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Book Review

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Scholars in language policy studies increasingly highlight how language policy is not merely a set of formal regulations, but also a practice that shapes authority and meaning across various social contexts. In this framework, *Language Policy in Action* by Kristof Savski emerges as a significant contribution that challenges conventional approaches which tend to view language policy as a normative document. This book explores the dynamics of language policy in social, political and digital environments through data-driven analysis and in-depth theoretical inquiry. Drawing on case studies from diverse regions such as Slovenia, Thailand and Singapore, the author examines how language policies are constructed, contested, interpreted and even resisted in different social structures.

The selection of these three countries as case studies reflects the diversity of language policy contexts in terms of both the forms of authority involved and the issues addressed. However, this choice still leaves limitations in terms of global representation. The inclusion of Slovenia is closely tied to the author's academic background in interlanguage communication in 2011, which provided a strong foundation for understanding the dynamics of language policy in Central Europe. Singapore was selected due to the complexity of its language policy, which has long been recognised globally, particularly for its management of official, ethnic and global languages in a multilingual city-state. Thailand, where the author currently serves as a professor of linguistics, represents the local context with which the author is most intimately engaged, enabling a deeper level of empirical exploration. While these case studies were chosen strategically, the absence of representation from other regions, particularly Africa and South America stands out as a critical limitation, given the distinctive linguistic histories and language policy dynamics present in these areas. An explicit acknowledgment of this limitation is essential to clarify the analytical scope of the book and to encourage further research that is more geographically inclusive and representative.

Chapter 1, entitled 'Introduction: Why Language Policy in Action?' provides a critical exploration of emerging challenges in language policy studies. Employing a data-driven and contextually grounded approach, the author underscores the dynamic nature of language policy across various domains, including governance, digital spaces and traditional media. Case studies from Slovenia, Thailand and Singapore reinforce the argument that language policy must be understood in a broader sociopolitical framework. One of the chapter's key strengths lies in its integration of theoretical perspectives with practical methodological concerns, offering valuable insights for scholars, policymakers and practitioners alike. However, while the author successfully connects language policy to global realities, the analytical approach tends to be complex, which may pose challenges for readers less familiar with language policy theory. Overall, this chapter lays a strong foundation for understanding how language policy operates in practice and why an action-oriented approach is particularly relevant in contemporary contexts.

Chapter 2, 'Scoping Language Policies', examines the scope of language policy with a broader perspective beyond the mere regulation of language as a system of rules. The author highlights that language policy functions as a mechanism for managing semiotic resources in discourse, not only governing language use, but also establishing social and political boundaries that influence public participation. By situating language policy in various contexts such as education and professional communication, the author reveals that these policies are often intertwined with social legitimacy

and knowledge hierarchies. The discursive approach employed demonstrates how language policy can serve as a political tool that controls access and representation in society. However, while the analysis is insightful, the highly theoretical exposition may be challenging for readers seeking more concrete practical implications.

Chapter 3, 'Situating Language Policies', explores how language policies are implemented in different contexts, highlighting two primary archetypes: institutional language policy and community-based language policy. The author systematically differentiates between policies enforced by formal institutions such as governments and universities, characterised by universal mandates and clear hierarchical structures, and community-based policies, which are more flexible and dependent on individual participation. A key strength of this chapter lies in its in-depth analysis of how language policy is not merely normative, but is also shaped by surrounding social, economic and cultural dynamics. However, the author does not sufficiently explore the interaction between these two archetypes in real-world practice. While acknowledging that language policy often exists on a spectrum between institutional and community-driven approaches, the discussion lacks concrete examples illustrating this interaction, leaving room for further exploration of hybrid policy applications.

Chapter 4, 'Constructing Language Policies', analyses how language policies are formulated in complex institutional frameworks. The author argues that language policy is not merely an administrative document, but a social construct shaped by power dynamics and social relations. Drawing on theories from Jessop and Bourdieu, the author explains that institutional changes can influence policy outcomes and that the actors involved in this process, particularly linguists and policymakers, often have conflicting agendas. The case study of Slovenia's National Language Policy Programme illustrates how language policy evolves through negotiations among various stakeholders amid shifting political landscapes. The author critiques how such policies are frequently dominated by certain influential groups, while the voices of more marginalised communities are often overlooked. This chapter enriches the understanding of the relationship between language policy and broader social structures, inviting readers to critically question the extent to which these policies genuinely represent a society's diverse interests. However, the chapter could be further strengthened by exploring more participatory policy models, offering a critical perspective that could assist policymakers and scholars in understanding the complexities of language policy formulation across global contexts.

