be managed?” (2009: 261) do not make sense in the context of LMT, because LMT posits that people essentially cannot *not* manage their language.

The African tradition of language management does not tend to be mentioned in the context of language management at present. The reason for this is likely the fact that there are relatively few experts working within it, and it is thus not highly developed. Mwaniki constructs this tradition starting with the work of Webb (above all 2002) and sees himself as its representative (see Mwaniki 2011). In his opinion, this tradition should consider the specific character of the language situations in Africa, in other words, theories of language management should not be (mechanically) transferred from other research contexts (and thus from other traditions), but rather, it should be developed on the basis of African language data (in this point, Mwaniki identifies with the Grounded Theory of Glaser and Strauss). While Webb’s approach is inspired by the concept of management developed in organization and business studies (language management as business strategy tool), Mwaniki’s theory of language management is, as he puts it himself, “a complex of theoretical precepts deriving from decision-making theory, sociolinguistic theory, modernisation theory, systems theory, management theory [especially as advanced by the public value management paradigm], phenomenology, and human development theory that seeks to understand and explain the interactive dynamics of language in society and language and society” (Mwaniki 2011: 253). Mwaniki’s approach enters into dialogue with both the Israeli/American and European/Asia-Pacific traditions and poses provocative questions to them, above all epistemological ones. However, his approach itself is formulated on a very general level, hence it appears to be little more than an ambitious program, a prolegomena to a future theory (for a critique of this approach, see Orman [2013]).

The center of the European/Asia-Pacific tradition is, for Mwaniki (2011), LMT in the vein of Neustupný and Jernudd. We will now deal with this theory in more detail.

## 4 The main features of Language Management Theory

As stated above, the foundations of LMT were laid in the 1980s (see Jernudd and Neustupný 1987), but their original seeds can be found as early as in the 1970s (see above all Neustupný 1978). Since that time, a further two generations on at least three continents have been working with this approach. It is thus a given that their use of this theory varies and Kimura (2013) names a series of features which are specific for LMT in Australia, Japan and Central Europe.<sup>1</sup> Nevertheless, the basic aspects of the theory are essentially common ones, and we will now briefly deal with them (utilizing, among others, the introductory texts in, for example, Nekvapil [2009], Nekvapil [2011], Marriott and Nekvapil [2012], see also <http://languagemanagement.ff.cuni.cz/> [accessed 4 November 2014]).

First of all, it is essential to grasp the concept of language management in LMT. Language management is understood broadly, as any sort of activity aimed at language or communication, in other words, at language as a system as well as at language use (or, put simply, “behavior toward language” or “metalinguistic behavior”). These activities can be undertaken by an institution (e.g. the ministry of education, which makes decisions regarding mandatory foreign languages in a given country), but also individuals in particular interactions (when, for example, we switch to another language variety because we note that our communication partner does not understand us well, or when we begin to speak more slowly because we note that our communication partner does not understand us well, but we are not able to switch to another language variety, because we do not have competence in any other variety). The connections between the management done by institutions and the management done by individuals undoubtedly exists (even in our hypothetical example) and various cases can occur here, some of which were presented on a general level at the beginning of this text in the discussion of top-down and bottom-up.

Language management in LMT is thus not merely a matter of institutions (the position of classical language planning), but also an issue of the everyday lin-

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<sup>1</sup> Interestingly, the original set of features from the 1970s is used even today (see Du Plessis 2010).

guistic behavior accompanying the ordinary use of language in concrete interactions. This everyday management is terminologically called simple management (or discourse-based management, or “on-line” management). In opposition to that, management performed by institutions varying in complexity is technically called organized management (or institutional management, or “off-line” management).

Simple management is understood as a process divided into several phases: the beginning phase is when an individual *notes* something in his own or in his interlocutor’s way of speaking (a noteworthy research question is, of course, what stimulates this noting, for more on this see Marriott and Nekvapil [2012]). The process of language management can stop at this moment, but it can also enter a further phase, that is, that the speaker *evaluates* the noted phenomenon (e.g. a deviation from a language or communicative norm). If this noted phenomenon is evaluated negatively, it counts in LMT as an “inadequacy”.<sup>2</sup> The language management process can stop at this moment as well, but it can also enter yet another phase, i.e. the speaker can think about an *adjustment design* (e.g. how to replace one word or form with another). The process can stop here as well, but it can also enter the fourth phase, i.e. the speaker can *implement* the adjustment design, in other words, use it in the conversation. What happens then? The speakers can continue in conversation without devoting further attention to their own or their interlocutors’ way of speaking, but it also can happen that a speaker notes the *implemented* adjustment design, evaluates it, etc., in other words, simple management may proceed in a cyclical manner (see Nekvapil [2009] for more details).

As is well known, it is not only individuals in everyday interactions who devote attention to language and its use, but also institutions and organizations of various degrees of complexity (the traditional topic of LPP). This “organized management” has some structural features of simple management, but its basic qualities follow from the fact that it does not take place in a single concrete interaction, but evolves out of numerous interactions (in this sense it is “trans-interactional”). In sum, organized management can be defined against the background of simple management by the following features (Nekvapil 2012: 167):

1. Management acts are trans-interactional.
2. A social network or even an institution (organization) holding the corresponding power is involved.
3. Communication about management takes place.

