Andrew Linn

Investigating English in Europe

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Andrew Linn

Investigating English in Europe: Contexts and Agendas

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With contributions from
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Series preface

The biggest language challenge in the world today is English. School children are expected to learn it, and the need to succeed in English is often fired by parental ambition and the requirements for entry into higher education, no matter what the proposed course of study. Once at university or college, students across the globe are increasingly finding that their teaching is being delivered through the medium of English, making the learning process more onerous. Universities unquestioningly strive for a greater level of internationalization in teaching and in research, and this is in turn equated with greater use of English by non-native speakers. The need to use English to succeed in business is as much an issue for multinational corporations as it is for small traders in tourist destinations, and meanwhile other languages are used and studied less and less. On the other hand, academic publishers get rich on the monolingual norm of the industry, and private language teaching is itself big business. In the market of English there are winners and there are losers.

The picture, however, is more complicated than one simply of winners and losers. What varieties of English are we talking about here, and who are their ‘native speakers’? Is there something distinct we can identify as English, or is it merely part of a repertoire of language forms to be called upon as necessary? Is the looming presence of English an idea or a reality, and in any case is it really such a problem, and is it really killing off other languages as some commentators fear? Is the status and role of English the same in all parts of the world, or does it serve different purposes in different contexts? What forms of practical support do those trying to compete in this marketplace need in order to be amongst the winners?

These are all questions addressed by the *English in Europe: Opportunity or Threat?* project, which ran from January 2012 to October 2014. This international research network received generous funding from the Leverhulme Trust in the UK and was a partnership between the universities of Sheffield (UK), Copenhagen (Denmark) and Zaragoza (Spain), Charles University in Prague (Czech Republic) and the South-East Europe Research Centre in Thessaloniki (Greece). Each of the partners hosted a conference on a different topic and with a particular focus on English in their own region of Europe. During the course of the project 120 papers were presented, reporting on research projects from across Europe and beyond, providing for the first time a properly informed and nuanced picture of the reality of living with and through the medium of English.

The *English in Europe* book series takes the research presented in these conferences as its starting point. In each case, however, papers have been rewritten, and many of the papers have been specially commissioned to provide a series of coherent and balanced collections, giving a thorough and authoritative picture of the challenges posed by teaching, studying and using English in Europe today.

Professor Andrew Linn
Director, *English in Europe* project

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5.5 Language Management and Language Management Theory [LMT]

5.5.1 What is LMT

Language management can be understood both as an object of research and as a comprehensive sociolinguistic theory. As the object of research, it consists of any and all manifestations of metalinguistic behaviour or "behaviour-toward-language" (cf. Fishman 1972), i.e. actions taken to reflect upon or alter aspects of language or communication. The delimitation of these actions is based on an understanding of two processes: the production or generation of language on the one hand and metalinguistic behaviour or management on the other. Language users, when they speak or write, on the one hand produce or generate language, which can be broken up into analysable units such as sounds, words or sentences. On the other hand, they manage this production, by correcting, erasing, reformulating, evaluating the manner of speaking or writing itself, or engaging in more complex measures to change speaking or writing practices on a larger scale.[6]

As a comprehensive theory, Language Management Theory (also known as the Language Management Framework, Model or Approach) (Jernudd and Neustupný 1987; Neustupný and Nekvapil 2003; Nekvapil 2006; Nekvapil and Sherman 2009a, 2015)[7] can be viewed as a theoretical-methodological apparatus which views language-related problems through a prism which complements other developed theories, particularly, though not exclusively, those dealing with Language Planning and Policy (LPP). Approaches to language planning in the post-colonial era of the 1960s were rooted in other approaches to planning (e.g. economic planning) and focused on its application by government bodies. The further evolution of LPP, including the increased position of the "policy" component, continued in a number of different directions (for an overview of these, see Baldauf 2012), of which LMT is merely one. Others include what Baldauf (2012: 237–8) calls "the critical approach", for which social inequalities are the

6 This is loosely based upon and gradually developed from Neustupný's original distinction between "use of language" and "linguistic correction" in "linguistic behaviour" and between "linguistics" and "metalinguistic correction systems" in "metalinguistic behaviour" (Neustupný 1978: 243–244).

