

Bernard Spolsky: Rethinking Language Policy

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Rethinking Language Policy is Bernard Spolsky's most recent comprehensive publication focused on language policy and planning (LPP). In his latest work, Spolsky presents an updated theory of language policy. He uses case studies and rich examples to bring the reader closer to the field. The individual and its place in language policy will be a key element throughout the whole book. He examines the diversity of linguistic repertoires and illustrates why language policy is difficult to implement due to several conditions. This collection serves as a strong reminder that efforts to interfere with language can influence and alter the language habits and practices of speakers and will always be a part of everyday linguistic reality.

The book consists of a preface, an introduction, and fourteen chapters. In the preface, Spolsky explains why language policy is changing and why it is essential to seek out new elements and new connections. Spolsky believes that *language policy and management remain critical if we are to survive in a world threatened by pandemics, climate change and irresponsible governments* (p.4). The introduction highlights the complexity and ever-present nature of language policy. Further on, he continues listing socioeconomic, religious, ethnic, and linguistic features that affect language policy. He concludes this section by noting that comprehension of this emerging topic depends on both linguistic and non-linguistic variables.

Chapter 1 of the book tries to seek connections between the individual and language policy. He refers to one of his most famous works with Shohamy (1999), in which they proposed a model that defined language policy into three independent but interrelated parts: *language practice, language beliefs and ideology, and language management*. He continues to search for explanations for the relationship between an individual's linguistic repertoire and the environment that influences their language preference. The author concludes that self-management is crucial, and as a closing remark of Chapter 1, he mentions that *without acceptance and willingness by members of a speech community...language policy is doomed* (p. 15).

Family is one of the actors/institutions that the author moves up towards in Chapter 2 in order to discuss other higher-order scales and how they might significantly impact how speakers' language repertoires are formed. According to Spolsky, scholars should give more attention to the individual than the family. In the future, scholars should especially focus on the internal and external factors influencing family language policy.

In Chapter 3, the author introduces a new field that has a significant influence on modifying one's language repertoire: *education*. Spolsky highlights Walter's (2008) work, which confirms that the choice of language of instruction has a

significant impact on the effectiveness of schooling. The author brings attention to the economic pressure schools have to face from governments. This chapter guides us through examples of how school policies differ from country to country. Spolsky concludes that *school is probably the second most important source of language management* (p. 52).

In the next chapter (Chapter 4), other powerful language determiners are listed that affect the individual's language repertoire. Apart from school (discussed in Chapter 3), the neighbourhood and the workplace also have a significant impact on language choice. These spheres, plus the family (Chapter 2), can overlap easily.

In Chapter 5, the author emphasizes the impact that public domains have on individuals. The government plays a crucial role in this modification. Spolsky lists several communication agencies that enter and influence the home. Furthermore, in this chapter, he mentions the effect of religion on language policy. We can conclude that these public institutions, with their unique language practices and policies, shape the individual's language repertoire.

Chapter 6 deals with military language and policy. Military language policy specifies a unique jargon that is needed in order to move freely in this sphere. It is worth pointing out that this field has much potential and is showing a growing interest among scholars.

Spolsky discusses historical and socioeconomic topics, including colonialism and imperialism, in Chapter 7. Case studies of the language policies implemented by the Portuguese, Brazil, French, Spanish, Belgian, Italian, and British are compared in this chapter. The examples show us how European colonisation weakened and replaced Indigenous languages.

In Chapter 8, Spolsky addresses the economic pressure behind language choice. He differentiates between two ways: *integrative* and *instrumental*. Grin (2010) analyses the economic value of learning a language. Further on in this chapter, the influence of linguistic and economic variables is covered. Heller (2010) highlights the significance of understanding the market value of a language. In conclusion, Spolsky mentions that the *economic weakness of a country interferes with the ability to tackle language problems* (p. 131).

Chapter 9 discusses endangerment and language shift. Spolsky identifies three critical factors that endanger languages: *economics*, *access*, and *motivation*. He starts by outlining opposing viewpoints and discussions among linguists and LPP experts regarding the type and severity of language endangerment. Edwards (2019) points out the threatening status of English, meaning that minor languages disappear due to the spread of English. This leads to the question: what will happen to minority languages? In this chapter, the author illustrates some selected cases of minority languages. He concludes that language management concerning minority languages should follow a unified scheme and be able to tackle socioeconomic problems.

In Chapter 10, Spolsky discusses the difference between managers (who have authority) and advocates (without authority). He refers back to Chapter 1, where he introduces his famous language policy model. The community's willingness and acceptance play a significant role in how managers and advocates can contribute to and modify changes. Managers and advocates are present at all levels. Further on in this chapter, he introduces different language management agencies and how they work in different countries.

Chapter 11 and Chapter 12 of this book deal with international treaties and charters at the supranational level. Skutnabb-Kangas and Phillipson (1995) differentiate between five periods of universal human rights: *personal freedom, economic, social and cultural rights, and solidarity rights*. The fourth and the fifth periods came after the Second World War. These two periods marked the beginning of recognising minority linguistic rights. In Chapter 12, the author illustrates how nation-states work as language managers. Spolsky demonstrates the varying roles of agents and agencies in different countries and how they enforce laws and regulations in order to shape the individuals' linguistic repertoire.

In Chapter 13, the author explores the language policies of specific countries in further depth. The primary purpose of the case studies is to exemplify the complex and context-dependent nature of language and language policy.

The final chapter frames the whole book and Spolsky's personal journey in the field of language policy. He believes that language can be managed at all levels, but it comes with great sacrifice. Language policy remains a disputed issue, meaning it is challenging to find a simple resolution. "*Rethinking*" refers to the current difficulties and future problems that language policy and language policy planners have to face today and in the future.

Spolsky's aims and intentions are unquestionable, and his work is an essential contribution to the field of language policy.

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