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Researching language management in Central Europe

Cultivation, social change and power

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This contribution contextualizes the research conducted using the language management approach in Central Europe, demonstrating the influence of local disciplinary traditions as well as real language, communicative and sociocultural problems. It considers J. V. Neustupný's original inspiration in the approaches to language cultivation developed over the years by the Prague School, the contemporary Czech institutional basis for the continuation of cultivation-based research, and the emergence of research topics sparked by the political and socioeconomic changes after 1989. One of these topics is the management of linguistic diversity, which reveals manifestations of power in issues such as foreign language teaching policy, language choice in the workplace and the position of minority languages.

Keywords: language management approach/framework, language policy and planning, Central Europe, language cultivation, Prague School, societal multilingualism

1.   Introduction

The language management (LM) approach has been applied in the analysis of language problems and situations in many national and regional contexts, with clearly established hubs based in Central Europe, Japan and Australia, representing the "three continents" in the title of the volume edited by Nekvapil and Sherman (2009c). Even a quick glance at the texts stemming from the research conducted in each context reveals that, at the very least, there are differences in topics selected, methodologies employed, and theoretical interpretations (see Nekvapil, 2016; Sherman, 2016; and Fairbrother, Nekvapil & Sloboda, 2018, for various attempts to integrate these). This is nothing unusual, we can and should presume that the

elaboration of an approach will be dependent upon the specific sociolinguistic and sociocultural situation in which it is applied. For this reason, it is important to elucidate the connections between the context and the research as concerns the following:

a. How the approach was introduced and why and how it was able to find its place in the local research tradition
b. The objects of research
c. The other theories, approaches, or concepts used in combination with LM and corresponding methods
d. Their contributions to the theoretical development of the LM approach

In this chapter, I will attempt to briefly outline these points for one of the major contexts in which LM work is being done: Central Europe, with the Czech Republic at its core. I will try to capture the way in which the research strands on LM are rooted in the historical, political and socioeconomic development of the region, as well as in its intellectual traditions. I will use both the terms "Czech" and "Central European" to describe the given school or approach. The Czech sociolinguistic situation, in my view, serves as the main influence on the topics and methodological approaches to LM which have spread to neighboring countries (above all Slovakia, Germany and Austria) or other parts of the Slavic-speaking world, either as the objects of research (Giger & Sloboda, 2008; Sloboda, 2009), as the initiators of LM-related publications (note, for example, the recent inclusion of LM topics in a Russian-language volume, see Jílková, 2017 and Mrázková, 2017 in Neščimenko, 2017), or through simple translations (see the translated papers Neustupný, 2015 and Nekvapil, 2015 in Vuković, 2015). However, the descriptor "Central European" or "Czech" does not represent the entirety of the research currently being conducted in the region. It should also be pointed out that the approach described here need not necessarily correspond to the geographical region of the objects of research. For example, there are studies which, though situated in the Central European context, are clearly framed in a manner more consistent with work being done in Japan (Neustupný, 2003; Kimura, 2014, 2015) or which, despite examining situations elsewhere, display the clear influence of the Central European approach (e.g. Rudwick, 2017, 2018).

2. How the approach was introduced and why and how it was able to find its place in the local research tradition

As is well known, the main Central European tie to the LM approach consists in one individual, that is, Jiří V. Neustupný. Neustupný initially participated in the

