

Monitoring language policy: Policy instruments and indicators

NPLD-Coppieters Campus “Planning and Evaluation of Language Policies”

13-14 September 2018

Udine

Dr. Michele Gazzola

Università della Svizzera italiana (USI), Lugano -



Table of contents

1. Language policy as a public policy
2. The policy cycle
3. Methods of operation and policy instruments
4. Indicators

1 Language Policy as a Public Policy

1. Language policy as a public policy

- ▶ Language policy can be viewed (and therefore analysed and evaluated) as a form of **public policy**.
- ▶ A public policy can be defined as *“A series of intentionally coherent decisions or activities taken or carried out by different public—and sometimes private actors—, whose resources, institutional links and interests vary, with a view to **resolving in a targeted manner a problem that is politically defined as collective in nature**”* (Knoepfel *et al.* 2001: 29).

1 Examples of language issues and their treatment through policy

- ▶ LPP → need for language planning to solve “language issues” such as
 1. Managing official languages in a multilingual state (*issue*: providing public services in several languages)
 2. Choosing a set of official and working languages in an international organisation (*issue* : managing communication between people speaking different languages)
 3. Increasing competence in foreign languages in a given country (*issue* : lack of skills in foreign languages)
 4. Supporting a minority language (*issue* : the minority language is threatened)
 5. Language training for adult migrants and refugees (*issue* : the lack of adequate skills in the local dominant language hampers social and economic inclusion)

1. A definition of language policy

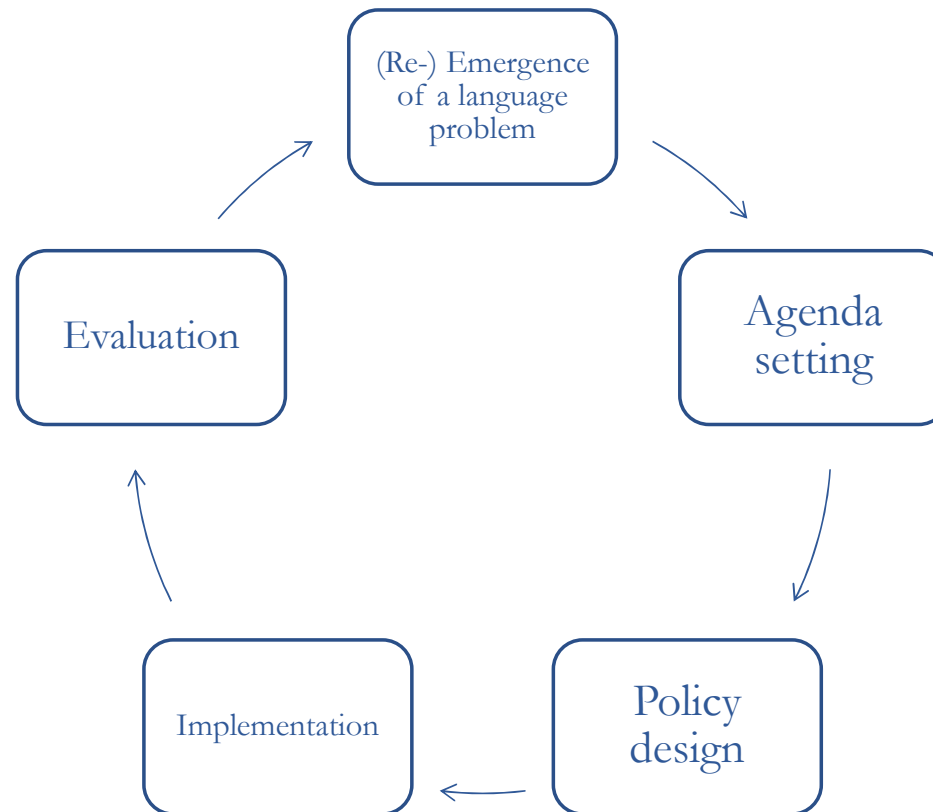
- ▶ Language policy as a form of **public policy in the area of language**.
- ▶ Public policies are the
 - ▶ “results made by **governments** to alter aspects of their own or social behaviour in order to carry out some end or purpose” (Howlett 2011: 19).
- ▶ Language policy and planning (LPP): Set of measures -- usually undertaken by the State or its surrogates -- to influence, explicitly or implicitly, the *corpus*, *status*, and the *acquisition* of a language.
- ▶ There is no zero option in language policy → A deliberate decision to **do nothing** (e.g. avoiding using a minority language for official purposes) and simply maintain the *status quo* is a form of public policy (Howlett, Ramesh and Perl 2009).

1 Why is language policy special? Substantive vs institutional public policy

- ▶ A **substantive public policy** aim at solving a problem politically defined as collective in nature.
- ▶ An **institutional public policy** regards the transformation of state institutions. e.g. a change in the structure of public offices or a re-organisation of human resources. Institutional public policies aim at creating the conditions for the accomplishment of the tasks of the state, including the implementation of substantive policies.
- ▶ This distinction is not always straightforward in language policy.
 - ▶ While teaching a foreign languages at school to improve pupils skills in that language is a clear example of substantive language policy,
 - ▶ the choice of a set of official and working languages and the constant implementation of multilingualism in an organisation such as the Irish or the Welsh government, the European Union or the Swiss federal public service has both substantive and institutional elements.
- ▶ The government and public administration can be at the same time the subject and the target of language policy

