

Applying a model of language policy and management to endangered languages

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Management (or planning) is one of the three components of language policy. It applies to an attempt made by some individual or body with or claiming authority to modify the practices and beliefs of a group of speakers. It applies then to efforts to rescue threatened languages, and should be distinguished from language salvage, the work of recording varieties of language before they disappear. The model as a whole is best seen as working on a range of social levels or domains, each with its own participants and internal forces; at the same time, there is interaction among the domains, as for example when participants in the government domain attempt to modify family language practices. The very complexity of the model helps account for the difficulties faced when attempting to preserve or strengthen varieties under threat. The model will be explored by looking at a number of cases, including Navajo, Maori, Yiddish, Irish and Hebrew.