

LANGUAGE PLANNING AND SOCIAL THEORY

Novoklasični in zgodovinskostrukturalni pristop k raziskovanju jezikovnega načrtovanja se protistavita glede na enoto analize, vlogo zgodovinske analize, namen vrednotenja in implicitno ideologijo.

The neoclassical and the historical-structural approach to language planning research are contrasted with reference to the unit of analysis, the purpose of evaluation, and implicit ideology.

Research in the field of language planning seeks to describe and explain deliberate efforts to change language structure and language use. Its emphasis is on planned change, as distinct from unplanned or "natural" language change. Research in this area has focused upon such issues as language standardization; language acquisition and loss; development of writing systems, normative grammars, and dictionaries; linguistic modernization, including development of scientific and technological terminology; and efforts to use vernaculars in education and government. Among the major questions in language planning are: Under what conditions will specific changes in language structure be accepted by a speech community? When will vernacular languages be considered acceptable as official languages of government and education? What kinds of policies will effectively regulate language use within bilingual and multilingual speech communities? How might languages be codified or standardized?

Since the field of language planning began to take shape in the 1960s, the amount of published material has grown so rapidly that there are now journals (e. g., *Language Problems and Language Planning* published at the University of Texas), an introductory textbook (Eastman, 1983), theoretical essays (e. g., Rubin and Jernudd, 1971), and hundreds of case studies (see Lencek 1971; Fishman 1974). Among the most important international conferences on language planning was the Ljubljana Seminar on the Multinational Society, convened by the United Nations Secretariat, June 8–21, 1965 (for the collected papers, see Mackey and Verdoodt 1975).

Despite the large and growing literature on language planning, attempts to synthesize the field into a comprehensive theoretical framework have proved to be inadequate. The most important difficulties in this effort are the lack of comparable methodologies of empirical studies, the trivial nature of many generalizations, the irrelevance of much of research to actual language planning processes, and the isolation of language research from related issues of social planning.

A central aspect of these limitations is the coexistence of two competing analytical approaches. Research within the neoclassical framework presumes that the rational calculus of individuals is the proper focus of language planning research. In this view, the formulation of language plans and policies involves rational analysis of the costs and benefits of alternatives; the implementation of plans and policies consists of distributing these costs and benefits in a manner designed to achieve formulated goals; and the evaluation of plans and policies

consists of quantitative measures of the "fit" between stated goals and achieved ends. The neoclassical approach contrasts with the historical-structural approach developed primarily for application to language problems in developing nations (cf Wood 1982). The historical-structural approach examines the history of the social system within which planning takes place, with primary emphasis upon structural considerations (e. g., class). The historical-structural approach searches for the origin of constraints on planning; the sources of the costs and benefits of alternatives; the relationship between language planning and other areas of social planning; and the social, political, and economic factors that constrain or impel changes in language structure and use.

The differences between research within the neoclassical approach and research within the historical-structural approach involve the unit of analysis each employs, the role of historical analysis, and the purpose of evaluation in the planning process. These differences are reviewed and critiqued in part one of this article.

These conceptual issues reflect more fundamental differences between the two frameworks. These more fundamental differences involve the underlying ideological orientation of the proponents of the two approaches and their different views of the relative importance of individual choice and collective behavior in social science research. The impact of these differences on the development of language planning theory is examined in the second part of this article.

Part I – Competing Analytical Approaches

The Neoclassical Model of Language Planning

In the neoclassical model of language planning, the language planning process is conceptualized as the formulation and implementation of plans according to a rational analysis of the costs and benefits of alternatives (Jernudd and Das Gupta 1971; Thorburn 1971). One particularly important set of costs includes difficulties encountered in implementation. It is assumed that successful implementation requires accurate and comprehensive analysis of potential difficulties as part of the formulation of plans and policies. Political organization and economic structures are viewed as the setting within which plans are formulated and as possible sources of difficulties for plan implementation. It is presumed that plans and policies reflecting the needs and goals of the sociopolitical system will be more easily implemented than those that run counter to those needs and goals. Thus it is widely claimed that plans and policies should conform to the general drift of social forces if they are to be successful. It is presumed further that language is a resource like any other resource, that language thus has quantifiable economic value, and that its economic value is a central component in the rational assessment of costs and benefits of alternative plans (Fishman, Das Gupta, Jernudd, and Rubin 1971).

