

Language Planning and Language Policy: Prospects of Integration and Interaction for the Preservation and Advancement of the Arabic Language

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Abstract:

In light of the ongoing changes in various aspects of social, political, economic, and cultural life, the need for effective language planning has become essential. Language planning serves as a practical and technical step within the broader framework of language policy, aiming to promote the Arabic language. Both language planning and language policy are concerned with how language is used in society and its impact on individuals. While language planning involves concrete programs to improve language use, language policy sets the overarching decisions and goals to enhance and support the language. This study seeks to explore both concepts and their role in facing linguistic challenges, achieving language development, and adapting to globalization and technological progress. A descriptive-analytical method was employed. One key finding is that language planning and language policy are two foundational pillars for building the future of the language, with a complementary relationship between planning and policymaking.

Keywords: Arabic language, language policy, language planning, challenges.

1. INTRODUCTION

Language planning and language policy play a fundamental role in promoting and advancing the status of the Arabic language, as they contribute to preserving Arabic as a sign of identity and culture while ensuring its ability to keep pace with scientific and technological developments. Language planning aims to strengthen the functional presence of Arabic across diverse domains by developing, coining, and translating scientific and technical terminology, reinforcing the language's role in education, media, and public administration, supporting the production of scientific research in Arabic, and contributing to the enrichment of Arabic digital content. Language policy, on the other hand, serves as the legal framework that defines Arabic's status as an official language and mandates its use in governmental and educational institutions, thereby protecting it from marginalization in favor of foreign languages. Through such integrated policies, the status of Arabic can be reinforced as a language of science and knowledge, connecting generations to their cultural identity and ensuring its continuity as a living language capable of engaging with the dynamics of modern times. Accordingly, the research questions can be formulated as follows: What is the concept of both language planning and language policy? How can language planning and language policy contribute to preserving and promoting the Arabic language? Among the proposed hypotheses are the following: language planning contributes to the development of Arabic usage; integrating language policy with language planning enhances the effectiveness of efforts to protect the Arabic language. This study aims to analyze the concepts of language policy and language planning from a theoretical perspective, to highlight the complementary relationship between them and their impact on the Arabic language, and to propose practical solutions and recommendations through effective language planning and supportive language policies to address challenges and preserve Arabic. The research adopts the descriptive-analytical method to achieve a precise and comprehensive understanding of the impact of language policy and planning on the current state of the Arabic language, identify existing gaps, and suggest scientific and practical solutions.

2. The Concept of Language Planning and Language Policy

The concepts and interpretations of both language planning and language policy have varied widely. In some cases, the two terms are used interchangeably to refer to the same concept, while in others, they are viewed as complementary elements, each with its own distinct role. Therefore, it is essential to define and contextualize these two terms in order to clarify the differences between them and to understand the nature of the overlap that may occur between them.

2.1 The Concept of Language Planning

The term language planning was not originally common in writings that addressed this type of activity. Perhaps the term language engineering (Miller, 1950) was the first expression used in the literature of this field to refer to the activities carried out by language planners. This term appeared more frequently than language policy, language development, and language organization. At times, the term language policy has been used as a synonym for language planning. Later, Jernudd and Neustupný (1986) proposed the term language management. However, given the relative novelty of this expression, it is still too early to determine whether it has gained widespread acceptance in usage. Today, the term language planning remains the most widely used among all these related terms (Cooper, 2006, pp. 67-68).

The evolution of terminology shows that the term “language planning” was not initially widespread, as terms such as “language engineering” and “language policy” were more commonly used. Over time, however, “language planning” became the most prevalent and, widely used term in this field. According to Haugen, Uriel Weinreich was the first to use the term “language planning” during a seminar at Columbia University in 1957. (Cooper, 2006, p. 68) Yet, it was Einar Haugen himself who introduced the term into the literature of sociolinguistics. Haugen (2006) defined language planning in that article as “all activities related to preparing a writing manual (spelling rules), compiling a grammar book, or producing a dictionary in order to guide writers and speakers of a given language within a linguistically heterogeneous community.” However, Haugen later came to

view these activities as outcomes of language planning—that is, as part of the implementation of policies designed by language planners, rather than language planning itself (Cooper, 2006). We can therefore conclude that Weinreich was the first to use the term language planning, while Haugen was the one who established it within sociolinguistics. Moreover, Haugen’s understanding of the term evolved over time: he eventually considered linguistic activities such as dictionary-making and grammar compilation as results of language planning, not the planning process itself.

