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Epilogue

Reconsidering the language management approach in light of the micro-macro continuum

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1. Introduction

In this closing chapter, we reflect on the current volume in order to assess its achievements and limitations, and especially highlight its contribution to research on the integration of micro and macro dimensions. We begin by reassessing the place of language management theory (LMT) within the broader field of research, considering its theoretical scope and application in research thus far. We then re-examine the core of the theory, the language management process itself, and propose improvements. In the following section, we summarize the main points in the chapters in Parts II, III, and IV relevant to the conceptualization of the micro and macro as an intertwining continuum. We finish with suggestions for further research.

2. The scope of LMT and its geographical spread

Part I traced the origins of the language management (LM) approach and the relationships between socio-historical contexts and research traditions in East Asia and Central Europe. In order to clarify the place of LMT with regard to the micro-macro issue within the research landscape, we will reconsider the basic intention and later developments of the LMT approach, paying particular attention to its historical and current social context.

As a witness of the early days of language policy and planning (LPP) as a research field in international academia, Jernudd recalls that the focus of the “classical” LPP paradigm on the state level was not a sign of ignorance of other levels, but a conscious decision in response to the pressing need for language regulation in developing nations. The proponents of LMT, Jernudd and Neustupný, were

aware of this fact, but they developed LMT to also cover the other levels, which were beyond the scope of the then dominant LPP paradigm. The concern with different types of micro-level management, including the elaboration of languages by linguists and other language users, known as language cultivation, rather than state-level language policy was related to the backgrounds of these two researchers. Jernudd (this volume) characterizes his native country, Sweden, as “a language cultivation speech community, at the time without so-called policy issues”. According to Sherman (this volume), in the Czech Republic (or more precisely the former Czechoslovakia), Neustupný’s native country, “both among linguists and the general public, the cultivation approach continues to be more widely applied than the policy one”. She connects this to the fact that the Czech Republic has a highly visible public language management institution (see Prošek, this volume).

Additionally, the spread of LMT in the field of Japanese language education and more generally in Japanese sociolinguistics can be explained by the research interests and personal career history of Neustupný, who after having taught Japanese language in Australia came to teach sociolinguistics at universities in Japan. The chapter by Fan, which follows the development of LMT in East Asia, especially in Japan, explains why Neustupný’s approach was regarded as suited to the local social context in Japan. In this island country, where the Japanese language dominates and the “myth of homogeneity” (Fan, this volume) prevails, encounters with people perceived as non-Japanese have raised awareness of language issues, resulting in calls for research on such “marked” contact. LMT, which focuses on contact situations, was a welcome approach to these issues. As Zawiszová (2014, p. 356–357) notes:

Japanese history is marked by a period of some two hundred fifty years of almost complete isolation, and Japanese society is still thought of as one of the world’s most homogeneous ones. Therefore, as long as globalization... continues to cause substantial transformations in every facet of Japanese people’s daily lives, it can be expected that this line of research will not only prevail, but also expand.

Thus, we can understand the focus and geographic origin of LMT, and why it became rooted in certain Central European and East Asian “nation states” with “weak” types of explicit national-level language planning.

LMT’s interest in language management on various sub-state levels corresponds to the reality that different agents and actors are involved in LM processes. On the other hand, He and Dai (2016) have argued that state-level language planning should be more explicitly acknowledged in LMT, pointing out that both the Czech Republic and Japan have weak governmental language policies. However, this does not mean that LMT studies have completely ignored state-level planning. Neustupný and Někvpil’s (2003) extensive study on major management

processes observed in the Czech context, including state-level policy, is one example of LMT being applied to multiple levels in society, ranging from the individual to the national.

In sum, while theoretically broader than LPP and claiming to be a comprehensive approach encompassing all types of management in any context, in reality, LMT seems to have developed as a complementary approach to the research strands focusing on the state (national) level in LPP. For example, Ali, Baldauf, Shariff and Manan (2018, p. 143) argue that LMT first “posits that language problems should be investigated in real language contact situations” and second, “provides a lens for understanding the interplay between simple and organized management *in meso language planning*” (by ‘meso’ they mean organizations/institutions below the state level; emphasis added by the current authors). This has undoubtedly contributed to a redress of the imbalance in LPP research that has focused overwhelmingly on state-level policy. The weak concern with the state level, however, may be one reason why LMT is not mentioned in some publications that aim to provide an overview of LPP research (Tollefson & Perez-Milans, 2018; Johnson, 2013), as this particular conceptualization of the macro level has been the benchmark of LPP research.