Chapter 5, 'Debating Language Policies', examines policy debates in public discourse, particularly in conventional and digital media. The author highlights that while discussions on language policy in traditional media are often limited and closely tied to broader narratives of identity and ideology, more dynamic debates take place on social media. By comparing language policy discussions in Singapore, contrasting letters to the editor in print media with Facebook comment threads, the author provides empirical insights into public responses to language policy across different discursive spaces. Through data-driven arguments, the chapter effectively demonstrates how these discussions not only reflect social and political dynamics, but also reveal how individuals and communities attempt to influence policy through public discourse. However, the concrete impact of these debates in both traditional and digital media on future language policy changes still requires further exploration.

Chapter 6, 'Interpreting Language Policies', provides a critical analysis of how language policies are understood and implemented across different levels of power and social contexts. The author asserts that the interpretation of language policy does not occur in a vacuum; rather, it is shaped by power dynamics that determine how a policy is read and adapted in various environments. Using the example of the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages*, the author illustrates how globally framed policy documents can take on different meanings when implemented at the local level, depending on the actors and power structures involved. This perspective aligns with Ricento's (2006) argument that language policies are not merely products of governmental decisions, but are also outcomes of social negotiations involving multiple stakeholders. By employing a framework based on concepts of scale and recontextualisation, the author enriches the understanding of language policy not merely as a normative document, but as a flexible tool that can be interpreted and adapted according to regional interests and needs.

Chapter 7, 'Enforcing Language Policies', explores how the implementation and enforcement of language policies are inevitably shaped by sociopolitical factors. By replacing the traditional term implementation with enforcement, the author emphasises the concrete actions involved in policy execution and the complexities that accompany it, including power asymmetries and social resistance. Through a critical approach, the author acknowledges that language policies do not merely regulate formal language use, but also shape individuals' emotional responses and linguistic habits, as seen in policies that promote English as a moral imperative in Thailand's mass media. This chapter demonstrates the author's deep understanding of the intersection between ideology, power and language practices in policy-making, while also offering a critical perspective on how policy enforcement often remains normative, relying on institutional authority without fully accounting for broader social dynamics.

Chapter 8, 'Resisting Language Policies', builds on the discussion from the previous chapter by examining resistance to language policies in Thailand. It highlights the dialogic aspects of policy discourse and the dynamics of resistance that emerge in response to normative language regulations. The author convincingly demonstrates that resistance is not merely a reactive act, but rather a complex process of negotiation in which individuals and communities challenge dominant language ideologies embedded in policy frameworks. Through discourse analysis, the author reveals how marginalised groups employ various strategies – both direct and digital – to preserve their local linguistic identities, as seen in the resistance to language restrictions on online forums for non-local teachers in Thailand. The strength of this chapter lies in the author's ability to connect language policy resistance to broader issues of power, identity and racial ideology, offering valuable insights into how language becomes a site of social and political struggle. However, while the author effectively illustrates resistance in a specific context, further exploration is needed to examine how such resistance contributes to broader policy changes in Thailand.

The last chapter, 'Conclusions: Acting in Language Policy', synthesises the book's key findings while offering a critical perspective on the role of scholars in language policy. The author not only highlights the complexity of language policy as a dynamic process but also underscores the importance of academic engagement in advocating for more inclusive and contextually responsive policy changes. By integrating theoretical reflections with practical implications, the author encourages readers to view language policy as an interactive field where institutional structures and individual agency intersect. This chapter challenges the notion that language policy is static and prescriptive, instead promoting a more flexible and adaptive approach that accounts for evolving social realities. However, a more detailed discussion on concrete strategies that scholars can employ to influence policy at various levels would further enhance the argument. Overall, this chapter serves as a compelling conclusion, reinforcing the relevance of language policy research in shaping public discourse and promoting more equitable policies.

The *Language Policy in Action* approach, which frames language policy as a social practice, offers valuable insights into contemporary language policy studies. This book effectively demonstrates that language policies are not merely normative regulations, but also arenas for negotiating power, ideology and identity across diverse social contexts. Through case studies in Slovenia, Thailand and Singapore, the author asserts that language policy cannot be understood in isolation from broader social, political and digital dynamics. However, a key challenge of this approach lies in addressing the variability of local contexts and the interaction between policy frameworks and constantly evolving social realities. As Spolsky (2004) argues, language policy encompasses not only official regulations, but also everyday practices and ideologies that shape language use in society. Consequently, further research incorporating perspectives from a wider range of language policy actors would enrich our understanding of this phenomenon.

Despite the challenges in applying language policy theories across different contexts, this book remains an outstanding academic contribution. With its data-driven analysis and robust theoretical foundation, *Language Policy in Action* makes a significant contribution to language policy studies, applied linguistics and sociolinguistics. It is valuable for academics, researchers and policymakers seeking to understand language policy not merely as a set of regulations, but as a dynamic and complex social practice.

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