2.2 Language Planning: Etymological Definition

In Lisān al-‘Arab it is stated: “plan: Path means a straight line or path in something; its plural is khuṭūṭ. It is said, the pasture (uncultivated land) forms lines on the ground, meaning paths that the rain did not cover entirely (Ibn Manzur, n.d, p. 287).”

In Al-Ṣiḥāḥ fī al-Luġha (The Crown of Language and the Authentic Arabic Dictionary), it is mentioned: “paths — Line: the singular form of lines; “This ritual line” refers to the act of tracing lines with one’s finger in the sand while reciting omens; a line drawn with a pen means to write. A striped garment (a striped garment) is one that has lines.” The linguistic definitions of the term “planning” (planning) thus carry multiple connotations reflecting various concepts (al-Jawhari, 1987, p. 1123).

They encompass meanings such as organization, documentation, and guidance, which make it a versatile term applicable in contexts of language, planning, and writing.

2.3 Language Planning: In Terminological Terms

Language planning is defined as “the necessary means for implementing a language policy and putting these means into practice (Calvet, n.d, p. 220).”

The term language planning refers to all language standardization activities carried out by linguistic academies and committees specialized in language development. It encompasses all types of activities generally known as language development, as well as all proposals related to language reform and standardization.

According to Rubin and Jernudd (1971), language planning is “a deliberate change in language”—that is, a modification in the structure and

sounds of a language, in its functions, or in both—as proposed by organizations established for this specific purpose. Thus, language planning revolves around finding solutions to linguistic problems and involves the formulation and evaluation of alternatives to address language issues, with the goal of providing the most effective and feasible options (Cooper, *Language Planning and Social Change*, 2006, pp. 68-69).

Based on these definitions, language planning can be considered a set of activities undertaken by linguistic academies or specialized institutions authorized to regulate language, with the aim of addressing linguistic problems and finding effective solutions that contribute to the development of the language and its adaptation to the needs of society.

2.4 Stages of Adoption in Language Planning

The adoption of dual planning refers to the degree of acceptance of a planned linguistic term or expression in actual usage. Rogers and Shoemaker (1971) propose five stages for the acceptance and adoption of any language planning initiative: awareness (being informed of the linguistic innovation and recognizing its existence), interest (seeking information about it), evaluation (forming a positive or negative attitude toward it), trial (testing the innovation through use), and finally, decision (either accepting or rejecting it). Rogers (1983) later suggested a slightly different set of stages: awareness of the innovation, persuasion (forming a favorable or unfavorable attitude toward it), decision (adopting or rejecting it), implementation (putting the decision into practice), and confirmation (reinforcing adoption through continued use) (Cooper R. , 2006, p. 122).

It can thus be said that the adoption of language planning follows a gradual process that ensures the acceptance of linguistic terms or changes in daily usage. According to these models, acceptance progresses through several stages: recognizing the linguistic innovation, showing interest and evaluating it, and finally deciding whether to accept or reject it. Actual adoption also requires reinforcing acceptance through continuous use, which helps embed the linguistic innovation within society. This demonstrates that the success of any language planning effort depends on gradual implementation, persuasion, and responsiveness to users' needs to

ensure its sustainability and dissemination.

Robert Cooper suggests several steps for the success and acceptance of language planning, as follows:

Awareness and recognition: The use of a planned linguistic innovation requires awareness and acknowledgment of its existence. For example, before the emergence of the feminist movement, few people recognized the gender bias toward men in language use, as it was considered one of the unquestioned norms of everyday life. However, the feminist movement helped raise awareness of this linguistic bias (Robert L. Cooper, 2006, p. 122).

Evaluation: To benefit from the use of a linguistic innovation, the user must hold a positive attitude toward it, adopting a means–end approach. The attitude of users toward linguistic innovations depends on: The extent to which they believe that learning and using the innovation will help them achieve important goals; The personal significance of those goals related to the innovation.

Competence: The user must be able to use the innovation correctly. Awareness implies the ability to use it appropriately with the right person, in the right situation and context, as indicated by the pragmatic principle of “situation and discourse.”

Usage: While awareness refers to the ability to use the innovation, this final stage refers to the frequency of its use. We can distinguish between absolute and relative usage — that is, how often the innovation is used for a specific purpose and in a given context, and how often it is used compared to other available alternatives. These four steps — awareness, evaluation, competence, and usage — represent successive stages in the acceptance of planned linguistic innovations. However, these stages may also occur simultaneously and spontaneously. Competence may result from usage, and the logical order can sometimes be reversed — for instance, when individuals begin using a new language before fully studying and mastering it for proper use (Cooper., 2006, p. 123).