Aware of the weak approach to the national (state) level in LMT research, the chapters in this volume have tried to consider the national level, including also transnational aspects (most evident in Takahashi’s chapter). A direct analysis of national policy, however, is not presented in this volume, reflecting the origin and academic training of the authors mostly educated and/or working in the Czech Republic or Japan and having encountered LMT in these contexts. Keeping in mind the gap between the conceptualization of LMT as a comprehensive framework and the *de facto* application of this approach in a complementary way to major LPP research, in the next sections we re-examine the LM process itself, as well as the linking of micro and macro dimensions, considering the examples presented in the individual chapters of this volume.

3. Insights into the LM process

Regarding the process, one discussion in the LM literature focuses on the stages where the model should start and the process end (Fairbrother, Nekvapil & Sloboda, 2018, p. 18). Indeed, the individual chapters in this volume display some variation in the presentation of the process model.

3.1 Attention to norms as a pre-stage to LM

Regarding the beginning of the management process, all the chapters in this volume, including those focusing on contact situations, actually discuss the management process from the stage of “noting” deviations from norms. For example, Fairbrother explicitly refers to the “initial noting stage”, which is aligned with the stages originally outlined by Jernudd and Neustupný (1987). In later versions of the LM model, however, Neustupný (2003, 2004, 2005) posited the occurrence of deviations from norms (or expectations) as the initial stage. The authors in Part II (Aikawa, Takeda & Aikawa, and Fairbrother) cite this later version of the LM stages, which begin with “a deviation from a norm or an expectation”. Lanstyák, however, argues strongly against the inclusion of the occurrence of deviations prior to the noting stage (2018, p. 71):

Some authors sometimes include the “deviation from the norms or expectations” among the phases of LM (e.g. Neustupný, 2003), but it can be argued that a deviation is simply the state of affairs, not a phase of the process of LM, since it goes against all logic that any kind of management could take place prior to the noting of the deviation.

In other words, the deviation may be considered to be just part of generation (language behaviour), not management (behaviour toward language), if there is no noting. Therefore, the norms from which the deviation is perceived are a prerequisite of the management process, rather than part of the process itself.

It has also been argued that the beginning of the management process need not be triggered by an actual deviation from a norm occurring in situ, but a hypothetical or imagined one (Nekvapil, 2012; Nekvapil & Sherman, 2014; Marriott, 2015). For example, Beneš, Prošek, Smejkalová and Štěpánová (2018) report that the Language Consulting Centre of the Institute of the Czech language often receives enquiries asking to confirm if a certain language phenomenon is in line with standard Czech norms. In such cases, the management is not triggered by a deviation from a norm that has actually occurred, but rather management is initiated to check whether a certain usage might potentially be a deviation if it were to be used. More broadly, pre-interaction management (Nekvapil & Sherman, 2009) is a typical type of LM that occurs without a concrete deviation occurring in situ.¹ This evolution of the model does not exclude deviations as a trigger for LM; it merely opens up a way to include other possibilities of language management

1. Pre-interaction management can, however, be implemented as the result of LM that occurred in previous interactions. For example, in their analysis of “accustomed language management” Muraoka, Fan and Ko (2018) argue that “language management is not only triggered by deviations noted in the on-going discourse, but also triggered by accumulated and/or ac-

occurring in the real world. If LM intends to deal with all kinds of language management as behaviour toward language, the model has to be comprehensive. On the other hand, it has to be recognized that the above-mentioned example of Beneš et al. (2018), as well as cases of pre-interaction management, presuppose the existence of norms. It is striking that all studies in this volume, in both the micro- and macro-focused sections, highlight the importance of considering norms (or expectations). This volume, therefore, confirms that norms remain a central concern for LMT no matter which micro and macro dimensions are involved. Following Beneš et al. (2018), who emphasize keeping the stage of deviation from norms in order to consider un-noted phenomena (p. 124), while also beginning the discussion of the management process from the noting stage (p. 129), we propose taking up “norms (and deviations from them)” as a pre-stage (stage 0) of language management. This is similar to Lanstyák (2014, p. 336), who places “0. Deviation” prior to “1. Noting”. In fact this is no conceptual innovation. Its main significance is to make explicit and transparent the already practised positioning of norms in LMT-based research.

