

WORLD YEARBOOK  
OF EDUCATION 2003

LANGUAGE  

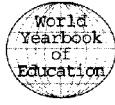
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EDUCATION

EDITED BY  
JILL BOURNE & EUAN REID

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# Contents

<i>List of contributors</i>	vi
<i>Series editors' foreword</i>	ix
<i>Preface</i>	x
<b>PART I KEY ISSUES</b>	
1. Bilingual education <i>Jim Cummins</i>	3
2. Remedial or radical? Second language support for curriculum learning <i>Jill Bourne</i>	21
3. Mother tongue and mother tongue education <i>Sjaak Kroon</i>	35
4. The expansion of sign language education <i>Carol A Padden</i>	49
5. Foreign language education in context <i>Michael Byram</i>	63
6. Standard language education in transition <i>Sigmund Ongstad</i>	79
7. Initial literacy: extending the horizon <i>Frances Christie</i>	93
8. Adult literacy <i>Mike Baynham</i>	113
<b>PART II LANGUAGE EDUCATION IN POLICY AND PRACTICE: REGIONAL AND NATIONAL CASE STUDIES</b>	
9. Language education in Japan: the multicultural challenge <i>John C Maher and Akira Nakayama</i>	131

- |     |   |     |
|-----|---|-----|
| 10. | Language education in the conflicted United States<br><i>Carlos J Ovando and Terrence G Wiley</i>                     | 145 |
| 11. | 'Modern foreign languages' across the United Kingdom: combating 'a climate of negativity'<br><i>Joanna McPake</i>     | 161 |
| 12. | Language education in Australia: Italian and Japanese as symbols of cultural policy<br><i>Joseph Lo Bianco</i>        | 175 |
| 13. | The languages of Spain and Spanish language education<br><i>Clare Mar-Molinero</i>                                    | 193 |
| 14. | Language education in Russia<br><i>Georgii Khruslov</i>   | 207 |
| 15. | Language education and 'nation building' in multilingual Malaysia<br><i>Maya Khemlani David and Subra Govindasamy</i> | 219 |
| 16. | Linguistic complexity and the Three Language Formula': language education in India<br><i>Amitav Choudhry</i>          | 231 |
| 17. | Language education in Brazil: a focus on raising attainment for all<br><i>Luiz Paulo Moita-Lopes</i>                  | 245 |

### PART III CITY CASE STUDIES

- |     |                                      |     |
|-----|--------------------------------------|-----|
| 18. | Hamburg<br><i>Ingrid Gogolin</i>     | 259 |
| 19. | Singapore<br><i>Anne Pakir</i>       | 273 |
| 20. | Cape Town<br><i>Peter Plüddemann</i> | 287 |
|     | <i>Index</i>                         | 303 |

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## Series editors' foreword

The issues raised by the role of language in education are some of the most important and contentious ones faced by education systems across the globe. Thus we were delighted when Jill Bourne and Euan Reid, two experts in this field, agreed to edit this *World Yearbook of Education*.

Our expectations have been fulfilled. We believe that this *Yearbook* is an excellent overview of the range of educational issues raised by language in education. More, the detailed case studies show how these issues are resolved, or not, in practice. Perhaps most significantly, this book shows how the role of language in education is deeply embedded in more general debates about the nature of nationhood in an increasingly globalizing world. The issues may shift and change, as will our understanding and practice, but the fact remains that the role of language in education is a critical one. States and education systems that fail to face up to these issues do so at their peril.

Accordingly, we feel that this *Yearbook* makes a valuable contribution to this key debate and a thought-provoking and challenging one at that.

*David Coulby and Crispin Jones*  
*December 2002*

## Preface

What can we expect from a *World Yearbook* with the special theme of 'Language Education' published in 2003? Our view is that what a series like this can do best is to offer a range of international perspectives on familiar problems of common concern in most parts of the world. We invited some of the most interesting people we knew from a variety of different countries, the most stimulating thinkers and writers in the various sub-fields within language education, to offer in condensed form discussion of key themes that preoccupy education ministries, researchers, teacher educators and practitioners everywhere. Our hope is that readers will find new insights, evidence and ideas that will help them find new solutions to age-old problems.