2 The Policy Cycle

2 The policy cycle



2. Phase 1: Emergence (or re-emergence) of awareness of a *public* language issue to be solved

1. Emergence and awareness of a **public problem** to be solved (Public debate in the broad sense of the term).
2. In this phase, the public debate involves different private actors: media, associations, employers, individuals, gurus, etc.
3. Public debate on a question that is perceived by *someone* as problematic, for example:
 - ▶ Lack of adequate skills in foreign languages in the population
 - ▶ Decrease in the number of speakers of a minority language
 - ▶ Trend towards monolingualism in an international organisation (e.g. the United Nations)
 - ▶ The cost of language services (translation and interpreting) in a multilingual country

This stage is preparatory to language policy and it is *not* part of language policy proper

2 Phase 2: Agenda setting

1. A public problem cannot be defined as such if it is not part of the *political* agenda
2. Political parties and public organisations start to take part in the debate and to propose **solutions**
3. The agenda-setting process includes media coverage, internal and external mobilisation of political and para-political actors

2 Phase 3: Policy design (programming)

1. Set of legal acts and regulatory means that the public authority considers to be necessary to implement the language policy (e.g. legal basis).
2. During this phase the policy-maker:
 1. Sets the objectives to solve the problem (goals)
 2. May propose alternative solutions to tackle the problem
 3. Identifies the relevant actors (target group, stakeholders)
 4. Defines the “programme theory”
 5. Identifies the resources to mobilise (inputs)
 6. Defines the methods of operation
 7. Chooses the policy instruments
 8. Sets the relevant indicators for monitoring and evaluation

2 Phase 4: Implementation

Implementation is the execution of the policy by the public authorities

1. Implementation is the set of processes which, after programming, are aimed at achieving the objectives of the language policy.
2. Action plans are defined (Action plan= instrument for steering and managing language policy).
3. Action plans concretely indicate *who* should do *what* and *how*.
4. Implementation produces outputs and outcomes.
5. Collection of data to ***monitor*** the implementation.

2 Phase 5: Evaluation

1. On the basis of data collected during monitoring (and possibly other external sources), evaluation provides a final **judgment** on the policy on the basis of some relevant criteria (e.g. efficiency, equity).
2. Evaluation provides feedback to the public debate

2 Examples: Canada

Canada's Policy on official languages:

6.1 Official Languages Governance

Taking into consideration their institution's size and mandate, deputy heads are responsible for the following:

[...]

6.1.4 (Performance Evaluations) Ensuring that compliance with this policy and associated directives and standards is included in annual performance appraisals and influences appraisal ratings in institutions for which the Treasury Board is the employer.

Source: <https://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/pol/doc-eng.aspx?id=26160>



2 Examples: Switzerland

Ordinance on the National Languages and Understanding between the Linguistic Communities (Languages Ordinance, LangO) of 4 June 2010 (Status as of 1 October 2014)

▶ Art. 8b Federal delegate for plurilingualism

- ▶ 1 The Federal Council shall appoint a delegate for plurilingualism (the Federal Delegate for Plurilingualism), who will be affiliated to the Federal Department of Finance.
- ▶ 2 The tasks of the Federal Delegate for Plurilingualism include:
 - ▶ a. supporting the Federal Council in setting the strategic objectives and **monitoring** their implementation;
 - ▶ b. coordinating and **evaluating** the implementation of the strategic objectives by the departments and the Federal Chancellery;

[...]

▶ Art. 8d Monitoring and evaluation

▶ [...]

- ▶ 4 The Federal Delegate for Plurilingualism shall prepare an **evaluation report** for the attention of the Federal Council every four years based on the reports of the departments and Federal Chancellery. The Delegate shall also make recommendations in the evaluation report on the thrust of plurilingualism policy in the future.

<https://www.admin.ch/opc/en/classified-compilation/20101351/index.html>

2 Examples: Italy, Friuli-Venezia Giulia

Regional Law 18/12/2007 , n. 29 (Norms for the protection and the promotion of the Friulan language)

Art. 25 (General Language Policy Plan- GLPP)

3. The GLPP also establishes the methods for evaluating the initiatives carried out and the instruments for verifying the results achieved by each subject.

Art. 29 (Evaluation)

3. Every five years, before the General Plan of Language Policy for the next five years is presented to the competent Council Commission, the Council shall present the Council with a report on the results obtained in terms of extending the use of the Friulian language.[...]



3 Policy Design and Implementation

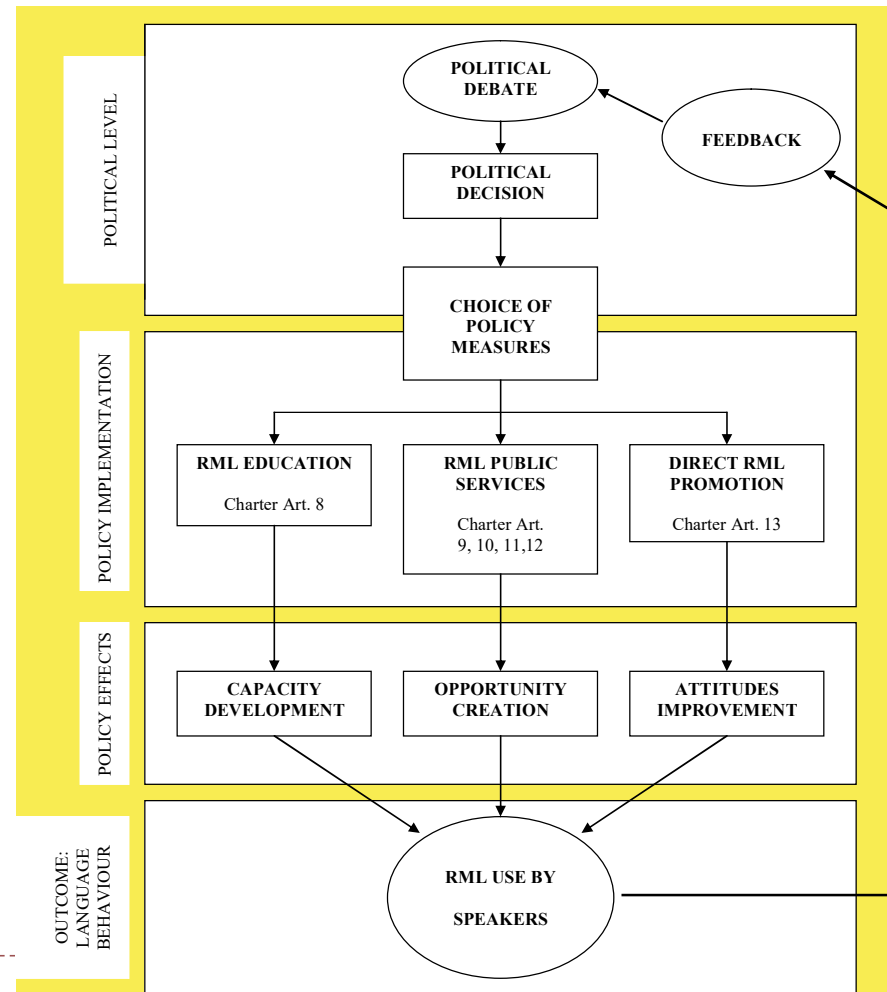
Methods of operation and policy instruments