7 For a basic description of LMT and a complete bibliography, see the website languagemanagement.ff.cuni.cz. For more on the distinction between LMT and language management as described by Spolsky, see Dovalil (2011), Sanden (2014) and Sloboda (2009).

point of departure, best exemplified by the work of Tollefson (1991, 2006), and the "domain approach" (Baldauf 2012: 237), found in the work of Spolsky (2004, 2009). Due to the latter's use of the term "language management" and its extensive further utilisation in the works of numerous scholars after him, a few words of clarification are in order.

The pair of books published by Spolsky entitled respectively *Language policy* (2004) and *Language management* (2009) view language policy as consisting of three parts: "language practices", "language beliefs or ideology", and "language intervention, planning or management" (2004: 5). Spolsky later defined 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). Spolsky's approach more or less limits itself to the description of numerous types of metalinguistic behaviour done by people in positions of authority in a given *community* (2004), later *domain* (2009), such as the family, the workplace, or schools, prompting Baldauf's 2012 characterization of the approach as such. It thus remains a tool for the organization of the description of metalinguistic behaviour rather than a theoretical treatment of it, and should not be confused with the model of LMT that is the subject of the remainder of this chapter.

Björn Jernudd and Jiří V. Neustupný, who were among the participants in early language planning seminars, introduced the model with the name "language management" for the first time in their 1987 text 'Language planning: for whom?'. Among the more innovative aspects of this model at the time were the inclusion of the discourse level (influenced, among others, by the correction model described in Neustupný 1978 and 1983), the language management process which will be described below, and the concept of the language problems as the starting point for the analysis. Concerning the focus on *language* problems, it should be acknowledged that from the perspective of LMT, language as a system does not exist as an isolated entity, but rather should be viewed in the context of the extensive range of functions it serves, including communication and identity.

The theory of the language management process itself as originally described in Jernudd and Neustupný (1987) begins with the everyday, lived experience of meta-communicative awareness. Various aspects of communication are noted by participants. These may include, for example, the foreign accent of an interlocutor, the unusual pronunciation of a given word, the perceived high or low competence of a speaker in a given language or the highly formal style of expression in an informal context (such as the use of highly formal language in an internet chatroom). Focus in LMT has been placed upon situations in which deviations from norms or expectations were noted, and the noting of deviations remains the starting point of the process in most work on LM. Recently, however, it has since been emphasized that *any aspect of communication* may be noted, thus triggering further management processes (Marriott and Nekvapil 2012). Noted phenomena may then be evaluated, adjustments may be designed and then implemented in communication. A language problem or inadequacy emerges when a deviation is noted and evaluated negatively, particularly when this occurs repeatedly and is acknowledged as a problem by multiple actors.

LMT distinguishes between management taking place in the course of an ongoing interaction, so-called simple or on-line management, and management taking place beyond or outside of a single interaction or utterance by an individual speaker, so-called organized or off-line management (Nekvapil and Sherman 2015)[8]. Organized management (cf. Nekvapil 2012) is characterized by the reflection of multiple, repeated interactions, the participation of multiple individuals organized into complex social networks, and a more explicit, directed character. The language problems are noted and formulated by actors on the meta-level, e.g. "English education in the Czech Republic is insufficient", and are the subject of discussion, in which theories (both expert and non-expert) and ideologies serve as the motivation and legitimizing instrument for the chosen trajectories of the management process. This discussion may take place in the public sphere, in the media, or in more private or restricted settings. In this point, many activities and outcomes understood as language planning and policy are interpretable as instances of language management. Though organized management was originally envisioned as a process with the same series of phases as simple management, Lanstyák (2014) has criticized this parallel, arguing that organized management bears a closer resemblance to other models of organizational management.

In addition, LMT places the management of *language* problems in the appropriate sociolinguistic context, that is, it also aims to describe the management of related communicative and sociocultural (including socioeconomic) problems and to demonstrate the connections between these three levels. In other words, language management is rarely a matter of language alone, as we will see below.[9]

The distinction between levels in LMT and the interaction between them should be viewed as a continuum, and can be elucidated using the following example. As Europe continually faces issues of increased immigration and mobility, the acquisition of local, national or official languages by the new arrivals is continually the object of management. An instance of simple, on-line management would be where a non-native speaker corrects himself in the course of a single turn. In observing this correction, we may pose the question of why the

8 The terms on-line and off-line management are used by Jernudd (2001).
9 See Jernudd and Neustupný's (1987: 77ff) distinction between "linguistic interest" and "non-linguistic interest".