international collaborative attempts at theorizing language planning in the 1960s and 1970s, and in doing so made active use of knowledge and experience from the area of his origin. Like B. H. Jernudd, the other "father" of the LM approach, Neustupný came from a modern European society with a national language having strong connections to ethnicity, in which the cultivation of language was very important for the establishment and maintenance of nationhood (cf. Hroch, 2007). Both scholars thus offered a contribution to language policy and planning (LPP) among others through the integration of the ideas surrounding language cultivation, which is more or less synonymous with what is known as corpus planning in LPP (Nekvapil, 2008, p. 251). In 1974, Neustupný pointed out one of the key differences between the "policy approach", dealing with large-scale issues such as language education planning or standardization, and the "cultivation approach", addressing individual language and communication issues, such as questions of correctness, observing that "[w]hile the policy approach appeals to administration, the cultivation approach addresses the public in general, and intellectuals in particular" (Neustupný, 1974, p. 39). The policy approach, as he saw it, was typically undertaken in societies with less technological progress, while the cultivation approach was associated with more technologically advanced societies (which he calls "modern industrialized societies", 1974, p. 44, see also Neustupný 1978, p. 255 and Neustupný 2015). The Czech cultivation approach, Neustupný's likely main source of inspiration, was primarily developed from the Prague School theories of language cultivation. The Prague School thinking, initially represented by authors such as R. Jakobson, V. Mathesius, or B. Havránek, was not grounded in purism-based prescriptivism, but rather, originally focused on the ideas that codified norms should emerge from actual, contemporary language use and that the standard language should be flexible enough to be able to absorb changes, though these changes should not be arbitrary (Neustupný & Nekvapil, 2003, pp. 333–335; Nekvapil, 2008, pp. 253–254; Nekvapil, 2010, pp. 57–58). Later, based above all on the work of František Daneš and Karel Hausenblas, this approach was extended to non-standard varieties as well as entire communicative processes, thus dealing not only with language norms specifically, but also, for example, with questions of the selection of the appropriate variety for a given communicative situation (Neustupný & Nekvapil, 2003, p. 339, Nekvapil, 2008, p. 255).

The LM approach has been presented as a continuation of the Prague School tradition by observers abroad, above all Vuković (2015), who published an anthology of translations of important Prague School papers on language cultivation. The final two papers in this volume are translations of Nekvapil's (2009) chapter on the LM approach's integrative potential and Neustupný's (2006) overview of the connection between phases of modernization in individual societies and the sociolinguistic issues that receive attention in them.

In the Czech context, both among linguists and the general public, the cultivation approach continues to be more widely applied than the policy one (though, as the relevant research shows, linguists and lay language users often understand cultivation in different ways). This can be connected, among other things, to the fact that the Czech Republic has a highly visible public language management institution, the Czech Language Institute of the Czech Academy of Sciences, which has existed in its current form since the years after WWII. In addition to management in the classic corpus planning form, i.e. codification through the creation of dictionaries, grammars, orthography guides and style manuals (cf. Homoláč & Mrázková, 2014), the Institute also provides a language consulting service (Beneš, Prošek, Smejkalová, & Štěpánová, 2018; Prošek this volume), through which it is possible to continually monitor the language problems that everyday users face, and the degree to which they view the Institute as an important management authority.

The societal prestige of the Czech Language Institute is one reflection of the position of cultivation-related issues in Czech society. Another is the way in which the national "mother tongue" is approached in the primary and secondary education systems, which display a strong tendency toward the use of "correct" Standard Czech in certain domains, in both written and oral genres. The management of the use of Czech varieties is also conducted in and in reaction to the national media (Štěpánová, 2010; Čmejrková, 2011; Havlík, Jílková, & Štěpánová, 2015; Jílková, 2017; Mrázková, 2018). Given this, another interesting branch of inquiry into language management has been displayed in numerous new media genres: discussion fora or social network sites such as Facebook. Since the inception of these genres, users have displayed a penchant for pointing out the linguistic errors of other users, and in some cases making fun of them or connecting their errors to the logic of their argumentation. Applying the LM approach (Sherman & Švelch, 2015; Švelch & Sherman, 2018) has shown that most of the noted deviations, however, concern orthography, more specifically spelling, and a limited range of types of spelling errors at that. The behavior of these users, who often refer to themselves as "Grammar Nazis", basically confirms observations made earlier by Neustupný & Nekvapil (2003) and Nekvapil (2008) that orthography has received unwarranted attention in the Czech school system to the detriment of other communication-related issues.

