Inclusion and transparency as sources of normativity in language policy

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In my paper, I will explore the theoretical background to critical language policy studies, and show how normative concepts such as transparency and inclusion can be applied to a study of language policy. In my approach, I combine a strong social transformative agenda based on these concepts with a view of policy as a complex and dynamic socio-cultural phenomenon, involving (re)conceptualisation and deliberation by actors at different levels of society. I show how this view of language policy can support both a critique of structural hegemony and at the same time pay attention to the potential of grass-roots agencies, and how this combination can support a critical approach to language policy, focussing on enhancing linguistic democracy and justice.

In my paper, I will report on my ongoing research about Slovenian language policy, focussing on what different actors and groups become involved in formulating a government language policy programme. I will comment on the results of a detailed textual analysis (drawing on the discourse-historical approach in critical discourse analysis) showing what changes have occurred in the various versions of a Slovene language policy document drafted during 2012 and 2013. In conjunction with this, I analyse articles from various media outlets to uncover how the policy process was made visible to the public. I combine these two aspects into an overview of the trajectory of the policy document as it passed through time and space, showing when its various versions were made public, how this was covered in the media, what the reactions to them were, and how they contributed to the reshaping of the text.

Keywords: Language policy, Critical discourse analysis.