The neoclassical framework presupposes that planners seek to formulate and implement plans that will provide the greatest return (i. e., maximum net benefits after costs). The framework also presupposes that plans and policies are the cumulative result of individual decisions about the costs entailed and the benefits to

be gained from alternatives. In its broadest form, this framework is an example of the neoclassical micro-economic theory of consumer choice (Shaw 1975). The model has been extended to include variables such as the costs and benefits to specific agents responsible for planning (Jernudd 1971), the processes by which costs and benefits are distributed within the political system (Pool 1972), the role of evaluation in planning (Rubin 1971; Jernudd 1983), and the impact of ethnicity, nationality, and religion (Das Gupta 1970). The model has been further extended by applying it to nation building (Barnes 1977), economic development (Hocevar 1982), and international relations (Alisjahbana 1974).

The Historical-Structural Model of Language Planning

Both corpus planning (i. e., changes in language structure) and status planning (i. e., changes in the social or political role of languages) are carried out within the context of broader economic and social planning. This means that the benefits of plans often accrue with reference to economic and sociopolitical aims. For instance, the status planning decision in the United States to expand the functional range of Spanish to include the exercise of voting is analyzed within the neoclassical framework as a cost expended in order to achieve the benefits of increased political participation of the Spanish-speaking community and its greater commitment to the English-dominant political system. In contrast, within the historical-structural approach, research seeks to discover the mechanisms that perpetuate existing class structure and exploitation, as well as the contradictory tendencies that lead to structural transformation (Bach and Schraml 1982). Though this approach permits a wide range of viewpoints, the primary insights have been derived from Marxist analysis.

Within the historical-structural approach, the language planning process is viewed as one arena within which the interests of dominant groups are maintained and the seeds of transformation are developed. Thus the major goal of language planning research is to examine the historical basis for planning processes and to make explicit the mechanisms by which language planning decisions serve or undermine particular class interests. Language planning institutions are viewed as being inseparable from the political economy, and no different from other class-based structures.

In contrast to the neoclassical model, the historical-structural model assumes that the primary goal of research and analysis is to discover the historical and structural pressures that lead to particular policies and plans. Structural factors influence language planning decision through their impact on the composition of planning bodies and on the economic interests which are expressed by the sociopolitical goals to which those bodies are committed. Thus language planning is considered a macro-social rather than a micro-social process (Tollefson 1981b). Moreover, language planning is conceptualized as a historical process inseparable from structural considerations, particularly the class-based political system. The unit of analysis is thus the historical process as opposed to the neoclassical approach, which examines individual decisions.

Explanations for planning decisions may refer to a wide range of historical and

structural factors. These include: the nation's role in the international division of labor, the stage of the nation's economic development, the political organization of decision-making, and the role of language in broader social policy (Tollefson 1986).

Critique of the Neoclassical Model

The neoclassical model of language planning dominates research in the field. This approach has conceptualized language planning as similar to other forms of planning and has demonstrated that, like other resources, language can be planned (Rubin and Jernudd 1971). This achievement has resulted, however, in the separation of language planning from historical and structural processes that might explain the causes and consequences of particular policies. The issue is not the assumption that planners behave rationally or that the attempt to maximize benefits is an essential characteristic of the planning process. The problems with the neoclassical approach involve (1) the nonhistorical nature of the approach and the resulting lack of attention to structural constraints on decision-making; and (2) limitations in the model's ability to provide a theoretically sound evaluation of plans and policies.

The assumption that planners formulate plans and policies in response to their rational analysis of the language situation constitutes a separation of the planning process from history. This "freezing" of history precludes analysis of the historical causes for adoption of the planning approach or for specific decisions. Moreover, the assumption that planners base their decisions upon rational cost-benefit analysis ignores the issue of why particular groups may benefit more than others from a particular policy. Critics of the neoclassical approach point out that costs and benefits are not distributed equally throughout a population and that costs and benefits are determined by existing political and economic structures, of which language planning bodies are only a small part.