Of late, the Prague School tradition has also fueled LM-based interest in research on standardization, along with the incorporation of other sociolinguistic theories. Dovalil (2011a, 2013b, 2013d, 2015a, 2018b), utilizing Ulrich Ammon's social forces model, has applied the LM approach to the German language situation, most recently including its pluricentricity. By using the tools of LM, which describe the dynamics of these processes, he also conceptualizes the demotization and destandardization of languages (Dovalil, 2016, Dovalil this volume).

In sum, it can be stated that evolving research on the management of the standard language in the Central European context is a good example that demonstrates that the LM approach was born in part out of its founders' European intellectual upbringing and their need to integrate it into other LPP approaches, and it continues to form a part of the basis for inquiry regarding and within those same countries (both in Central Europe and in e.g. Sweden, see Jernudd, 1977, 2018). As we will see below, however, though this forms the historical basis, research on the management of phenomena other than language varieties has taken over due to later social, economic and political development in the country and region.

3.   The objects of research

The previous section offered a historical explanation for the initial selection of the objects of research in Central Europe. A more ahistorical view, e.g. a synchronic comparative one in which the language policy in different countries is examined, might involve the observation that, at present, the Czech Republic is characterized by a lack of extensive formal written language policy in many domains (though see Dovalil, 2013a for an overview of the management of the position of Czech in legal documents). Rather, many language problems are dealt with on an ad hoc basis and/or on the micro-level. This may be one reason why the LM framework is typically more applicable in the Czech context than classic LPP approaches, which frequently work with official policy documents.

Another inspiration for the use of LM in the region may be tied to the abrupt social changes recently experienced there. The first LM research conducted by authors based institutionally in Central Europe was after the seminal year 1989. The language situation in the post-communist countries subsequently began to change in the 1990s, as these states found themselves in rapidly evolving societies. In the Czech case in particular, this was yet another key point at which the underlying conditions for the emergence of specific language-related research constellations were reset. One part of this was a new multilingualism, tied to the changes in business and employment opportunities for the local population, along with the gradual arrival of a broader range of speakers from different countries than before. Foreign language teaching policy was also adapted: whereas Russian had been mandatory prior to 1989, individuals and schools were given a greater degree of freedom in the selection of languages to teach and learn. This change initially favored Western languages in which a shortage of knowledge was perceived: English and German. One manifestation of this shortage was that people gained employment on the basis of foreign language knowledge (and in many cases, solely on this basis). English surpassed German in the number of pupils studying it in

the mid-1990s and, beginning in 2005, gained additional support via the National Plan for the Teaching of Foreign Languages. The prioritization of English in this plan highlighted and even further contributed to significant differences between the supply of qualified teachers of individual languages and the demand for them (cf. Dovalil, 2010a, 2017, 2018a). There has been a gradual shift from this initial period to the 2010s, where skills in certain languages are presumed, and skills in other languages are seen as an added bonus. Of course, throughout this entire time, there have been ideological motivations for the management of selected languages, both in the work and educational spheres (this is best demonstrated in Nekvapil and Sherman, 2013).

This state of constant flux in social structures and its impact on questions of language and ethnicity inspired the deepening of investigations into the connection between LM and socioeconomic issues. Work on more "traditional" minorities, such as Czech Germans or Roma, also continued in this vein (Nekvapil, 2000b). Neustupný (1992) continued in his earlier work on the management of the Romani language, which became an important illustrative case for the connections between language, communicative and socioeconomic problems (see also, Neustupný, 2002; Hübschmannová & Neustupný, 2004). The division of Czechoslovakia led to a change in the status of Slovak in the Czech Republic and a gradual shift in the understanding of Czech and Slovak as mutually intelligible (Nábělková, 2002; Sloboda, 2006) and the management of their use in domains such as the internet (Sloboda & Nábělková, 2013).

However, despite the changes in the ethno-linguistic composition of the country, the issue of Czech as a foreign language was put on the back burner due to the abundance of other, more pressing problems in the 1990s. The management of Czech acquisition, both on the part of the state and as undertaken by individual learners, has been a subject of research (Sherman, 2006, 2009, 2012, 2015; and Sherman & Homoláč, 2014, 2017), but not to the same degree as in the LM schools in Japan and Australia.

