Language Management in Contact Situation: Perspectives from Three Continents (Prague Papers on Language, Society and Interaction 1) makes a dynamic contribution to the discipline of sociolinguistics by introducing a new theoretical framework, Language Management Theory (LMT) and the concept of ‘contact situations’. The area traditionally termed ‘language policy and planning’ is completely rewritten. The book is likely to become an indispensable reference book for scholars in linguistics and intercultural communication, for language educators and teachers who, as a part of their professional training, need to be well-versed in human ‘behaviour towards language’.

Ten chapters deal with behaviour toward language in East and Central Europe (Part I), Japan (Part II), and Australia (Part III). In the introductory remarks, the concept of contact situation is briefly introduced, and in the prologue, Nekvapil explains the birth and development of LMT (Jernudd and Neustupný, 1987; Jernudd, 2000; Neustupný, 2004), and the influence it then received from Hymes (1974). Nekvapil underscores the necessity in LMT of differentiation between generative and management processes and the corresponding components – the former produces utterances or communicative acts, whereas the latter manages (pp. 1–2) them as meta-linguistic activities, i.e. ‘behaviour towards language’. Of the two, LMT - by definition - devotes far greater attention to the management processes. Management processes are viewed as being either ‘simple management’ or ‘organised management’ – the former take place in the ongoing face-to-face communication of everyday speakers, whereas the latter take place in the decision-making processes of state or public organisations. The connections between the simple and organised management are of paramount importance in LMT. Nekvapil then identifies the key tenets of the language management process and the language management cycle. The prologue also positively puts forward LMT’s future integrative potential with existing approaches to language, such as CA and functional grammar.

The following is a brief review of the ten chapters in the book.
MARIÁN SLOBODA

A LANGUAGE MANAGEMENT APPROACH TO LANGUAGE MAINTENANCE AND SHIFT: A STUDY FROM POST-SOVIET BELARUS

The chapter makes two significant contributions to the field of problems in language management. Firstly, it interconnects the individual's management behaviour and that of institutions through systematically presented qualitative data. Secondly, it affirms that for analysing the language problems of a young nation (which, after decades of social, political and economical change, needs to maintain its own language), the inevitable choice is LMT, not the language maintenance and language shift approach. The Belarusian language problems analysed in this chapter, including the attempt at a shift to Belarusian, can be compared to language problems in other parts of the world.

ISTVÁN LANSTYÁK AND GIZELLA SZABÓMIHÁLY

HUNGARIAN IN SLOVAKIA: LANGUAGE MANAGEMENT IN A BILINGUAL MINORITY COMMUNITY

By using the LMT framework, the chapter presents field language problems and their management as experienced by the Hungarian-Slovak bilingual minority community in Slovakia. The chapter's timely contribution is fully appreciated in an era where ‘…. the study of language management will reflect the Zeitgeist and show progression of differential problems and differential interests’ (Jernudd, this volume, p.251). It serves as a forerunner for researchers of language management and language policy and planning, especially those of new nations tackling similar national communication problems.

TAMAH SHERMAN

MANAGING HEGEMONY: NATIVE ENGLISH SPEAKERS IN THE CZECH REPUBLIC

The chapter ventures to analyse a non-traditional, informal community, this being internet discussion forums of native English speakers living in the Czech Republic. As succinctly summarised by the author, ‘Taking one’s language problems to a discussion forum represents both levels of language management, simple and organised. While simple management on the individual level can be described within the posts themselves, the existence of the discussions as a whole...is an instance of organised management, as it serves as a resource for other language users’ (p.94). The chapter provides an exemplary protocol
for future research into internet language management. The suggestion of practical adjustment plans is noteworthy for those engaged in language learning and teaching.

SAU KUEN FAN

HOST MANAGEMENT OF JAPANESE AMONG YOUNG NATIVE USERS IN CONTACT SITUATIONS

In this chapter, the author puts forward the view that contact situation participants with bilingual backgrounds exhibit various personal managements in their contact language, as a result of their experiences playing a ‘language guest’. The author suggests that these participants’ management show, unlike features expected in traditional host management, some cultural preference for their own native background. The chapter stresses the need to examine the entirety of native participants’ backgrounds when analysing the norms used in contact situations. The possibilities of ‘Universal norms’ and ‘Global norms’, in addition to the existing native and contact norms, are suggested.