speaker did it. It may have been a simple communicative issue, i.e. he felt that he would not have been understood. However, it may have been more of a sociocultural issue – he felt the need to speak in accordance with codified linguistic norms to the greatest degree possible in order to avoid discrimination on the part of his interlocutor or questions regarding his origin, which may hold up the conversation unnecessarily. Examples of management which move more into the offline territory, but remain more or less on the simple level, include instances of exposed other-correction (Jefferson 1987) done by a teacher in a language class. The truly organized character of the management begins when the teacher, on the basis of repeated noted deviations, orients his or her teaching practices toward their adjustment, creating an actual abstraction of the language problem (e.g. "some students cannot differentiate between voiced and voiceless consonants in Czech, and this is not desirable, because it can lead to the misunderstanding of words"). Increased organization comes in the form of textbook and curriculum writing, the adoption of speaker and pronunciation models, the establishment of language teaching institutions, hiring practices in those institutions (selection of teachers with certain qualifications), and regional and national education policy. But organized management may also be conducted by the learner in a less traditionally institutional sense, via informal, everyday language learning, the use of language exchanges, and further integration into social networks where the given language is used.

Individuals necessarily differ in their management practices related to the acquisition of the local language of the country to which they have migrated. These differences help to illustrate the connections between sociocultural, communicative and language management. In the Czech Republic, put simply, some immigrants acquire the Czech language, while others do not. This reality can be tied to two issues: 1) the organized management on the part of the Czech state, which does not require Czech language knowledge of all immigrants, and requires only limited knowledge of some others; and 2) organized management occurring within an individual's social networks, which is necessarily connected to sociocultural and socioeconomic aspects of his or her everyday existence. This is most visible in the case of immigrants (most often English-, Russian- and Vietnamese-speaking) who are able to find employment within their own networks and are not dependent on the Czech-language labour market. The lack of national language knowledge may be noted as a deviation and evaluated negatively in the case of many immigrants in various countries, and adjusted not only through the acquisition of the language, but also through the avoidance of situations in which the language is necessary, or through the hiring of interpreters. The specific adjustment design selected is dependent upon the given individual's life situation.

5.5.2 Scope of LMT in previous research

LMT has been utilized in the analysis of a number of language situations, which necessarily overlap.

1. Situations often analyzed using LPP models and dealing with issues previously addressed via status planning (Kloss 1969) and acquisition planning (Cooper 1989), e.g. management done by international organizations, national and local governments, educational institutions, workplaces, religious or civic organizations (see, e.g. Dovalil 2015a; du Plessis 2010; Giger and Sloboda 2008; Sloboda 2009; Sloboda, Szabó-Gilinger, Vigers and Šimičić 2010). Focus is frequently placed on the broader picture: the process as a whole and especially its later phases, adjustment designs and implementation, as well as on feedback or the post-implementation phase (Kimura 2014), and the completion (or non-completion) of language management cycles.
2. Situations which correspond more closely to corpus planning (Kloss 1969), in which codified norms and codifying institutions inspire the management and are often referenced in it. This includes research on language cultivation (Nekvapil 2008) and standardization and destandardization processes (Dovalil 2015b).
3. Situations to which other models of LPP oriented toward traditional corpus, status and acquisition planning, as well as the communities and domains of language policy and management as set out by Spolsky, are not typically applied due to the non-traditional character of the networks in which language and communication are managed. These include online social networks and discussion fora, individual social networks or informally organized groups (see Pasfield-Neofitou 2012; Sherman 2009; Sloboda and Nábělková 2013; Sherman and Švelch 2015; Švelch 2015). Focus is frequently placed on demonstrating novel and creative ways (from the descriptive perspective) in which actors go through the LM process and the aims they attempt to achieve in doing so.
4. Situations studied using inspiration from models of intercultural communication and acculturation, in which language, communicative and sociocultural problems typically stem from differing norms or expectations of the communicative partners. Among authors working in the Japanese tradition, these situations are the prototype of what are referred to as “contact situations” (see e.g. Fairbrother 2002, 2009; Fan 1994; Marriott 2000; Masuda 2009; Muraoka 2000; Neustupný 2003, 2005).
5. Situations which are analyzed from the perspective of Second Language Acquisition (SLA) and which create a bridge between sociolinguistic and psycholinguistic perspectives, particularly in regard to the phase of noting,

examining its triggers and attempting to reconstruct internal mental processes as faithfully as methodologically possible (see e.g. Neustupný 1990; Miyazaki 2001).