The key contextual factors in the early 21st century seem to us to be increasing globalization and the increasing mobility of populations. Every sector of language education and every education system in every part of the world is concerned in some way to balance two central elements. On the one hand, there is a perceived need to maintain—or develop for the first time—national, cultural and linguistic cohesion. This leads to a focus on what is often called 'the mother tongue', although it frequently turns out on closer inspection to be more accurately described as a 'standard national language'. On the other hand, many systems today are also acknowledging, and in the best cases actually making positive use of, the linguistic diversity to be found in every country and region. Minority languages of various kinds are finding a place in schools, as well as in public life, and in the most ambitious cases are being given a central role in bilingual, even occasionally multilingual, schooling. However, there is still a nervousness about the dangers of national disintegration should 'other languages' be given too high a status. This is easier to understand in postcolonial situations where a sense of nationhood is less secure, but it is also evident in well-established 'old countries', where it is less easily explicable. Altogether then, the many tensions and dilemmas arising from the contradictions between the desire for uniformity and the pressures for diversity—Bakhtin's 'centrifugal' and 'centripetal' forces—are at the heart of much of the discussion in the papers that follow.

There is also increasing awareness in many places of the role of language in maintaining unequal power relationships between different sectors of national populations, in encouraging participation and inclusion, or in challenging the status quo more radically. Many of the contributions that we offer here are also preoccupied by these interrelated themes. Other important contextual factors are the more general, and sometimes radical, changes in many education systems, with their own special impact on language education.

Against this background, we asked all the contributors to [Part I](#) of the volume to outline and provide commentary on what they regard as the key contemporary issues in relation to their chapter title, each reflecting on their own specialist area in the field of language education. Then, in [Part II](#), we sought contributions that focus on the particular national implications of attempts to formulate policy and establish practice in language education. All the contributors have a close knowledge of and strong commitment to the development of enlightened language education in their regions. They were given an open brief, allowing each to provide an intuitive response to those concerns they themselves identify as currently significant in their own location. Each has selected a few overall themes around which the dilemmas and potentials of the various forms of language in education can be discussed, with reference to the cultural values and beliefs in which they are embedded. Thus there are only background treatments of the structural features of national education systems and the different provisions for different languages and language groups available within them, although the chapters are well referenced for those who wish to learn more about particular contexts.

In the light of a number of the issues raised in [Part I](#) of the book, we have organized the chapters in [Part II](#) in the following way. We start with an examination of some strong nation-states where the hegemonic dominance of one language has become naturalized and thus often unexamined. [Chapter 9](#), on Japan, outlines the decline of the hegemony of Japanese in the face of globalization and the need for wider international contacts and understanding. Japan was once seen as perhaps the most socially homogeneous nation in the world, but the chapter reveals the dawning there of a new awareness of social and linguistic diversity, alongside the effects of a ‘modernizing’ school system. [Chapters 10 and 11](#) pick up the theme of hegemony, examining the struggles to define language education policy within two English-dominant nations. [Chapter 10](#), on the United States, draws out the implications of non-standard dialects of English within education, as well as of the nation’s existing linguistic diversity for language policy and provision. With [Chapter 11](#), on the United Kingdom, it illustrates the struggle to motivate learners and to resource the teaching of other languages in the context of the global spread of English and its current status as an international language. In contrast, [Chapter 12](#) examines the way in

which leadership in language education policy development has enabled Australians to explore notions of multiculturalism and the possibilities of new forms of national identity, despite hegemonic pressures.

Chapters 13 to 16 examine the role of language education in ‘nation building’, first in Spain and Russia as they respond to political and social reforms, then in post-colonial Malaysia and India. These chapters illustrate the conflicts and resolutions in language policy making and provision for ‘minorities’ and ‘minority languages’ where both regional differences in language profiles and the existence of linguistically diverse urban centres need to be taken into consideration. In these systems, the existence of minority languages is given formal status within the school systems in a variety of different ways in the different regions, but there is overarching concern, reflected in language education policy to maintain national integration and a sense of national citizenship, and to avoid linguistic difference escalating into divisiveness. In contrast to the emphasis on nation building in the previous chapters in Part II, Chapter 17, on Brazil, returns to some of the other themes raised in Part I, reminding us of the crucial role of language education in raising the general educational attainment of disadvantaged students and in helping to provide equal opportunities and social justice for all.

This emphasis on the role of language in learning and on improving opportunities for students from disadvantaged communities is continued in Part III of the book. This offers illustrative case studies of language education policy and practice in three linguistically diverse cities in Europe, Asia and Africa respectively. Contributors to this section each provides a sense of the complex sociolinguistic profile of their city, and of the degree of ‘fit’ of national policy with local realities, as well as of the very different attempted solutions to language education in a world in which such multilingualism is becoming increasingly accepted as the norm.

As editors, we have greatly enjoyed our contacts with the international group of contributors to this volume, and the opportunity to learn from their different perspectives and analyses. We thank them for their patience in responding to all our requests for clarifications, and for their tolerance in submitting to necessary cuts and editorial amendments. We hope that, taken overall, this book will allow the reader a sense of some of the tensions implicit in implementing language education policy in the ‘real world’, in the context of current and ongoing educational, social and political reforms.

*Jill Bourne and Euan Reid*  
December 2002