There are two studies which provide an overview of some of the major management processes observed in the Czech context during the 1990s. These are: Nekvapil (2000a) and Neustupný & Nekvapil's polity study for *Current Issues in Language Planning*, first published in 2003 and later reprinted in 2006 in the Language Policy and Planning in Europe series published by Multilingual Matters. Both are good examples of how the Central European work on LM typically places the management it analyzes in a specific historical context. In the former, Nekvapil (2000a) offered some of the most prominent examples of objects of language management in Czech society in the 1990s. These included the growing influence of English on Czech, the increase in numbers of self-motivated learners of "Western" languages such as English and German, politically-motivated changes in street

names, or new ways of reporting on and describing political and economic topics in political and mass media discourse (see also Nekvapil, 1997), and the weakening prestige of Standard Czech in many spoken domains. In the latter, the authors provided a thorough overview of the areas in the Czech Republic which are the subject of both simple and organized management, divided into language communities within the country, language varieties, including Czech (both in the Czech Republic and abroad), minority languages and foreign languages, and situations in the family, education, work, public and cultural domains. They were also innovative in their use of a Hymesian framework to explore the management of "functions, setting, participants, content, form and channels" (pp. 187–189, 318–332). The research is exhaustive, and thus far, no other polity study using the LM approach has been done.

The initial "boom" of LM-inspired research in the Czech Republic took place from the late 1990s to the mid-2000s. Since then a number of studies have been conducted elsewhere in the region based on the management of actual practical problems. In neighboring Slovakia, extensive focus has been placed on multilingualism and problems concerning the Hungarian minority. Lanstyák and Szabómihály (2009) analyze the case of the Gramma Language Office (Gramma Nyelvi Iroda, their own institution) as an important player in the management of language problems related to varieties of Hungarian spoken in Slovakia. In Croatia, the management undertaken by official institutions, particularly in conflict with actual language use, has been examined by Vuković (2016).

Of course, in terms of individual topics, there have been parallels to the progress in LPP scholarship the entire time. Domains such as the family, the university and the workplace, discussed extensively in Neustupný & Nekvapil (2003), have emerged as LPP subtopics in their own right. Given tendencies toward ad hoc management in many workplaces, for example, the management approach (see in particular Engelhardt, 2011; Nekvapil & Nekula, 2006; Nekvapil & Sherman, 2009a, 2009b, 2013, 2018) has attracted the attention of other scholars working in this domain (e.g. Incelli, 2008; Sanden, 2016; Kraft & Lønsmann, 2018). The family as a similar such domain has been addressed in Özörencik (2017, 2018), Özörencik and Hromadová (2018), and Sherman, Hromadová, Özörencik, Zaepernicková and Nekvapil (2016). See also Nekvapil (2006, 2010, 2016) for the explication of the relationship between LM and other approaches to LPP.

In sum, LM in Central Europe has emerged as a field inspired by, open to and compatible with a broad range of topics from everyday life as well as other (primarily) sociolinguistic approaches, as we will see in the next section.

4. **The other theories, approaches, or concepts used in combination with LM theory and corresponding methods**

The Central European approach is characterized by the general use of multiple sociolinguistic theories, as well as approaches from sociology, anthropology, political science and other fields. Some specific concepts that have been integrated to varying degrees include:

Language ideologies. The integration of this concept which was based mostly in the American anthropological tradition (e.g. Kroskrity, Errington, Silverstein and others) appears in Nekvapil & Sherman (2013). Based on research in German-based multinational companies, they show how language ideologies underlie and/or guide language management, and how this is visible in the individual phases of the management process. Lanstyák (2012, 2016), working on the basis of perspectives on multilingualism in Slovakia, provides an extensive, nearly exhaustive overview of the types of ideologies, for example: ideologies of language pluralism, regionalism, nationalism, purism and vernacularism.

