

John Benjamins Publishing Company



This is a contribution from *Language Problems and Language Planning 30:1*
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About the reviewer

Clare Sullivan (Ph.D., New York University) is an assistant professor of Spanish at the University of Louisville. Her research interests include both literary translation and translator training.



Robert B. Kaplan and Richard B. Baldauf, Jr. *Language and Language-in-Education Planning in the Pacific Basin*. Dordrecht/Boston/London: Kluwer. 2003. 276 pp.

Reviewed by Liu Haitao

This book examines language planning and policy in 14 polities: Japan, the two Koreas, Taiwan, the Philippines, Indonesia, Malaysia, Brunei Darussalam, Singapore, Australia, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, the Solomon Islands, and Vanuatu. The authors consider that the major reason “for focusing on the Pacific Basin is precisely the great diversity found across the region and the challenges this then poses for language planners, linguists and those interested in linguistic ecology.” (p.4) In other words, “the area provides a linguistic workshop where linguistic and language planning ideas can be tested.”

Following the authors’ introductory chapter, Chapter 2 deals with “Language Planning in Japan: Internal Monolingualism, External Pragmatism.” We note that the problem of English teaching in Japan is similar to that in China, in that “pragmatics is entirely ignored in favor of quite traditional grammatical instruction.” In other words, English is learned as a source of knowledge, not as a tool for communication. Why is there such similarity between two very different polities? Perhaps the answer lies in cultural factors rather than in Ministry of Education policies as suggested in this book.

Chapter 3 discusses language planning in the two Koreas under the subtitle “One Language, Two Policies.” For anyone interested in human intervention in the development of language, the process of language planning in North Korea is a vivid example of the impact that an individual can have on language evolution. In one sentence, the language of North Korea was remade to fit a socialist political philosophy and was significantly influenced by the thought and writing of Kim Il Sung. At the same time, South Korea’s language planning resembles that occurring in Japan: it is largely conducted within the education sector and is primarily concerned with the teaching of foreign languages, while the Korean language itself has essentially been left undisturbed. If North

Korea's focus is to restructure Korean and South Korea emphasizes the learning of foreign languages, will we eventually reach a point at which the two varieties of the same language become mutually unintelligible? The question is attractive to any linguists who are interested in the development of languages under special conditions. This chapter serves to confirm that language policy and planning is a political rather than a linguistic topic; perhaps that explains why socialist states with planned economies often have better results in LP activity than states with market economies.

The subtitle "Tradition or New Directions?" summarizes language planning in Taiwan. It is a pity that this book does not include a chapter about the language planning of Mainland China; as it is, readers cannot make a comparison between the Mainland and Taiwan as they can with the two Koreas. Yet the situation of increasing distance between Mainland and Taiwan varieties of Mandarin is somewhat comparable to the situation in the two Koreas. Starting from the year 2001, local languages in Taiwan have become formal school subjects. The authors suggests that this serves to "address the Taiwanese people's desire to maintain a unique identity of their own" (p.60), but in many ways it is a political move. In Taiwan the NLM (National Language Movement) was intended not only to publicize the National Language but also to solve a variety of social problems. There is, however, little significant evidence that the social problems have been resolved; in fact, it is doubtful that there is any relationship in this context between language issues and social issues (p.60). The policy gives a reason to break the supposed link between uniformity and economic development.

The subtitle of the fourth chapter, on the Philippines, is "Intellectualizing a New Language." The complex history of Philippines LP presents many interesting problems, for instance the suggestion that "any nation can do without English as a language of science only when the linguistics has been adjusted to adapt to new technologies" (p.78). The experience of the Philippines again reveals the truth about LP, namely that "the political environment has been a key element in the definition of the actor in the LP process; it has not been linguists who have made policy — on the contrary, in virtually every instance, policy has been created by politicians, rarely even with the advice of linguists" (p.80).