3. The “Programme theory”

1. The programme theory of a policy is defined as “the logic that connects its activities to the intended outcomes, and the rationale for why it does what it does” (Rossi et al. 2004: 44).
2. The programme theory is a theory about change. It spells out the **cause-and-effect relationships** between the policy measures adopted (or to be adopted) and the change aimed at (→influencing more or less directly the conditions that shape people’s patterns of language learning and language use).
3. The programme theory explains the **internal logic** of a policy, that is, the plan linking the programme’s elements together.
4. It corresponds to the explicit theory of how the programme plans to achieve the expected results. The **assumptions** about resources and activities and how they will lead to expected results are identified, explained and justified
5. The programme theory can be explicit (overt language policies) or implicit (covert language policies). If documents are not available it has to be reconstructed.
6. Fully compatible with individuals’ agency



Example: The COD Model



Grin (2003)

Application: The General Language Policy Plan (GLPP) of the Region Friuli Venezia Giulia (Bollettino Ufficiale (BUR), 29 07 2015)

- ▶ The GLPP provides for the development of an evaluation and control system (p. 33 of the BUR).

Art. 25 (General Language Policy Plan- GLPP)

3. The GLPP also establishes the methods for evaluating the initiatives carried out and the instruments for verifying the results achieved by each subject.

Art. 29 (Evaluation)

3. Every five years, before the General Language Policy Plan for the next five years is presented to the competent Commission, the local Government shall present the Council with a report on the results obtained in terms of extending the use of the Friulian language.[...]

- ▶ Page 23, "there is a lack of constant monitoring and evaluation of the results achieved and the territorial impact".
- ▶ Precise relations between the GLPP and the Special Language Policy Plans (SLPP) that the Region, the Local Authorities and the Public Service must adopt to implement the GLPP (p. 32).

Critical points: "Regional Conference of verification and proposal on the implementation of the regional law 29/2007" (Rules for the protection, enhancement and promotion of the Friulian language), Udine 1-2 December 2017

Report of the Working Group 'Language Planning':

- ▶ Implementation and monitor issues: "the GLPP has not been known or promoted, therefore no local authority or public service concessionaire, [...], has so far had its own Special Language Policy Plan (SLPP)". (p. 4)
- ▶ Planning and organisation issues: while financial resources "have also increased slightly over the last 5 years", there is a lack of "a strategic vision and use of human resources" (p. 5)

3 Methods of operation

1. Direct regulation based on prohibitions, obligations, the granting of rights and the application of sanctions
2. Incentives or dissuasive financial means to indirectly modify the behavior of the members of the target group
3. Persuasion: application of strategies to convince the actors concerned to modify their behaviour
4. Direct supply of goods and services

Knoepfel et al. (2015)



3 Policy instruments (PI)

1. Policy instruments are

“the means by which governments attempt to induce individuals and groups to make decisions and take actions compatible with public policies” (Schneider and Ingram 1990: 527, quoted in Landry and Varone 2005: 108).

2. A distinction is made between

1. Organisational PI
2. Information-based PI
3. Authoritative PI
4. Financial PI

3 Language policy instruments: A tentative typology

1. **Organisational PI**

- ▶ **Substantive:** Bilingual front offices, direct provision of language courses
- ▶ **Procedural:** Network management tools to create and restructuring policy community. E.g. Executive coordination agencies such as the Regional Agency for the Friulan Language in Italy

2. **Information-based PI**

- ▶ **Substantive:** Information campaigns, “Label für die Mehrsprachigkeit” in Switzerland, Eurobarometer survey
- ▶ **Procedural:** Using information resource to alter policy-making process (e.g. facilitating or discouraging access to documents and information). E.g. Censorship of specific documents in a minority language

3. **Financial PI**

- ▶ **Substantive:** Subsidizing publications in a minority language, “the bilingualism bonus” in Canada, in Slovenia, and in the Ladin-speaking area in Italy
- ▶ **Procedural:** Subsidizing language activist groups and think tanks

4. **Authoritative PI**

- ▶ **Substantive:** Direct language regulations of labels and commercial signs
- ▶ **Procedural:** Instruments that provide preferential treatment access to certain actors in the policy process. E.g. Advisory councils (language academies) and consensus conferences (European Civil Society Platform for Multilingualism)