The neoclassical definition of successful planning is attainment of formulated goals (Rubin 1971). This definition limits evaluation to a comparison of formulated goals and implemented plans, and precludes evaluation that is "external" to the planning process (Tollefson 1981a). This limited view of evaluation has profound political implications. If planning bodies reflect the interests of dominant groups (and this is one of the main claims of the historical-structural approach), then the neoclassical approach provides the theoretical basis for preserving those interests. That is, the neoclassical model provides no basis for a social scientific critique of the effects of plans and policies on language rights, language use, or the distribution of wealth and power. That the neoclassical model is nonhistorical and amoral in its evaluation of plans and policies can be seen in the Germann policy of restricting use of Slavic languages in certain areas of Southern Austria during the Second World War. Within the neoclassical approach, that policy is considered to be "successful" if it is effectively implemented, even by means of violence and other forms of coercion.

The failure of the neoclassical model to accommodate coercion reflects its assumption that language choice is predictable but "free." That is, within the

neoclassical model, a population affected by policies analyzes costs and benefits and then makes a free choice on that basis. When the model is applied to language learning, it compares the costs of learning (e. g., time, money) and the benefits (e. g., better jobs, educational opportunities), and assumes that learning will take place when the benefits significantly outweigh the costs. This analysis fails to recognize that there may be no real alternative. To attribute the use of German by Slavic people in Southern Austria in the 1940s to their cost-benefit analysis utterly fails to capture the historical context for this important language shift. Within the neoclassical approach, there is no theoretical difference between the acquisition of German among Slavs in Austria during the 1940s and the acquisition of French by a highly motivated group of American high school students on vacation in Paris.

Critique of the Historical-Structural Model

Although the neoclassical model explains planning decisions with reference to cost-benefit analysis, others argue that planning decisions are in fact manifestations of the historical and structural factors that determine the alternatives available as well as their relative costs and benefits. The historical-structural model assumes that planning is rational, but emphasizes instead the macrostructural forces affecting planning. Individual actions are explained by locating individuals within the larger political-economic system, primarily with reference to class, the central unit of analysis, but also with reference to religion, ethnicity, and other such variables. Within the historical-structural model, the costs and benefits of learning a language (or not learning one) are the result of historical and structural variables which the neoclassical model holds constant, and thus ignores.

The primary difficulty with the historical-structural approach is that there is no necessary connection between structural categories (e. g., class) and the actions of specific planners or groups. Individuals may hold varying positions and make varying decisions that cannot be directly explained in historical-structural terms. Related problems are the resiliency of policies that may persist long after planners have concluded that they are not in their best interests, and the capacity of politico-administrative systems to alter or subvert plans as they are implemented (Tollefson 1981b). In such cases, the model's emphasis on historical and structural factors makes it difficult to explain individual decision-making. At times, the approach seems to view individuals strictly as victims or beneficiaries of historical and structural factors. Abu-Lughod (1975:201) summarizes this view as follows: "Human beings, like iron filings [are] impelled by forces beyond their conscious control and, like atoms stripped of their cultural and temporal diversity, [are] denied creative capacity to innovate and shape the worlds from which and into which they are moved."

In contrast to the severe restriction on evaluation implicit in the neoclassical approach, the historical-structural approach presumes that plans which are successfully implemented will serve dominant interests, and thus the neoclassical evaluation of plans is relatively unimportant. Of far greater importance is evaluation of the effects of policies upon historical-structural factors, most significantly on the distribution of economic resources and political power. Concern for language

rights is an associated issue in that the exercise of language rights reflects the different economic status of language communities; moreover, language rights may be the focus for conflict between competing groups.