It should also be pointed out that there are numerous studies in LPP, sociolinguistics, SLA and elsewhere which analyse what can in fact be understood as acts of language management, but which either do not work with LMT, or do not do so with a predominant orientation to the conception of language management as described by Jernudd and Neustupný. These include approaches based on metaphors of fixing, polishing or policing language, e.g. Blommaert (2013), Cameron (2012a), Curzan (2014), standard language ideology, e.g. Seargeant (2009), Milroy and Milroy (2012), especially the "complaint tradition" (pp. 30–47) manifested in numerous examples of the noting and (negative) evaluation of non-standard language use. There are also a number of studies, mostly devoted to language classroom interaction, which analyse individual interactions as manifestations of language policy or as policy emerging in the course of interaction, some examples being the "micro-level policy-in-process" discussed in Amir and Musk (2013) or the "practiced language policy" in Bonacina-Pugh (2012).

5.5.3 Methodological aspects

In addressing the question of how to identify examples of language management and best elucidate its processual aspects, it is important to adopt an ethnomethodological approach (Garfinkel 1967), particularly via ethnomethodological conversation analysis in connection with the problem of "why that now" (Schegloff and Sacks 1973: 299). In other words, if we are interested in language management, we must ask why problems with specific aspects of language (or languages as entire units) are made relevant at a given moment in a given context and by whom. This approach also extends to LMT's orientation toward a focus on processes which may take place, in the vein of conversation analysis, "turn-by-turn" (see Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson 1974) in an ongoing interaction. In addition, concepts such as 'norms' and 'deviations' are determined by the interaction participants themselves, not by external observers, i.e. the perspective is an 'emic' one. In contrast to the earliest theories of language planning, there need not be a hierarchy of language managers. Professional language experts, linguists and laypeople (or 'ordinary language users') are all important in the identification and explicit formulation of language problems, and the important challenge for researchers is to explore the perspectives provided from all positions of expertise, power and the like, i.e. to understand the complete picture.

This challenge can be observed through the prism of some methods employed in LMT research, particularly those which encourage participants in communicative situations and/or management processes to reflect upon their own behaviour. There are frequent differences between spontaneous management processes, elicited ones, and unsuccessful attempts on the part of researchers to elicit management. In the final case, we can see a clash between the norms of language experts and the norms of everyday language users/laypeople. One example of this can be found in the use of languages, particularly English, as lingua francas. In many contexts, international business being a prominent one, English is used primarily for communicative purposes – to exchange information, to conduct ordinary work tasks, to engage in small talk, and the like. In a telephone conversation, for example, two speakers may exchange the information that they need, and at the same time use language structures which deviate from standard language norms. The question, then, is, whether the deviations are noted as such by one or more of the users, if the management process continues, and what it looks like. It may happen that a language expert, in this case an English specialist, would listen to a recording of the conversation and point out individual deviations which were not at all relevant for the conversation participants. Interestingly, this multiplicity of norms and potential conflicts between them serves as a basis for management among language teachers, who, in the role of norm authorities, must decide what to correct in the classroom and when to do so (see Dovalil 2015b; Hamid, Zhu and Baldauf 2014).

5.5.4 LMT and English in Europe

LMT provides alternative perspectives on contemporary issues related to the situation of English in Europe as well as in the global context. Speakers possess different resources and repertoires, including multiple varieties of English. In posing the question of which norms are made relevant in which situations, LMT can show, for example, that a single language user may note and evaluate deviations from different norms when in the role of a teacher, as the writer of academic texts, or in a business context. Throughout Europe, the management of English is done by individuals, parents, teachers, schools, editors and employers, to name but a few. This was exemplified throughout the various phases of the *English in Europe: Opportunity or Threat?* project, during which different areas where problems crop up were gradually brought to the fore. The frequently formulated language problems of "insufficient English" among students and employees was defined differently in different countries – a marked difference emerged, for example, between Scandinavia, the Spanish-speaking world, and Central and Eastern Europe, leading to varying, yet comparable management practices in each area. In academic publishing, journal editors note and evaluate deviations from various linguistic as well as genre-related norms of scientific articles, often on the basis of norms from native-English-speaking countries, and design and implement adjustments to deviations by editing the texts (see Kaplan and Baldauf 2005), or through offering paid proofreading services. Universities undergoing processes of internationalization are observed facing the task of deciding which language norms should be required of both teachers and students, often based on multiple acts of management conducted ad hoc. Finally, employers, above all those in the international business world, act as language managers when making decisions about the specifics of the English (and other language) skills required of their employees (see Nekvapil and Sherman 2009b; 2013).