3 Example: the Swiss “plurilingualism policy”

▶ Legal basis

1. Federal Law on the National Languages and Understanding between the Linguistic Communities (LLC) of 5 October 2007
2. [Ordinance on the National Languages and Understanding between the Linguistic Communities](#) (Languages Ordinance, LangO) of 4 June 2010 (Status as of 1 October 2014)

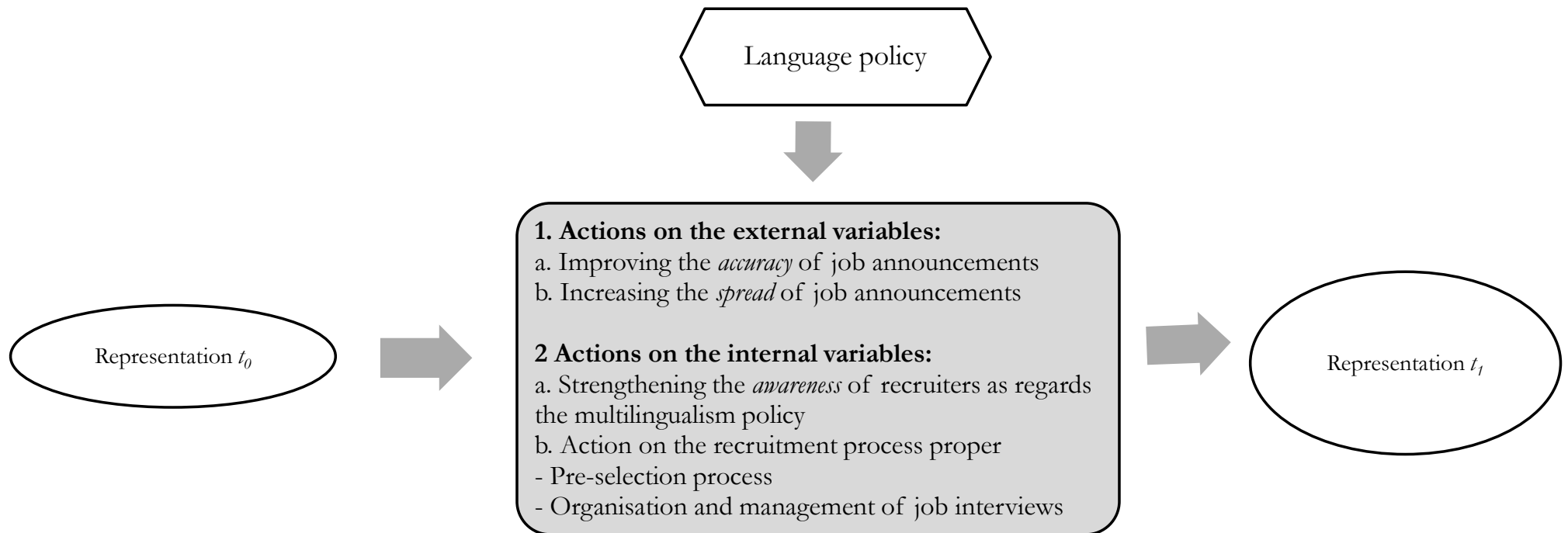
▶ Art. 7 and Art. 8 LangO: Goals (among other things)

1. To ensure a more balanced representation of the four linguistic communities in the federal administration: German (68,5-70,5%), French (21,5-23,5%), Italian (6,5-8,5%), Romansh (0,5-1,0%).
2. To improve the linguistic skills of federal personnel, thus promoting multilingual communication (based on “receptive multilingualism”)