LISA FAIRBROTHER

NATIVE SPEAKERS’ APPLICATION OF CONTACT NORMS IN INTERCULTURAL CONTACT SITUATIONS WITH ENGLISH-SPEAKING, CHINESE-SPEAKING AND PORTUGUESE-SPEAKING NON-NATIVE SPEAKERS OF JAPANESE

Drawing on extensive authentic interaction data, this chapter presents empirical evidence of ‘contact norms’ applied by native speakers to the deviations of non-native speakers in linguistic, communicative, and sociocultural domains in all the management stages. The major finding is that the contact norms are applied non-uniformly towards participants of different ethnic backgrounds. The varied findings are presented in conscientious detail, illuminating the interrelationships between many factors (e.g. type of deviations, ethnicity and language ability of non-native speakers). The chapter provides a prototypical framework for researchers examining comparative language management with multi-background participants.

HIDEHIRO MURAOKA

A TYPOLOGY OF PROBLEMS IN CONTACT SITUATIONS

This theoretical chapter explains that in the language teaching paradigm proposed by Neustupný, language teaching is an act of adjustment in response to language problems; that in 21st century society, there are solvable problems, unsolvable problems, and
problems that can be used as interaction resources in contact situations, and that these distinctions are important for the selection of the treatment of these problems. Importantly, it provides a typology of contact situation problems as a superordinate concept for language education. It will serve as an indispensable foundational premise for any practicing educator and researcher of, but not limited to, the field of Teaching Japanese as a Foreign Language.

HELEN MARRIOTT

JAPANESE SPEAKERS’ MANAGEMENT OF TRANSFERENCE BEHAVIOUR IN AN AUSTRALIAN CONTEXT
By analysing English lexical transfers which appear in the spoken discourses of Japanese adult speakers residing in Australia, the chapter demonstrates, using the examples of absence of noting and negative evaluations towards the lexical transfers, that language users in post-modern societies have a multiplicity of norms available to them. The minute analysis of the discourse of follow-up interviews is likely to be of particular interest to the researcher. The author’s examination of the discrepancies between the claims made by the language users and what the data actually present succinctly illustrates the complex nature of the phenomenon of intercultural identity.

YUKO MASUDA

NEGOTIATION OF LANGUAGE SELECTION IN JAPANESE-ENGLISH EXCHANGE PARTNERSHIPS
This chapter reports on a Language Exchange Partnership (LEP) organised within a university setting as one type of contact situation. The analysis of discourse data of LEPs between Japanese students wishing to improve their English and Australian learners of Japanese as FL makes apparent micro-management of the language selection by the participants – findings that would never have been obtained by traditional feedback exercises. It stresses the importance of capturing evaluations of language negotiation sequences on a continuum, rather than a simple positive/negative/neutral scale. The chapter offers a practical guide for language educators, international exchange offices, and researchers.
KUNIKO YOSHIMITSU

MANAGEMENT OF STUDY DIFFICULTIES BY JAPANESE STUDENTS AT AN AUSTRALIAN UNIVERSITY

The chapter examines the ‘management summaries’ (Nekvapil, 2004) by Japanese students of both local and international backgrounds in Australian academic contact situations. The chapter reveals students’ difficulties experienced at both the micro and macro level, which need to be addressed by the university. It underscores that the development of sociocultural competence is crucial for satisfactory student participation in academic situations. The call for more effective monitoring of international students’ performances by universities is timely in the current environment, where most learners have opportunities to study abroad.

HIROYUKI NEMOTO

NEGOTIATION OF NORMS IN ACADEMIC CONTACT SITUATIONS

This chapter examines Japanese exchange students’ struggles with multiple norms in academic contact situations during their year of studying at an Australian university. It frames the students’ struggles as ‘an inevitable component of academic management processes’ (p.240) instead of norm deviation – thus, through their struggles in their academic life, they improve their academic management. The chapter makes a worthwhile contribution to the further development of LMT, particularly in the field of pedagogy, and carries important insights for university academics and international exchange organisations alike.

In the epilogue, Jernudd eloquently encapsulates the contributions made by the contributing authors, then states, ‘An organisation of language managers contributes the most to this language as useful means of interaction, in the words of LMT, happy communication, not by creating problems, but by providing solutions’ (p. 250, emphasis in original). In compiling this book, Nekvapil and Sherman have brought together ten such language managers who have attempted to provide solutions to their respective language problems.

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REFERENCES