Part II – Issues of Ideology and Social Organization

Although the neoclassical and historical-structural approaches coexist within the field (at times, within a single analysis), language planning research has been dominated by the neoclassical approach. The preoccupation with individual decision-making has led to repetitive typologies of language planning processes and settings, and to individual case studies having little theoretical value. In large part, these limitations are due to the underlying ideology of the neoclassical approach and its narrow view of the proper content of social research.

One effect of the dominance of the neoclassical model is an emphasis on the characteristics of individuals and groups affected by planning decisions. In studying second language acquisition, for instance, researchers list characteristics of learners, such as motivation, in order to formulate hypotheses about rate of learning and eventual level of attainment. Yet the mechanisms linking these characteristics to language acquisition are not specified. For instance, studies in Canada examine the effectiveness of planned attempts to increase learners' motivation (see Pool 1974). Similarly, in special programs for refugees and immigrants, the U. S. Department of State emphasizes the values and attitudes of individual learners as the key to successful language learning, health, and employment (Tollefson 1989).

In such cases, the neoclassical model locates the primary variables within the individual. The model thus shares assumptions with a broad range of social science research focused on individual decision-making, such as the equilibrium model of economics that is expressed most explicitly in supply-side theory (Bach and Schraml 1982). These assumptions express the underlying belief that the key to understanding social systems is the individual, that differences between socio-political systems express the cumulative effect of individual decisions, and that the proper focus of social science is the analysis of those decisions.

These premises are articles of faith. That is, they constitute an ideology that is not subject to empirical verification. Yet they profoundly affect the relationship between researchers and the object of their study. First, these premises insulate planners from any evaluation which is external to the planning process. The only evaluative criterion is whether stated goals are achieved. Within the neoclassical model, the researcher is an objective observer who is not part of the historical-structural context. The researcher's primary challenge is to analyze the planning process without "interfering" in it. As a result, the field generally does not encompass research on appropriate social, political, and economic criteria for evaluating policies. One result is that researchers have little impact on policy making. Indeed, neoclassical ideology presents a theoretical obstacle to researchers' involvement in the planning process.

The premises of the neoclassical model have also limited the ability of researchers to respond to the disillusionment with social planning that has characterized

the social sciences since the early 1970s. Neoclassical advocates of the planning approach can argue merely that better policies depend on more accurate information. They do not examine the forces that lead to adoption or rejection of the planning approach, the historical and structural factors which establish evaluative criteria, or the political and economic interests that benefit from the perceived failure of planning.

The neoclassical approach is particularly unsuited to deal with two additional issues. First, how do language communities form and how do they come to invest their language(s) with varying degrees of value? Neoclassical theory is limited to deriving typologies of language communities based on their linguistic characteristics, their functional variation, and their degree of multilingualism. It is unable to develop a theory to account for the formation and development of language groups and the range of linguistic variation within them. Moreover, it is unable to explain why some communities are willing, for instance, to go to war over language issues, while others easily accept language loss, and still others exhibit a flexible attachment to language patterned by factors that are outside the neoclassical model.

The neoclassical model also cannot handle a second set of issues: What are the mechanisms by which changes take place in language structure and language use, and how does the language planning process affect these mechanisms? The neoclassical approach is limited to correlating planning decisions and language changes; it is unable to specify the mechanisms by which planning brings about these changes. Thus it has no predictive power.

In order to develop a theory of language planning, the field requires emphasis on those areas the neoclassical model has ignored: a theoretical account of the mechanisms by which planning affects the development of language communities as well as the structure and function of their language varieties. Because the historical-structural approach is concerned with such issues, it offers some hope that a theory of language planning can be derived.

A central tenet of the approach is that the action of groups is fundamentally different from the sum of the individual actions of its members. Thus planning bodies as well as populations affected by their decisions are viewed as products of history and the social relationships which organize groups. The primary task of the field is to develop a theory of language planning that makes explicit the mechanisms by which the planning process shapes the history and structure of language communities. Emphasis on individual decisions by planners and policy makers cannot fulfill this need.

