


Michele Gazzola: The Evaluation of Language Regimes: Theory and Application to Multilingual Patent Organisations

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Kathryn D. Stemper¹ 

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In *The Evaluation of Language Regimes: Theory and Application to Multilingual Patent Organisations*, Michele Gazzola focuses on management of linguistic diversity and “examines the theoretical and empirical implications of applying the principles of policy analysis to the selection, design and evaluation of language policies” (p. 2) in multilingual patent organizations. The purpose of this book is to interrogate the author’s argument that language policies can, and should, be evaluated. The application of evaluation frameworks to language planning and policy (LPP) research has been discussed within work on the economics of language policy (e.g. Grin 1990, 2003, 2006), but not researched widely. Gazzola aims to fill this gap in LPP literature by presenting an evaluation framework rooted in economic and evaluation theory, and subsequently applying it to two case studies of language policies (regimes) in international patent organizations. The text begins with a brief introductory chapter outlining the nine main chapters.

In Chapter 1, Gazzola argues that language policies “must be evaluated on the basis of their effects on people’s welfare” (p. 27), and thus there exists a need for tools and methodologies in order to do so. He defines language policy as a type of public policy that is, at the macro level, “a systematic, rational, theory-based effort at the societal level to modify the linguistic environment [sociolinguistic situation] with a view to increasing aggregate welfare” (p. 27). This is a carefully selected definition that substantiates the author’s approach to the selection and analysis of the two case studies.

In a general overview of LPP, Gazzola states that the absence of evaluation in LPP research is due, in part, to the rising focus on critical theory in the field, which has led researchers to evade positivistic or technicist notions, which may view *rational choice* in language planning as a value-free activity, neglecting the implicit

✉ Kathryn D. Stemper
stemp062@umn.edu

¹ University of Minnesota Twin Cities, Minneapolis, MN, USA

role power plays in the policy-making process. In this perspective, *rational choice* amounts to choosing the ‘correct’ language policy to solve a language ‘problem’. However, Gazzola subsequently makes an important distinction between understanding rationality as *goals pursued* and the *procedure followed to reach goals*, indicating that it can therefore, be used as the basis for choosing among different policy options [alternatives] to reach a goal—regardless of what that goal may be.

Chapters 2–5 comprise Part I and focus on the theory and design of evaluation methods for language regimes. Chapter 2 consists of a brief overview of welfare economics and policy analysis, with a focus on two criteria in analysis of public goods—efficiency and fairness—which are central to the evaluation framework. This chapter is written for readers less familiar with these topics, thus subsequent chapters can be read independent of Chapter 2.

Chapter 3 provides a rationale for viewing language as a public good and discusses how a cost–benefit analysis (CBA) may potentially be applied to language policy evaluation. Recognizing the nuances of analyzing efficiency and fairness of language policy alternatives, Gazzola employs what he names an *effective communication approach* and refocuses the object of study to *language policy designed and implemented to manage multilingual communication in a given environment* [language regimes], on which a cost-effective analysis (CEA) could be conducted (i.e., comparing the outcome of effective communication with its associated cost).

In Chapter 4, Gazzola discusses key features of evaluation theory and frameworks, noting examples of application to language policy. This provides context for his adaptation of these procedures to evaluation of language regimes. His approach is outlined in a series of twelve steps across *problem analysis*, *designing evaluation*, and *implementing evaluation* (traditional stages of an evaluation process). Applied to this book, for example, Gazzola identifies the main evaluative question (Step 5 of designing evaluation) as “whether there is necessarily a trade-off between cost-effectiveness and fairness in multilingual communication in international patent organizations” (p. 106); efficiency and fairness as evaluation criteria (Step 6); and, CEA as the method (Step 7). Step 10 of implementing evaluation refers to the role of indicators, which is discussed in detail in Chapter 5.

Chapters 6–8 comprise Part II and demonstrate application of Gazzola’s proposed evaluation framework. In Chapter 6, he articulates the need for evaluation in patent organizations and provides a clear and descriptive overview of multilingualism within patent processes, points which are essential context for the following chapters. Chapters 7 and 8 are case studies of the language regime of the Patent Cooperation Treaty (PCT) and the European Patent Office (EPO), respectively. Each provides an intricately detailed account of the patent processes as they relate to the organizations’ requirements for language use in patent application and filing. In the case of the PCT, Gazzola conducts two comparative analyses of the cost-effectiveness of the system: (1) pre and post a 1998 reform that modified the language requirements of patent applications; and, (2) pre and post a 2008 reform, which adopted Korean and Portuguese as languages of publication. In the case of the EPO, he considers the efficiency and fairness of the current language regime (which requires applications to be filed in English, French, and German,

regardless of the national language of the country of origin) and compares it to three alternatives, which might mitigate translation cost disparities among European applicants.

In the concluding chapter (Chapter 9), the author concisely summarizes the text and reiterates its theoretical, methodological, and empirical contributions. Given the book's rigorous content and refined text, readers might consider this chapter a helpful reference to the authors' main points.

This volume is extremely well organized; its meticulous use of headings, tables, and figures will likely aid readers' comprehension of the rich details and complex ideas it conveys. However, throughout the book there are diffuse explanations whose clarity might be improved by conciseness. Given its interdisciplinary nature, the text will be of interest for LPP scholars exploring new approaches to LPP research and theory, as well as evaluation experts and economists interested in the complex role language plays in various settings. Additionally, those whose work involves intellectual property rights may better recognize the impact of specific (language related) organizational decisions within the industry.

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Kathryn D. Stemper is a doctoral student in Second Language Education at the University of Minnesota. Her current research critically examines the ways in which language-in-education policy positions Indigenous language use and education in U.S. school settings.