This positioning of norms also underpins LMT’s focus on the cognitive processes occurring before a linguistic phenomenon is perceived as a problem. Nekvapil (2016, p. 18) states that “language management starts with the noting of a certain linguistic phenomenon, that is, even before any negative evaluation takes place, and hence, even before a potential problem may arise”. Similarly, Neustupný (2018, p. 377) stresses that one distinctive feature of LMT is that it pays attention to “deviations and noting, which other theories tend to overlook”. In an earlier paper, Neustupný (1985, p. 167) also pointed out the possibility of “unaware ‘noting’”. This deep concern with cognitive processes beneath the surface of discourse is an important characteristic of LMT in contrast to language planning research, which often focuses predominantly on problem solving. Explicitly referring to norms and their deviations as the pre-stage can strengthen this feature of the LMT framework.

3.2 Attention to the post-implementation stage

Turning our attention to the end of the process, the importance of a post-implementation stage has been mentioned by Takahashi and exemplified by Kimura in this volume. The omission of the post-implementation stage in LMT may be a relic, or proof, of LMT’s stronger focus on micro processes where feedback or verification are not as foregrounded as in research on more macro dimensions. However,

customed personal norms developed through one’s past experiences of participation in contact situations” (p. 203).

the theory demanded by today's practice of language management is... a system of general strategies on the basis of which the discipline is built... [that] contains all the general knowledge about language management we possess... [and] is both systematic and related to other theories – general theories of language, culture and society. (Neustupný, 2012, p. 295)

As awareness has been increasing in recent LMT research (Shen, 2016; Beneš et al., 2018), it is a natural progression that the post-implementation stage should be included in the LM process model as well. Among other reasons (see Kimura, this volume), the inclusion of this stage is a prerequisite to making LMT applicable to macro-focused analysis, including analysis of state-level management.

Fairbrother argued that in some cases the last stage could also be interpreted as pre-interaction management. This view further confirms the cyclical character of the management process; the post-implementation stage is a reaction to the consequence of implementation on the one hand, and preparation for further interactions on the other. Similarly, “language management towards contact situations”, the accustomed management behaviour developed through past experiences in contact situations (see Fan, this volume; also Muraoka, Fan & Ko, 2018, p. 203), can be interpreted as the result of an accumulation of post-implementation evaluations.

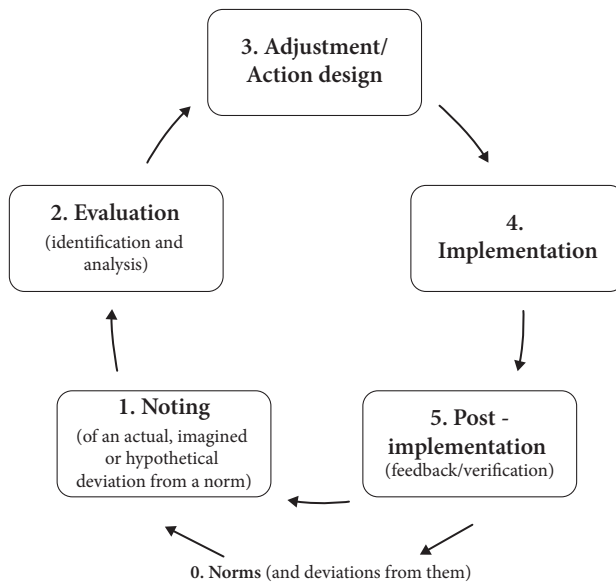


Figure 1. The management process model including the additional pre- and post-stage

Furthermore, norms are also related to the end of the process (Fairbrother, this volume). Specifically, the possibility of the creation of new norms is an important

aspect of the post-implementation stage. Summarizing these findings at the beginning and end of the process, we can add the function and (re)formation of norms (or expectations) as the foundation of the management process cycle model (Kimura, this volume). As the existence of norms is not part of the management process itself, this pre-stage is distinguished from the management stages presented in the boxes in Figure 1.

4. Linking the various dimensions: Insights from the studies in this volume

Having discussed the general issues concerning the process model, in this section, we examine how the authors of the individual studies in this volume conceptualize and link the various micro and macro dimensions. After reviewing how relevant the elements of ‘simple’ and ‘organized’ management within the micro-macro continuum have been to each of the individual studies in Parts II, III and IV, we go on to point out the main theoretical and practical contributions of the individual chapters.