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<sup>2</sup> An “inadequacy” can be removed by routine interactional means such as repair sequences, and, if this is not possible, such a phenomenon counts as a “problem” in LMT (see also Jernudd and Nekvapil 2012: 640, note 5).

4. Theorizing and ideologies are at play to a greater degree and more explicitly.
5. In addition to language as discourse, the object of management is language as system.

One of the merits of LMT is its continuous interest in the interplay of simple and organized management, and in particular, this research perspective distinguishes LMT from various approaches in LPP. In this connection the following proposition by Neustupný (1994) has been often quoted:

I shall claim that any act of language planning should start with the consideration of language problems as they appear in discourse, and the planning process should not be considered complete until the removal of the problems is implemented in discourse.  
Neustupný (1994: 50)

There were several attempts to conceptualize this complex relationship, be it in the form of “management summaries” (Nekvapil 2004), “dialectic of the micro and macro” (Nekvapil and Nekula 2006), “language management cycle” (Nekvapil 2009b; Dovalil 2012), “pre-interaction” and “post-interaction management” (Nekvapil and Sherman 2009), “instructed action” (Sherman 2010), or a factor (“discourse”) mediating between the both levels (Sloboda et al. 2010). The articles in this issue utilize these concepts, further develop them and demonstrate their capacity using examples from various language situations.

## 5 This issue

In his article, Goro Kimura (Tokyo) analyzes the maintenance of Sorbian in eastern Germany, focusing on the role of Catholic Church in the maintenance processes. He demonstrates that the “dualism” of top-down and bottom-up language planning is a mere gloss which hides complex processes which can be re-specified in terms of LMT. He stresses that it is imperative to study not only relationships between acts of simple management (“micro”) on the one hand and acts of organized management (“macro”) on the other but also relationships within processes taking place on these two levels or complexes of levels.

Language management in the sphere of religion is also the subject of the subsequent article by Tamah Sherman (Prague). She focuses, however, on behavior toward language of the Mormon missionaries working in the Czech Republic. She analyzes particular interactions in which missionaries and the locals were involved and demonstrates how these interactions connect to the language policy as formulated in official materials published by the missionary program of the



Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints (Mormons). Using this example, her aim is to show language management of an entire organization, level-by-level.

Lisa Fairbrother (Tokyo) analyzes behavior toward language of plurilingual residents of Japan. Though she does not analyze language management as it takes place in particular interactions, but rather “management summaries” collected in research interviews, she is able to demonstrate how deviations from expected language behavior are gradually perceived as problems by the participants in intercultural contact situations. Language management in micro-level interactions as summarized by the plurilingual residents enables her to formulate a number of incentives for macro-level management. Briefly, LMT serves as a diagnostic means here.

Aman Chiu (Hong Kong) and Björn Jernudd (Washington) address an issue which is usually considered a typical example of organized management, namely terminology work. However, in a language situation which is as complex as in Hong Kong (their example), it also matters how terminology is managed by the users of (potential) terms in micro-level interactions. Moreover, they demonstrate that organized language management can be complicated by the presence of several competing standardization bodies in the community.

Helen Marriott (Melbourne) pays attention to “the complexity and layers of management” in the context of globalizing academic sphere in Australia. While analyzing language management of overseas students (mostly from Japan), who develop their academic discourse at an Australian university, she notes that the boundary between simple and organized management need not always be clearly identifiable; according to her, such cases thus represent a “weak form of organized management”.

Björn Jernudd (Washington), one of the fathers of LMT, devotes his article to his lifelong topic – the language situation in Sudan (see texts as early as Jernudd [1968]), which has been recently split into two states. This is the only article of the issue addressing a language situation in the state of (war) conflict. In such situation, top-down and bottom-up management, the terms that Jernudd uses, may mean serious things reaching far beyond mere language matters. All the more so, Jernudd’s analysis is framed by politically sensitive concepts such as interests and ideology.

Demonstrating the utility of a number of the LMT concepts, the last article, written by Jaroslav Švelch (Prague), analyzes language management in online discussion forums. These forums are often characteristic of the informality and the absence of hierarchy, therefore, language management often takes place on the level of individual users. The author aptly calls this sort of language management “horizontal” in contrast to “vertical” management that corresponds to the idea of top-down or bottom-up management. Švelch investigates online

discussion forums as remarkable social phenomena, that is, in their own right. However, they can be also studied as a sort of laboratory where various types and processes of language management can be observed for the first time, and we believe that the results of such studies might be profitably utilized elsewhere.

The articles are followed by a brief report written by Lisa Fairbrother, in which she presents activities of the Society for Language Management based in Tokyo and founded under the direct influence of J. V. Neustupný (for other institutional information see <<http://languagemanagement.ff.cuni.cz/>>).

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