It can be concluded that the success of language planning and the acceptance of linguistic innovations depend on four interrelated stages: awareness, evaluation, competence, and use. First, no linguistic change can

be adopted without users being aware of it and recognizing its importance. Then comes evaluation, where a positive attitude toward the innovation plays a key role in its acceptance, as it depends on the extent to which individuals believe that adopting it will help them achieve certain goals. Next, users must possess the competence that enables them to use the innovation correctly and appropriately within the given context. Finally, repeated use reinforces and spreads the linguistic innovation, which may occur gradually or even in an unstructured way—individuals might start using a new linguistic form before fully mastering it. This shows that the success of language planning is not necessarily a linear process; rather, its stages may overlap or occur in different sequences depending on the social and cultural context.

2.5 Objectives of Language Planning

The activities and applications of language planning vary according to the nature and purpose of the intended planning. Tollefson (2006) attempted to summarize the goals of language planning into a single overarching objective: to resolve linguistic problems within society. This can indeed be considered a comprehensive and fundamental goal encompassing all language planning activities and applications. According to Gadelii (2006), however, the primary goal of language planning is to facilitate communication within society by working on three levels: the local, regional/national, and international levels. For instance, communication at the local level can be enhanced by promoting the use of the mother tongue in all aspects of life—especially in countries that experienced colonization, where the colonizer’s language became deeply entrenched, particularly in education, even though it is not used locally. At the national level, language planning can be seen in efforts to adopt and implement a widely used language as the official language of communication. At the international level, language planning may involve fostering attention to and engagement with other languages that play a significant role globally (Al-Mahmoud, 2018, p. 18).

In addition to these general goals, several researchers have identified other specific objectives of language planning, which can be summarized as

follows:

Describing the existing linguistic and non-linguistic situation in Arab countries and understanding the prevailing sociolinguistic context in order to identify the factors influencing it and diagnose the obstacles hindering the progress of Arabic and Arabization. Explaining the varying attitudes toward Arabic and Arabization and providing the justifications or counterarguments necessary for the successful generalization of Arabic use and the Arabization process. Predicting the future of Arabic and Arabization and anticipating potential shortcomings, challenges, or successes resulting from the spread and implementation of Arabic. Deriving general principles that serve as foundational truths and constants for the process of Arabic planning and Arabization—principles that can be applied both in the Arab world and in other countries seeking to promote their national languages. Establishing a science of Arabic language policy-making that includes planning for the status of Arabic and Arabization, its modernization and development, the creation of its terminology, and the planning of its teaching and acquisition (Al-Zeboun, 2009, p. 97).

3. The Concept of Language Policy

3.1 Language Policy: Linguistic Definition

In *Lisān al-‘Arab*, it is stated: “*As-siyāsa* is derived from *sāsa*; it is said: he manages (*yasūsu*) livestock when he tends to them and trains them. *As-siyāsa* means managing something in a way that ensures its proper functioning. The ruler *yasūsu* his subjects, and to *sāsa* someone in a matter means to train or guide him toward it.” (Manzur, 1994, pp. 2149-2150).

In *Al-Qāmūs al-Muḥīṭ*, it is mentioned: “A person who is experienced (*mujarrab*) has *sāsa* and *sīsa*—meaning he has disciplined and been disciplined (Al-Firuzabadi, 2005, p. 551).”

From these linguistic definitions, it can be concluded that policy (*as-siyāsa*) refers to management, direction, and reform. It is associated with the regulation and organization of affairs to achieve the common good—whether at the level of individuals or groups—and also encompasses discipline and training to ensure order and stability.

3.2 Language Policy: Terminological Definition

It is defined as “the conscious choices made by an authority to frame

the relationship between language and social life, specifically between language and everyday living (Calvet, *Language Wars and Linguistic Policies*, n.d, p. 220).”

This definition indicates that the authority takes deliberate decisions to organize the relationship between language and society, determining how language is to be used across different aspects of life, thereby ensuring harmony with the social and cultural context. It is also defined as “a decision made by a nation or an institution regarding the language or languages used by its people or community—for example, adopting Modern Standard Arabic as the medium of education, administration, and official communication among members of society (Mahmoud Ismail, 2015).”

In other words, language policy refers to a set of decisions made by a state or institution to regulate the use of languages within a community. These decisions include determining the official language for education, administration, and communication—such as adopting Modern Standard Arabic in official and educational institutions. The purpose of language policy is to guide linguistic use in a way that serves cultural and national identity and promotes effective communication among members of society.