Politeness. Nekvapil and Neustupný (2005), in their summarizing text on politeness in the Czech Republic, stipulate politeness as not merely a topic to be studied as it is practiced, but also as the object of management. They devote specific attention to the selection of address forms (formal vs. informal in Czech), the avoidance of direct address in situations in which the speaker does not know which form to use, or which certain address forms, such as "comrade", may be ideologically loaded.

Ethnomethodological Conversation Analysis in the examination of simple management has involved the question of the connection between the management process and, for example, the concepts of repair and correction, particularly self-correction, in conversation analysis (CA). Nekvapil (2016, p. 17) points out that "LMT took up from the very beginning some of the findings originating from conversation analysis (especially as far as the analysis of repair sequences is concerned) and its methods." He also observes that CA methods only enable the researcher to capture the implementation phase of the management process. However, given the desire for naturally-occurring data and the frequent (at least partial) adoption of CA transcription conventions, the LM approach in general, and in Central Europe in particular, can be characterized as "using conversation analysis" as opposed to "doing conversation analysis". In general, this is an area ripe for further investigation.

Language biographies (Nekvapil, 2004; Sherman & Homoláč, 2014, 2017). In a re-analysis of older data collected through primarily narrative interviews in which participants talked about their lives as they were connected to and influenced by the acquisition and use of various languages, Nekvapil (2004) elaborated

the concept of "management summaries". These involve retrospective descriptions of the entire management process or parts of it, for example, Czech Germans' decision to stop using German in Czechoslovakia in public after WWII in response to experiencing negative reactions, or the gradual establishment of Vietnamese children's role as language brokers for their parents.

Linguistic/semiotic landscape. Though the management of the language of signs was initially examined as one of the many aspects of the communication in multinational companies (Nekvapil & Nekula, 2006), the utilization of the linguistic and/or semiotic landscape as a major theoretical-methodological framework was initially employed in the research by Sloboda, Szabó-Gilinger, Vigers and Šimičić (2010), and later by Marx and Nekula (2015).

Language maintenance and shift. Sloboda (2009) built upon Neustupný's (1985) suggestion that language maintenance and shift are complex forms of LM. Using the example of contemporary Belarus, he moved the focus from the various external conditions that influence these phenomena (based on J. Fishman's classic approach) to the actual processes involved in their occurrence. Neustupný and Nekvapil (2003) also considered these issues in their examination of the management undertaken by various language communities in the Czech Republic.

Language and the law. Dovalil (2010b, 2012, 2013a, 2013c, 2015b) has explored court cases as well as legal documents which deal with various aspects of language and communication, for example the use of language on product labelling, national language requirements for employment, issues concerning the equality of languages, or language choice in legal proceedings, both on the national and international levels. Here, management processes typically involve the interaction between what is referred to as "law in books" and "law in action", with individual court cases being a good example of management processes in which various issues of power and interest come into play.

Historical sociolinguistics has been used to reconstruct the individual management conducted by multilingual historical figures and organizations based on their correspondence and other documents (Nekula, 2014, 2016), or historical events corresponding to the classical domain of LP such as Badeni's language regulations from the 19th century (Dovalil & Hall, 2011).

5.   The contributions to the theoretical development of the LM approach

Given the constellations mentioned in the previous sections, there appear to be two areas in which LM research in Central European contexts has contributed to the development of the LM approach overall: (1) language-related inequalities and their connections to issues of power and (2) further elucidation and

questioning of the connections between simple and organized management and their processual character.