An additional difficulty with the neoclassical model is the assumption that language is a resource like any other resource, with economic value for which costs may be expended (Fishman 1971). This assumption is the basis for treating language learning and language change as the result of cost-benefit analysis. Within the historical-structural approach, language is unlike most other resources (though like labor) because of the social relationships that give it form in linguistic communities (cf. Bach and Schraml 1982; Wood 1982). Language involves historically real people organized into communities according to roles, symbols, and ideologies that may not correspond to the economic logic of cost-benefit analysis.

The possibilities for planning, therefore, depend upon the social organization of communities. Thus the task for research is to explain the link between the organization of these communities, changes in their language structure and use, and the planning process. A plan which aims to change language structure or use may require a transformation of existing social relationships. Thus analysis of language planning cannot be analytically separated from historical processes of structural transformation.

The historical-structural model rejects the neoclassical separation between the researcher and the language planning process. A central task of the approach is analysis of the historical and structural basis of social science theories. The approach presumes that shifts in theoretical perspective have a historical basis and that all theories are embedded in sociopolitical structure. This central importance of the underlying ideology of social theory has not been widely recognized within the field (though see Khubchandani 1981).

Conclusion

The primary theoretical task currently facing the field is to specify the processes for the formation of linguistic communities and ways in which planning can affect those processes. At present, we can roughly outline the direction which this inquiry is likely to take. Historical-structural factors are responsible for defining communities. Communities may develop language varieties which they perceive to be their own without regard to linguistic "facts" (e.g., in the case of similar varieties considered to be different "languages"). The development of those varieties follows historical processes that govern a range of characteristics that define communities, including religion, ethnicity, and class. Planning may affect language change only to the extent permitted by historical-structural factors.

This sketch suggests directions for research. Under what historical and structural conditions will language come to be an identifying characteristic of a community? What historical and structural conditions permit language to lose its identifying power? How do language communities perceive the role of planning bodies, and what factors account for varying perceptions? Under what conditions will different linguistic groups be transformed into a unified community? What constraints affect planned attempts to change language structure and language use?

These and other research questions are part of a complex effort to develop a theory of language planning. Ultimately, a theory of planning and a theory of language must be integrated. Language change is central to both. Until that broad synthesis is achieved, the field of language planning would benefit from a sustained effort to examine the historical-structural context of the planning approach, planning institutions and decision-making processes, and the causes and effects of planning within sociopolitical communities.

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POVZETEK

Raziskovanje jezikovnega načrtovanja zahteva premišljene napore za oblikovanje jezikovnega ustroja in jezikovne rabe. Od 60. let je področje jezikovnega načrtovanja hitro raslo, ni pa se razvila strnjena teorija jezikovnega načrtovanja. To je deloma posledica dveh tekmujočih analitičnih pristopov na tem področju: novoklasičnega in zgodovinskostrukturalnega. Prvi domneva, da so odločitve o jeziku rezultat individualnih analiz stroškov in koristi. Raziskovanje znotraj novoklasičnega pristopa poskuša opisati in razložiti to podlago za individualna jezikovna odločanja. V tem pristopu se jezikovna politika ocenjuje samo glede na stopnjo ujemanja med izraženimi načrti in doseženimi cilji. Zgodovinskostrukturalni pristop pa nasprotno poudarja omejitve pri odločanju, razmerje med jezikom in drugimi področji družbenega načrtovanja odločitve o jeziku. Ta prispevek protistavlja novoklasični in zgodovinskostrukturalni pristop glede na enoto analize, ki jo eden ali drug uporablja, vlogo zgodovinskega raziskovanja in namen vrednotenja.

Novoklasični in zgodovinskostrukturalni pristop torej odražata osnovne razlike, vpletajoč ideološke usmeritve predlagalcev obeh pristopov, pa tudi različne poglede na vlogo individualne izbire in skupinskega vedenja pri raziskovanju družbene znanosti. Te razlike se raziskujejo s posebnim ozirom na njihov vpliv na teorijo jezikovnega načrtovanja.

Na koncu se predlagajo bodoče smeri za teoretično raziskovanje načrtovanja jezikov. Poseben poudarek je dan potrebi po strnjeni teoriji jezika in jezikovnega načrtovanja.