4. The Importance of Language Policy and Language Planning

The importance of language policy and language planning lies in their crucial role and influence on the life of a language at all levels—whether structural, semantic, or dialectal. They also play a key role in organizing relationships among languages in multilingual settings, managing linguistic diversity within a region, and determining the languages used in education and the media (Mahi, Eliga, & Ismail, 2019).

According to Saleh Belaid, language planning represents a cornerstone in all countries, including developed ones, as every sector and ministry operates according to a carefully designed plan based on clear objectives aimed at achieving various goals. He considers language planning one of the most effective modern solutions for addressing linguistic challenges such as the widespread use of dialects, language interference, and multilingualism (Belaid, 2012).

Thus, language policy and language planning are two fundamental elements for maintaining the vitality of languages and organizing their use within societies. They not only influence the structure, meaning, and dialects of a language, but also play a decisive role in managing linguistic diversity, defining the status of different languages, and selecting languages for education and media. Through well-designed language policies, it becomes possible to achieve linguistic balance, enhance effective communication among individuals, and preserve cultural identity.

5. The Difference Between Language Policy and Language Planning

It is often difficult to distinguish between language policy and language planning, as both have become, in modern times, inseparable parts of a single process. Language planning, in its various applications, is now seen as an extension of language policy, or as the mechanism through which the conscious political choices made by an authority—whether governmental or non-governmental—are implemented to guide the linguistic situation. In other words, language policy represents the framework of regulations and measures, while language planning serves as the practical means of translating and executing those regulations in reality (Mahi, Eliga, & Ismail, *Studies in Language Policy and Language Planning*, 2009).

Thus, the two concepts are complementary and interdependent: language policy defines the orientations, rules, and objectives, whereas language planning operationalizes them and brings them into tangible form. Consequently, planning can be viewed as the practical extension of policy, upon which authorities rely to shape the linguistic landscape and achieve desired linguistic goals.

6. The Relationship Between Language Planning and Language Policy

Researchers have long debated the relationship between language planning and language policy, particularly regarding which of them precedes or guides the other. According to Abdullah Al-Buraidi, there exists an organic interconnection between the two concepts — it is rare to find a study on language planning that does not also touch upon language policy. However, a clear distinction can be drawn: language policy is usually reflected in official documents adopted by governments, outlining their

stance on the official language, its rights, privileges, and the measures needed to protect and promote its use in areas such as education, trade, and media (Amara, 2020).

It is evident that both concepts serve the same overarching goal — the development and preservation of language — and are closely interdependent. Language policy precedes language planning in importance, acting as its primary driving force. No planning measures can be implemented without a well-defined policy to guide and shape them. As Louis-Jean Calvet explains, language policy encompasses “all deliberate choices made regarding the relationship between language and social life — particularly between language and national life.” For instance, the decision to arabize higher education represents a language policy choice, while the steps taken to implement this decision constitute language planning (Calvet, *Language Wars and Linguistic Policies*, n.d).

Therefore, language policy consists of decisions made by authorities across various sectors, while language planning follows these directives and operates within the framework set by the policy. Through planning — such as reforming linguistic structures and developing dictionaries — languages and linguistic diversity are preserved. Language planning thus represents the practical means of executing language policy and putting its directives into action.

In conclusion, language policy provides a comprehensive vision for a linguistic situation, while language planning serves as its operational execution within real linguistic contexts. The two are bound by a complementary relationship: language planning is the tangible implementation of language policy (Amara., 2020).

7. Possible Solutions to Confront Challenges, Preserve, and Promote the Arabic Language

The integration and complementarity of language planning and language policy can significantly contribute to addressing linguistic challenges, achieving linguistic development, and keeping pace with the requirements of globalization and technological advancement. Consequently, this helps preserve and promote the Arabic language. This

can be achieved through several key steps, summarized as follows:

- Identifying the Language Subject to Planning Before initiating any language planning process, it is essential to identify the language actually in use. This process requires conducting field studies by language specialists to accurately determine the linguistic reality. In this regard, Saad Al-Qahtani emphasizes that “before starting any language planning process, identifying the actual language in use is a complex issue that requires field studies carried out by linguists to determine it precisely (Al-Qahtani, 2007).”