4.1 The intertwining of the elements of the micro-macro continuum

No study in this volume has dealt with merely ‘micro’ or ‘macro’ issues only, but rather they have all depicted different management types on the continuum and have considered their intertwining elements. These different management types can be explicated by showing that the elements concerning the ‘object’ and ‘locus’ of management, the ‘duration’, ‘agents’, ‘actors’, ‘communication about management’ and ‘theorizing’, that have hitherto been associated with *either* simple *or* organized management (Table 1, p. 19), are relevant in various combinations and not in a dichotomous way. Here we will give some examples in which the relevance and combination of the elements do not fit the dichotomous micro-versus-macro scheme.

Concerning the ‘object’ of management, it is not the case that Part II, dealing with contact situations, is only concerned with discourse management, or that Part III, dealing with standard language problems, focuses solely on language as a system. Paying attention to the broader context of organizational and national-level policy initiatives, the writers in Part II are aware that the management of language as a social system affects the management of discourse and interaction, while those in Part III clearly illustrate the interplay between discourse and language as a system. Additionally, the two studies in Part IV illustrate how the management of research transcends the distinction between simple and organized management.

For example, the involvement of specialists (codifiers or researchers as ‘actors’) and the more or less explicit ‘theorizing’ of their management are elements that have been associated with organized management. On the other hand, a typical element of simple management is that the ‘agents’ of research management are individual researchers.

The distinction between simple and organized management is further blurred with regard to the ‘locus’ of management. In previous research, on-line, or discourse-based, management has been associated with individuals, and off-line, or non-discourse-based, management with organizations. However, Part II shows examples of individual off-line management, such as taking English lessons (Aikawa) or participating in a Japanese language group (Takeda & Aikawa), while in Part III Prošek analyses on-line management at an organization.

Concerning the ‘duration’ of management, there is also no dichotomous distinction possible. All the chapters take into account the importance of concrete interactions, regardless of where their predominant focus is on the micro–macro continuum. Furthermore, every chapter also considers trans-interactional management. Trans-interactional management is not confined to organizations/institutions as agents or specialists as actors, but can involve individual agency and ordinary language users as actors. Indeed, the term “accustomed language management” was coined (Muraoka, Fan & Ko, 2018; see also Fan, this volume) to pay due attention to recurrent patterns of language management by individuals.

The elements ‘communication about management’ and ‘theorizing’ have commonly been regarded as an off-line specialist enterprise. However, in this volume, these elements are presented most explicitly in the on-line meta-management discourse in the chapter by Prošek. The interviews and surveys presented in Parts II and III can also be regarded as a form of ‘communication about management’. All these involve not only specialists, but also ordinary language users. Communication about management and theorizing are therefore not confined to specific types of actors and can be performed also on-line.

Thus, the chapters in this volume confirm that it is necessary to be aware of and explicit about the specific elements involved when dealing with micro-macro issues. Instead of using the terms micro and macro to refer to some imagined social level, we need to clarify which elements of the micro and the macro we are specifically referring to.

4.2 The contributions of the individual chapters

Let us now examine the contributions of the individual chapters. The papers in Part II begin by investigating the interactions of individuals, and connecting them to macro dimensions. All three papers show how organizational and

state-level management affects interaction and vice versa. The findings have practical and theoretical implications. Based on interview data, Aikawa, and Takeda and Aikawa reveal that fostering only English language skills will not resolve the real communication problems related to intercultural communication in Japan. Their findings show that other factors, such as critical cultural awareness or the use of the Japanese language, should receive more attention. They question the current policies of organizations, including universities and corporations, as well as the Japanese government, that focus only on enhancing English as a means of international communication. These two papers have clear implications regarding organizational/institutional and state-level policy and confirm the importance of micro-focused investigations as a basis for macro-level policy decisions. The paper by Fairbrother is more theoretically driven. She provides a classification of intertwining language management processes that can occur at different levels. The question of where in the process and in which ways different types of management diverge or intersect deserves special attention and will no doubt be a focal point in future research on micro-macro relationships. More generally, because it can be supposed that management processes often co-occur, the analysis of different management processes that influence each other is a central challenge for the development of LM research.