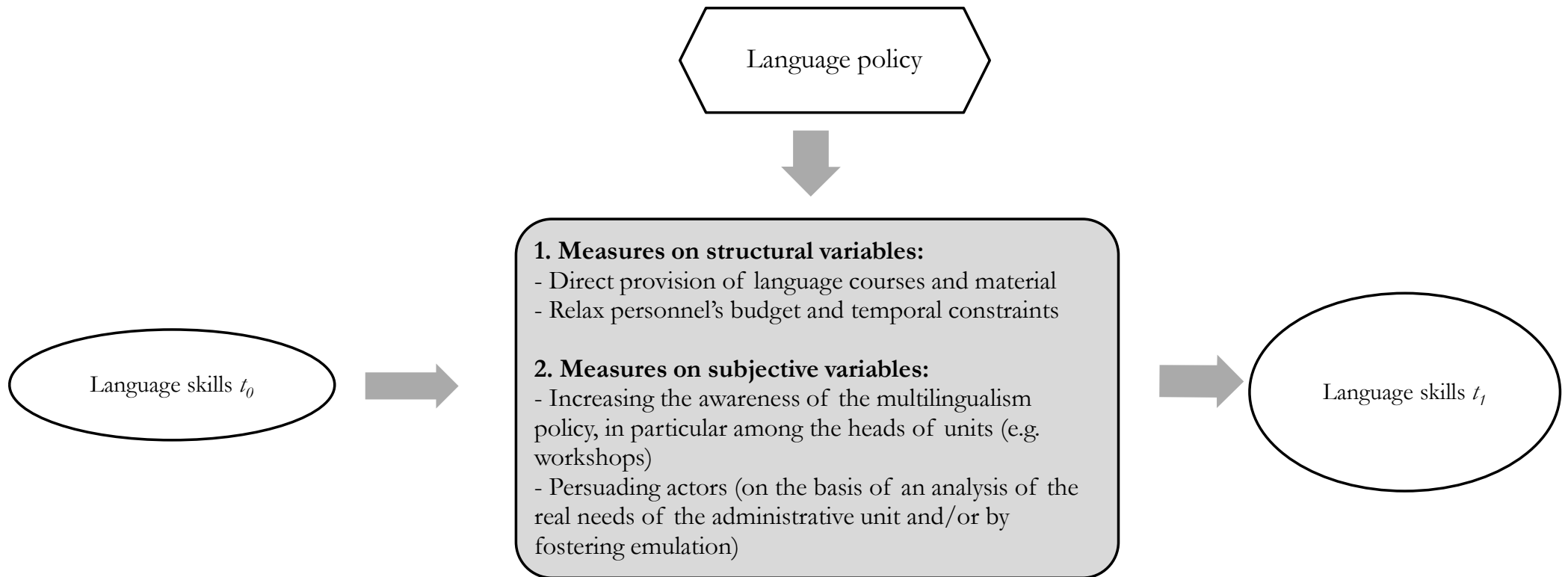
▶ Methods of operation allowed

1. Persuasion: application of strategies to convince the actors concerned to modify their behaviour
2. Direct supply of goods and services

Representation of linguistic communities in the federal administration: The importance of the recruitment process



Language skills of federal personnel: Policy instruments

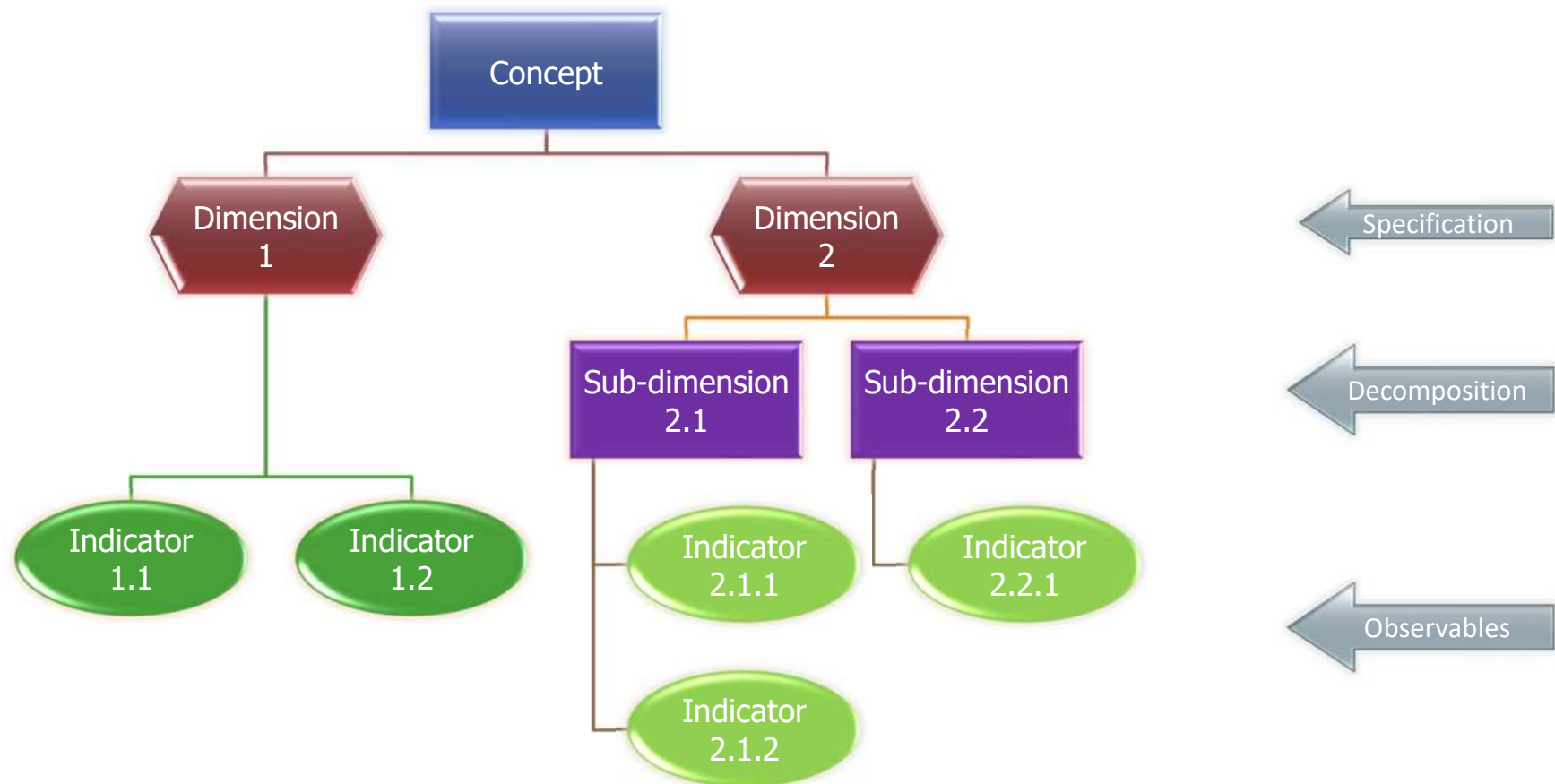


4 Indicators

4 Indicators

1. Criteria can be operationalised through indicators
2. An indicator can be defined as (European Commission, 2008: 111)
 - the measurement of an **objective** to be met,
 - a **resource** mobilised (input),
 - an **effect** obtained (outputs, outcomes),
 - a **gauge of quality**,
 - a **context** variable (*context* VS *policy* indicators).
3. Indicators are used at *all stages* of the policy cycle.
4. *Indicators make sense with respect to evaluation criteria adopted.* An indicator produces **quantified information** with a view to helping actors concerned with public interventions to **communicate, negotiate or make decisions** .
5. The set of indicators used in evaluation constitute the **indicator system**.

