Regional Language Network: a Language Planning Model?

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Abstract. Language planning has been a major field of state and regional intervention of New Public Management in the United Kingdom, with a move towards taking subsidies off university language teaching to allocate it onto training at regional level. The Regional Languages Network (RLN) was created in England after 2002 to provide for responses to concrete corporate language needs. This paper aims at describing the working of RLN as a network and as series of autonomous members of the network, elaborating on Spolsky’s language management theory (2009). It is argued that RLN is a language planning consultancy which not only solves stakeholders’ language issues, as language agencies and services do, but also allows businesses to meet challenges. RLN also deals with projects by bringing solutions to problems or elaborating on hypotheses. It also has a number of additional functions, among which language planning, managing projects and brokering, which consists in visiting companies to explain what financial support is available and through what schemes language services can be funded. Overall, RLN appears to implement an original language planning model, occupying a niche in language planning.

Keywords: language planning, multilingualism, language training, local language management, offshore English, European language projects.