

A Systems Model of Language Planning

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A Systems Thinking (ST) approach to language planning has not yet been addressed in the corpus of language planning literature. ST encourages the study of a language, understanding that its corpus, status and acquisition are interconnected. ST allows us to gain a better understanding of the complexities of language planning by creating a visual model reflecting the interrelations within and among aspects of language vitality.

There are two immediate benefits to bringing an ST approach to language planning theory. First, this approach allows for the assimilation and incorporation of hypotheses and principles from the field's forerunners, including Cooper (1989), Fishman (1991) and Williams (1992) into one qualitative model of language planning that uses consistent graphical language. Second, the ST approach allows for the creation of a model for language planning that is flexible and broadly applicable. ST can negate placing any one area of language vitality in position of privilege by suggesting that each area in which a language functions is only one part of a metasystem.

Governments in the United Kingdom, Canada, and the United States of America are effectively using ST in order to create models flexible enough to explain social systems and in order to help predict the repercussions of social intervention (Sterman, 2000). When ST is brought into the field of language planning, it can be used to further our understanding of how interventions in aspects of language vitality unite to positively and negatively influence the language.

References

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