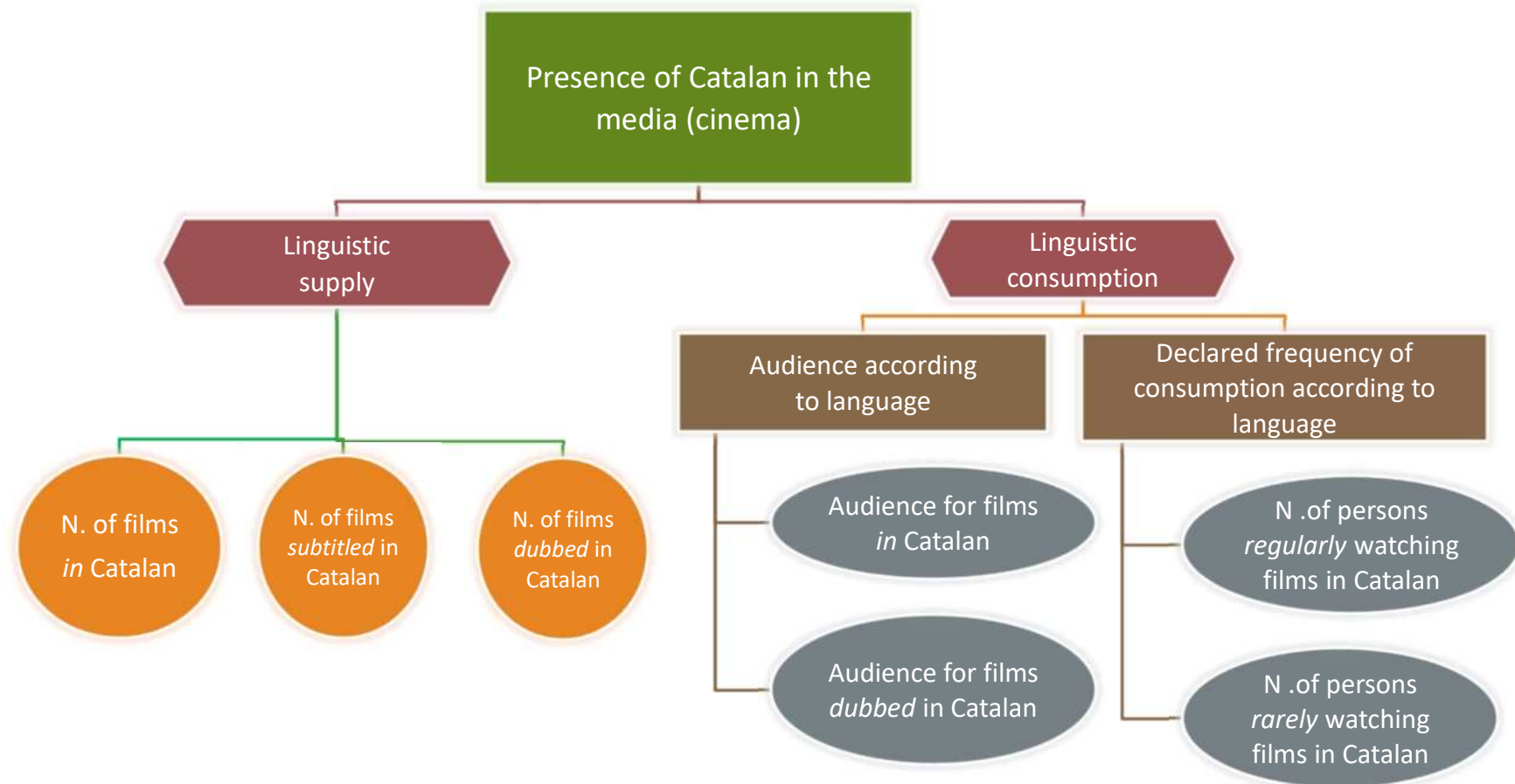
4 Designing indicators: the deductive approach (Lazarsfeld, 1958)