Part III focuses on phenomena including obvious organized language management elements and considers their relation to more micro-focused management. The chapters in this part share the aim of providing a conceptual basis and orientation for further research. The frameworks and concepts examined in these chapters deal with the management processes of the two directions of language change: convergence and divergence. Takahashi proposes a model called Language Codification Cycle Theory (LCCT) as a framework to analyse the interplay between different levels of language management processes related to codification. On the other hand, Dovalil shows that considering micro-macro relationships is indispensable for distinguishing the two concepts of demotization and destandardization. As well as highlighting the different types of LM processes involved in trying to solve individuals' language problems, Prošek's use of the consultation service's large-scale database provides a good example of a method to connect organizational language management with management occurring in individual interactions.

Finally, the two papers in Part IV deal with research-related activities as a process, showing that integrating the LM researcher as an actor of LM can contribute to gaining a more comprehensive account of LM processes in the research field. Specifically, they clarify the applicability of LMT to checking research findings and the self-check of the researcher at the level of micro-focused data collection in interaction and at more macro-focused levels of methodology or public engagement.

Saruhashi's findings demonstrate the micro-macro linkage in a double sense. Applying LMT to the micro-level data analysis of interviews can first contribute to a holistic understanding of the interviewee and her/his historical background, and second, it can be useful for reconsidering interview methods. In contrast to Saruhashi, who applies LMT at the interactional level, Kimura integrates the researcher's activities as organized management into the two cycles of language management: the language management process cycle and the micro-macro cycle. He argues that as part of the language situation, the researcher can/should link (bridge) micro-macro dimensions in both directions, micro to macro and macro to micro. The first direction constitutes part of the researcher's public engagement, and the second is the evaluation of the social impact of the research. The reflexive potential of LMT in the research discussed in these chapters is a topic that should be further pursued if LMT research wants to connect to critical approaches in LPP and related fields.

5. The maxim of cross-dimensional analysis

The synthesis of the chapters in this volume has revealed that the strong concern of LMT with the noting and pre-noting stages is in accordance with the micro orientation of the theory, whereas LMT's weak approach to 'national/ supranational-level management' is reflected in less attention having been paid to post-implementation issues in the past. The additions to the LM process model proposed here are intended to strengthen the strengths and weaken the weaknesses of the model. However, it must be stressed that the pre-stage of norms is also relevant for more macro-focused analysis and the post-implementation stage is also relevant to more micro-focused analysis, including the analysis of interpersonal interactions. LMT is just one approach available for researchers interested in language problems and can complement other approaches, but not in the sense that LMT's concerns are limited to particular societal levels. To the research landscape of LPP and related fields, it proposes a process-oriented approach with a stage-based model ready for application to all kinds of management. The data types and analysis methods common in LMT (see Fairbrother, Nekvapil & Sloboda, 2018) may seem too imprecise for conversation analysts and too detailed for policy researchers, but this middle-way characteristic of LMT makes it flexible enough to encompass various levels.

Overall, the chapters in this volume confirm the basic premise of LMT, that analysis of micro-focused processes including discourse and interaction is indispensable in understanding and conceptualizing more macro-focused management. Conversely, the contributions in this volume also provide insights into the issue of how macro-level management attempts to affect more micro levels.

Thus, the consideration of macro-focused management is essential to a deeper understanding of what is going on in more micro dimensions. In both directions, we must keep in mind that micro and macro are relative concepts on a continuum, not disconnected dichotomous poles. Having noted this, beyond just acknowledging the common-sense fact that there is interplay between different micro-macro dimensions, the point here is the importance of a cross-level analysis. We argue that in order to understand a management process on a certain level, considering the other levels is invaluable. This can be formulated as the following analytic maxim: if we want to further understand what we perceive as macro processes, we have to turn to the micro dimensions, and if we intend to understand micro processes, we have to deal with broader macro-focused dimensions. We call this the ‘maxim of cross-dimensional analysis’.

To put this maxim into practice, studies connecting management processes, including diverging and intersecting management, will be an important focal point for future language management research. On the one hand, conducting fine-grained analysis of concrete interactions will be a challenge. In this respect, recent developments in sociolinguistics will be helpful. On the other hand, collaboration with scholars of other LPP research traditions will be welcome, especially in order to pay attention to the macro processes of the state level and beyond. This broader perspective will continue to be beneficial to scholars concerned with language-related issues at any point on the micro-macro spectrum.

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