With regard to the first area, though the focus on power in the language management approach is nothing new, in the Central European context it appears to be a built-in feature. The core of the research is based in the Czech Republic and issues of power are typically at the forefront of current Czech sociolinguistic scholarship. This may be due at least in part to the social position of the Czech Republic, Czech citizens and Czech speakers, not only in a European and worldwide context, but also *within their own country*. We can observe this phenomenon in the research on multinational companies mentioned above. Here, Czechs working in top managerial positions in German or Korean-owned companies are required to learn foreign languages such as English or German even though they may work just a few kilometers away from where they were born. An outside observer with a different background may even conclude on this basis that the Czech Republic tends toward being a linguistic colony in which Czech is limited to certain contexts, such as the family. Yet Czech is the major, if not only language, used by a significant number of highly educated people and is being continually cultivated in nearly all domains of life. It is also the language imposed on minorities and immigrants from less-economically prosperous countries. At the same time, the educated Czech public does not exist in a linguistic vacuum – foreign languages are present to a greater or lesser degree in most people's lives, more so than in countries with larger national languages, such as Germany. As a result, language, then, be it native or foreign, is something in which the general public is very interested. In sum, the Czech context involves many powerful local language users and institutions that are highly aware of the power imbalances occurring in contact situations and, depending on their interests, either use this to their advantage (e.g. by perfecting their foreign language skills) or accept their position as disadvantaged in this regard.

As for the second area, a seminal paper that deserves mention is Nekvapil & Nekula (2006), which, in order to lay the groundwork for the analysis of the management conducted in branches of German companies operating in the Czech Republic, provides a thorough overview of the relationships between the macro and micro (relating it to other perspectives such as top-down-bottom-up, or even structure-agency), mostly from a sociological perspective, then presents LM as an illustration of these relationships. In this vein, ongoing discussions on the connections between simple and organized management, have led to a more detailed description of the characterization of organized language management (Nekvapil, 2012, 2016), a typology of so-called language management cycles and fragments (Nekvapil, 2009), and the question of whether the processual model based on idealized cases of simple management can actually be applied to organized management and whether it even needs to be, or rather, whether it would

not be more fruitful to consider it in light of other problem management theories (Lanstyák, 2014, 2015, 2018).

In addition, some smaller (though no less important) details of the theoretical apparatus have been developed, for example pre- and post-interaction management (Nekvapil & Sherman, 2009b) and the participation of multiple actors in the individual phases of simple management (Kopecký, 2014).

Finally, it should also be pointed out that there has been much discussion in the Central European context about clarifying the distinction between the LM approach and other ways in which "language management" is conceived, above all in comparison with the work of Bernard Spolsky (2004, 2009). Several reviews of Spolsky's, 2009 book on language management (Sloboda, 2010; Dovalil, 2011b) have been published (see also the overview of the different concepts of language management also including practical business approaches in Sanden, 2016). In addition, the team of researchers working on LM in Prague has created the language management website (languagemanagement.ff.cuni.cz), which includes a growing LM bibliography which contributed greatly to the work on this chapter. The site is accessible in Czech, English, Japanese, Croatian, German and Russian, emphasizing multilingualism as well as the research group's openness, and it supports the cultivation of parallel discourses.

6. Concluding remarks

Tendencies in any sort of research, particularly social research, are an evolving product of their environment. In Central European countries, the external socio-economic conditions, as well as the heavy focus on nationhood based in ethnicity, have been strong determiners of the position of various languages. This, in turn, has influenced the language problems managed in everyday life, and ultimately, the sociolinguistic studies conducted. In contrast with the Japanese tradition, for example, we can observe that in Central Europe, more focus has been placed on language and communicative management, and less on sociocultural management, as the differences between participants in contact situations are typically not as stark. However, because countries such as the Czech Republic can count on a continued increase in immigration in the future, the problem of the linguistic and sociocultural integration of foreigners, both adults and children, will eventually move away from the periphery of local sociolinguistic interest, where it finds itself at present.

In this chapter, I have attempted to shed light on the main motivations for the ways in which the LM approach has evolved in Central Europe, especially for the benefit of readers from outside the region. If we are to further consider the relationships between local contexts and paradigmatic traditions, the next welcome

step, then, would be to examine the spread of the LM approach to other areas of the world. Which problems and contexts are deemed appropriate and necessary for the application of LM? How do the flows of students and scholars from country to country and region to region contribute to further theoretical advancement and thematic breadth? Can the heritage of older European traditions of the cultivation approach be useful in places where the policy approach has thus far predominated? These are questions to be addressed in the coming years.

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