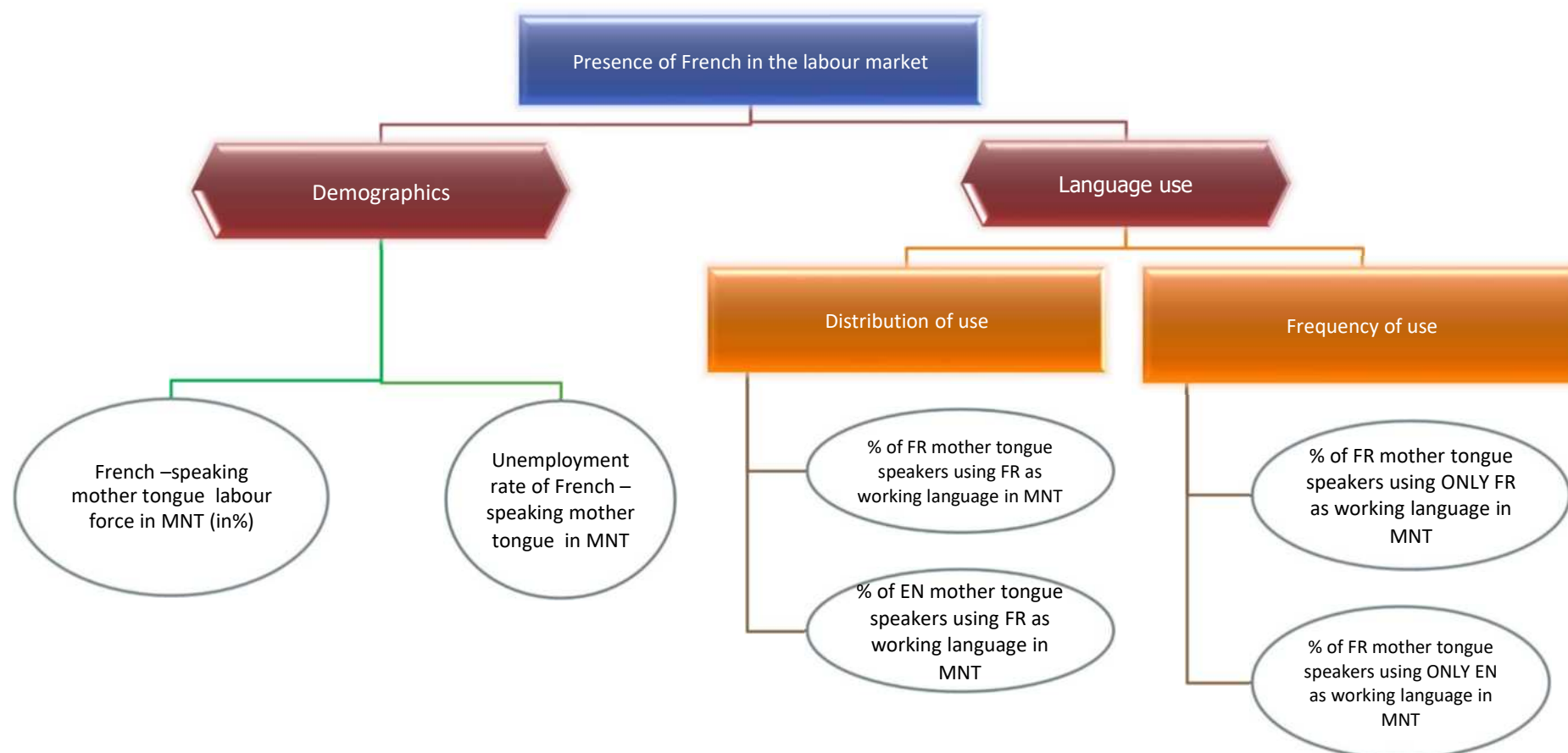
4 Some examples of sources of linguistic indicators

1. The **Office québécois de la langue française** (OQLF — Quebec Board of the French language): vitality of languages in Quebec, indicators related to the use of languages in different domains.
2. The **Hizkuntza Politikarako Sailburuordetza** (“The Sub-ministry for Language Policy” of the Basque Government) : *Euskal Herriko Hizkuntza-adierazleen Sistema*—EAS (“System of linguistic indicators of Euskal Herria”).
3. The **Generalitat de Catalunya** (“Government of Catalonia”) : *Sistema d’Indicadors Lingüístics a Catalunya*—SIL— (“Catalan system of linguistic indicators”).
4. The “DYLAN” indicators (<http://www.unige.ch/traduction-interpretation/recherches/groupe/elf/DYLAN-indicators.html>)
5. The **Osservatorio Linguistico della Svizzera Italiana** (“Linguistic Observatory of Italian-speaking Switzerland”) has recently developed a new list of indicators to assess the vitality of Italian in Switzerland (Moretti et al. 2011).

4 Catalan in the media (cinema)



4 French in the labour market in Montréal



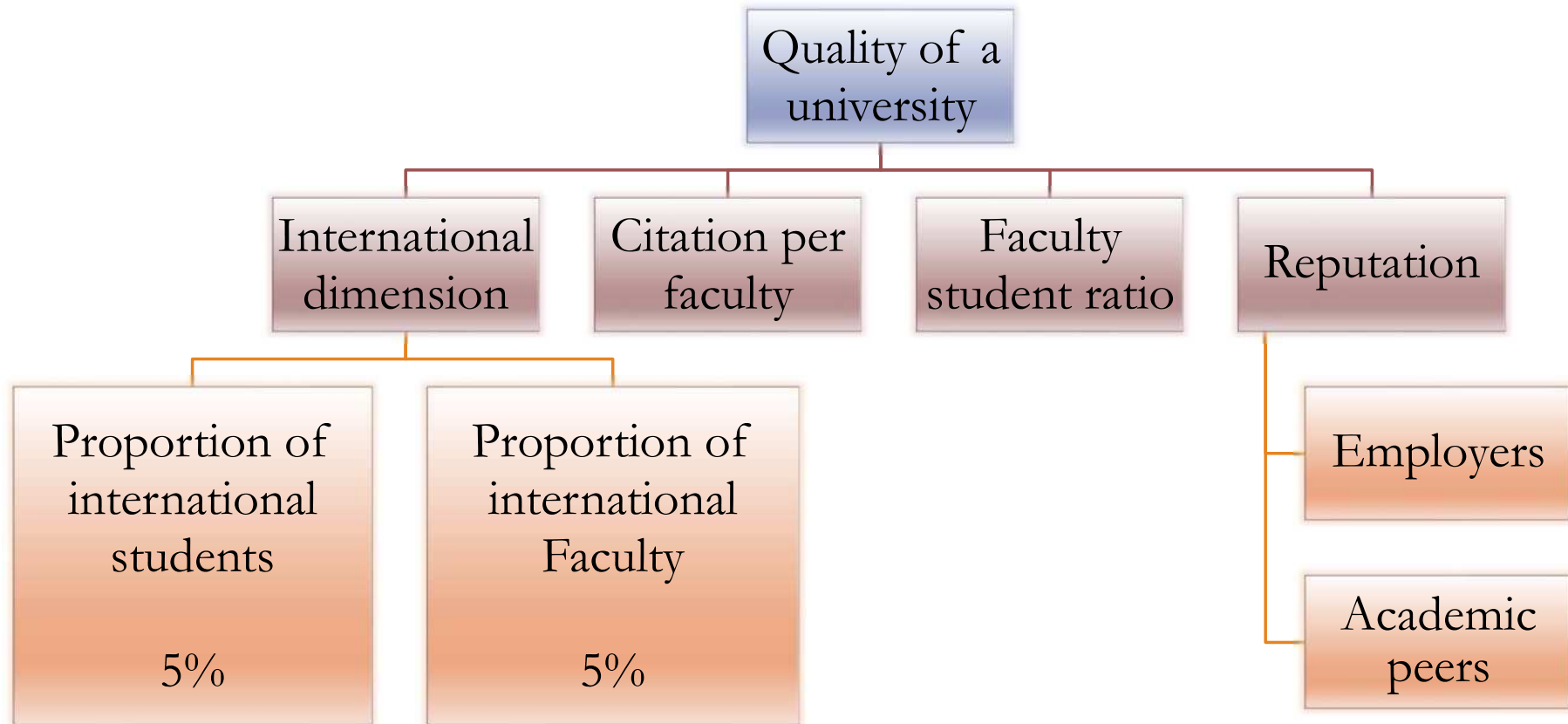
4 The role of effectiveness indicators in language policy evaluation