- Developing and Implementing a Well-Defined Language Policy a well-structured language policy can only be achieved through “full commitment to implementing decisions and legal provisions, moving from theory to practice, and bridging the gap between political decisions and administrative actions to avoid repeated setbacks. To overcome this situation, the following are required: A decisive and firm stance in adopting implementation strategies. A well-devised plan based on gradualism, integration, and comprehensiveness. Swift execution that focuses on finding solutions rather than waiting for resources to become available (Fadhel, 2013, pp. 204-205).”

In other words, a successful language policy cannot be realized without transitioning from the stage of theorizing to actual implementation. This requires strict adherence to the enforcement of decisions and laws, as well as addressing the gap between political decision-making and administrative execution. Achieving this involves adopting a firm attitude toward implementation, designing a gradual and integrated plan, and ensuring timely completion focused on proactive problem-solving.

- The Importance of Evaluation in the Language Planning Process “Evaluation is one of the most important elements and the core of language planning processes. In many cases, evaluation is required even before the planning process begins. Its importance lies in directing planning efforts toward the right path and identifying the areas that need reform, as well as helping planners choose the most effective methods to achieve successful linguistic change or reform (Al-Qahtanin, 2007, p. 23).” Thus, evaluation plays a fundamental role in language planning—not only as a tool for

assessing results after implementation but also as a guide before the process begins.

It helps direct efforts efficiently by identifying weaknesses and areas for improvement. Through evaluation, planners can select the most effective strategies to achieve desired linguistic goals, thereby maximizing the success of language planning. From this, we can conclude that successful language planning cannot be achieved without continuous evaluation, as it helps correct the course, set priorities, and determine the most suitable approaches. Evaluation ensures that the efforts invested yield maximum effectiveness in developing or reforming the linguistic reality.

Enhancing the Linguistic Environment for the Arabic Language Through a Detailed Survey of the Linguistic and Social Reality Enhancing and developing the linguistic environment aims to strengthen the integration and active use of Arabic in all areas of life by “restoring confidence in it as a language, countering bias and underestimation, fostering confidence among its learners, teachers, scholars, and users, supporting the Arabization of education, and encouraging the use of Arabic instead of colloquial dialects or foreign languages (Al-Fassi, 2013, p. 78).”

A thorough survey of the linguistic and social reality helps understand the existing linguistic situation and identify obstacles that hinder the spread and development of the Arabic language. Fawaz Abdul-Haqq Al-Zeboun highlights this by stating: “A detailed description and survey of the prevailing social situation is necessary to identify the influencing factors and diagnose the barriers and challenges that stand in the way of the Arabic language and Arabization (Al-Zeboun., 2009).”

In conclusion, effective development of the Arabic language and Arabization cannot be achieved without an accurate understanding of the social and linguistic context. Therefore, comprehensive description and survey are essential to identify the influencing factors and diagnose obstacles impeding the spread of Arabic, thereby enabling the formulation of effective strategies to address them.

4. CONCLUSION

The study led to several key findings that highlight the decisive role of

effective language planning in strengthening the use of Arabic across various fields, particularly education and media. The results indicate that when language planning is grounded in realistic, research-based approaches, it significantly enhances the efficiency of Arabic usage and broadens its functional domains.

The findings also underscore the necessity of integrating language policy with language planning. The analysis revealed that isolated or fragmented efforts to preserve Arabic tend to yield limited results in the absence of a coherent policy framework. In contrast, contexts that successfully combined clear political vision with practical planning achieved more sustainable and impactful outcomes. This confirms the validity of the second hypothesis: the integration of language policy and planning enhances overall effectiveness and reduces linguistic instability.

Furthermore, the study demonstrated the complementary nature of the two concepts. Language policy provides direction and strategic orientation, whereas language planning translates these orientations into actionable programs. Without this alignment, policies remain unimplemented, and plans lack the institutional support needed for tangible impact.

The results highlight the importance of adopting a unified and strategic approach that incorporates community engagement, modernization of linguistic tools, and the use of contemporary technologies. While most of the proposed hypotheses were supported by the data, certain aspects still require deeper examination in future research.

The study concludes by affirming that linguistic issues are deeply tied to cultural and national identity. Strengthening the status of Arabic is not only a linguistic necessity but also a cultural responsibility. Its vitality depends on sustained efforts by individuals, institutions, and policymakers to preserve the language and promote its functional role in society. Ensuring the development and sustainability of Arabic requires a comprehensive vision that harmonizes policy and planning, supported by cooperation between governments, academic institutions, and civil society. Through coordinated strategies and effective implementation, it is possible to enhance the global presence of Arabic and enable it to keep pace with modern scientific and technological advancements.

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