Micro-Paper 61: *Language Planning*

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Defining the Term

A clear and all-encompassing definition of Language Planning (LP) remains elusive, with a focus often on the regulation or creation of new national languages, thus reflecting the nation-building projects of those who saw the control and standardization of a national language as central to their efforts. Fishman provides a more inclusive definition in highlighting the pursuit of solutions to language problems, typically, but not necessarily, at the national level.

Macro 'top-down' LP roles can be played by central or regional governments (e.g. the *Académie Française* policing the French language or the Catalonian regional government in Spain maintaining Catalan), but language 'problems' may come in all forms and indeed, we are seeing more research that focuses on micro 'bottom-up' LP, i.e. people-led solutions to language problems, such as my work on LP and pupil voice in schools in the UK or, in another example, the work of Australian teachers, students and community members in reviving indigenous languages.

Language planning can be considered in terms of the selection of a norm and its wider implementation, a task usually carried out by policy makers (non-linguists), and the codification and elaboration of the norm variety, usually carried out by linguists; LP can be viewed in terms of a hierarchy of prestige — the greater the prestige of the planner, the greater the likelihood of LP success, e.g. a government versus individuals. One can also consider LP as a linguistic eco-system in which a number of interdependent forces are at work as languages compete in a multingual arena, such as language death, language change, and language revival.

Connecting it to LSLP

The research work of LSLP colleagues encompasses much that could be interrogated from a LP perspective, from language policy in gaming, both macro policy (the software company) and micro policy (gamer language use), to the language prevalent in streetscapes in urban literacy research in Medellín, to consider top down visible and official 'prestigious' language and bottom up 'grassroots' and 'less-prestigious' street language.

Expanding Second Language Research

LP has been with us a long time and much has developed in second language research since then in terms of new literacies, the changing perspective of 'language' from a reified fixed object (a 'noun', the 'Spanish') to something people are doing (a 'verb', practicing a variety of Spanish), and of course, the advent of new technologies. But I think LP theoretical and descriptive frameworks still have a useful role to play in helping us make sense of some of these newer linguistic and social developments.

References

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