- ▶ The function of indicators is to “indicate” the extent to which, in a particular context, a policy is effective.
- ▶ Rationale for indicators is *not* to “measure” or “quantify” policies, nor to assess whether a specific language policy is efficient *per se*.
- ▶ Comparative approach: assessing how they change if we move towards a more multilingual (respectively, less multilingual) policy.

4 On the “neutrality” of indicators

- ▶ In some cases and perhaps in all cases indicators are **not neutral tools** used for representing a reality which exists independently from the indicators themselves.
- ▶ The use of indicators for evaluation can **modify reality**, since they can have a direct impact on actors’ behaviour, including **language choices**.
- ▶ Agents may do something that they **would not have done** otherwise to cause a change in the value of an indicator towards a desired direction.
- ▶ In some cases the change in actors’ behaviour is precisely the **goal** of the policy maker, and indicators can provide an appropriate **incentive** for actors. However, the use of indicators can also have **adverse effects** (working for the indicators rather than for the result).
- ▶ Indicators can be “**opinions embedded in formulas**”

4 QS World University Rankings



4 Some of the most important qualities of a ‘good’ indicator

1. **Validity.** An indicator should avoid ambiguities, and therefore the correspondence should be as *clear* as possible a between the indicator and the object (or the concept) it is deemed to reflect (e.g. an outcome).
2. **Reliability** which refers to the fact that if two different people under identical conditions take the same measurement, the result, within a certain margin of error, should be an identical indicator value.
3. **Intelligibility.** A good indicator has to be understood by everyone involved in the policy.
4. **Comparability.** An indicator is useful if it allows comparisons among different measures of policy and among policies.
5. **Power.** that is, its capacity of distinguishing the various aspects of a phenomenon (e.g. distinguish between the effects of short term and long term training).



4 Attributes of a 'good' indicator system

1. **Coverage:** the indicators selected should cover a sufficiently large proportion of the policy measures.
2. **Balance:** the system should consist of a good balance between indicators in the different categories.
3. **Selectivity:** the system of indicators should be simple (not too many indicators).
4. **Relevance:** the indicators are developed primarily for those measures or themes that have significant implications in terms of decision-making.



4 Typologies of indicators

- Input indicators
 - Output indicator (where necessary)
 - Outcome indicators
- }
- In relation to the *phases* of a policy
-
- Effectiveness indicators
(can be ~ outcome indicator)
 - Efficiency indicators (derived indicator)
 - Indicators for monitoring distributive effects
(fairness indicators)
- }
- In relation to *evaluation* criteria
-
- ❖ Policy indicators
 - ❖ Context indicators ('parameters')
- }
- In relation to the *scope* of a information

NB: Distinctions are relevant with respect to the goal of the analysis. The same indicator IND_j can be at the same time a policy indicator, an outcome indicator and an effectiveness indicator. But IND_j is a policy indicator *with respect* to context indicators, an outcome indicator *with respect* to input indicators, etc.

4 Implications for policy work

- ▶ Design of indicators is an interdisciplinary endeavour in which sociolinguistics and applied linguistics play a central role.
- ▶ Language policy evaluation fully compatible with symbolic dimensions of languages (why≠how)
- ▶ Language policy evaluation is *partial, comparative* and its aim is to assess *incremental* improvements rather than definitive solutions.
- ▶ Application is context-dependent

“Policy problems rarely have perfect solutions, but some policies are better than others. A primary task for the policy analyst is to identify those policies that have the best prospects for improving social conditions, as measured in terms of specific goals and criteria”

(Weimer and Vining 2005: 209)

Grazie della vostra attenzione – Thank you for your attention

References

Gazzola, Michele (2014) *The evaluation of language regimes*, Amsterdam-Boston: John Benjamins.

Gazzola, Michele & François Grin (2017) “Comparative language policy and evaluation: Concepts, indicators and implications for translation policy”, in Reine Meylaerts and Gabriel González Nuñez (dir.), *Translation and Public Policy: Interdisciplinary Perspectives and Case Studies*. London: Routledge.

Wickström, Bengt-Arne, Torsten Templin, and Michele Gazzola (2018). "An economics approach to language policy and linguistic justice", in Michele Gazzola, Bengt-Arne Wickström and Torsten Templin (eds.) *Language Policy and Linguistic Justice: Economic, Philosophical and Sociolinguistic Approaches*, New York/Berlin: Springer.

Contacts

❖ E-mail: michele@michelegazzola.com

❖ Website: www.michelegazzola.com