The main topic of the chapter on Indonesia is "The Making of a National Language." The created NL is called Bahasa Indonesia, which provides the exception to the general rule for selecting or creating a NL. The rise of Indonesia's NL from a relatively small regional language, spoken more widely as a pidgin than in formal settings, to a modernized language widely spoken in Indonesia and the region is a major political and linguistic triumph. It seems to me that

this is also a triumph of neutral language as a communication tool in a multi-lingual environment. It is worth noticing that there is also some evidence that Bahasa Indonesia is beginning to diversify into regional dialects, and at the extremes mutually incomprehensible dialects are developing. This demonstrates that Indonesia still faces many problems of language policy and planning.

In Malaysia and Brunei Darussalam, “Language is a matter of sedition or official bilingualism.” This means that language planning and policy in the two polities has focused on the development of the national language, Malay, while at the same time seeking to retain and increase the use of English as a window to the world. This is a balancing act, trying to promote a diglossia in which both languages fill their appropriate roles (p.119).

“English-knowing Bilingualism” is the subtitle of the chapter about Singapore, which is a polity relatively small in size, both physically and in terms of its population; but these factors make Singapore an ideal illustration of the notion of language ecology. Singapore tells us that proximate language ecologies must be taken into account in any language planning activity and that changes do not stop at political borders (p.138). The language shifts evident in Singapore are transforming the language ecology within the polity, making Singapore a more linguistically homogeneous community (p.140).

Perhaps the pattern of LP in Australia can indeed be summed up as “From Indigenous to International Multiculturalism.” Australia is a polity that has systemic guiding principles on LP. This means that Australia has developed a reputation as a leader in language planning and policy. Language planning and policy has played an important role in Australia over the last two decades, but there has been a general shift in direction (p.163). The shift has progressively moved the Commonwealth government away from its previous language policy role. If the Commonwealth government has shown no interest in language policy, will the excellent model of LP survive? Or does the shift warn us that LP is only a short-term policy compared with other national policies?

New Zealand is “A window of opportunity.” While the evidence seems clear that New Zealand is in fact a multilingual and multicultural community, the evidence also seems quite clear that language receives relatively little attention in any sector of the society and that educational approaches to language education are uncoordinated with any significant planning in New Zealand (p.182). It seems to this reviewer that the inaction of New Zealand is closely related to the international position of English and its economic status.

Chapter 11 includes three polities, Papua New Guinea, the Solomon Islands and Vanuatu. These three independent Melanesian Pidgin-speaking polities are characterized by the subtitle “Will Pidgin and Diversity Prevail?”

According to the authors, the laissez-faire attitude regarding language and communication promotes the growth of Melanesian pidgins and changes the local language ecologies. If the essential neutrality of pidgins is beneficial to the partners in cross-lingual communication, why do we still believe that they disrupt the language ecology? If we exclude pidgins in Melanesia, who will determine the interlanguage of this region? Such intervention might well make its language ecology poorer.

Chapter 12, “Language Planning in Perspective: Trends from Diversity” is the concluding chapter of this book. To analyze and compare the situation in the various polities, the authors first introduce a framework of language planning (p.202) which is very useful in clearly understanding the different goals and activities of language planning and policy. This framework is also an important guide to comparative study of language planning in other polities. The authors conclude that “the various studies included herein demonstrate that initiating language policy activities without adequate understanding of language ecology involved may be counterproductive. Given the predilection for top-down activity, the predilection of government to move ahead with a plan without reference to linguistic realities of the environment often results in sudden and abrupt changes in directions over time, and these combined influences often cause language policy development to fail” (p. 225–226). This conclusion reminds us that scientific research about language policy and planning is useful because it supports and informs the making of language policy.

The book can be considered one of the best comparative works of language planning and policy. It provides a good model for such study within an ecologically unified framework. The book is not only necessary reading for language planners, but should also be read by language and language-in-education policy decision-makers. It is also a useful reference work for sociolinguists.

Reviewer's address

Applied Linguistics Department,
Communication University of China,
CN-100024, Beijing, P.R. China

htliu@cuc.edu.cn

About the reviewer

Liu Haitao is professor of applied and computational linguistics at Communication University of China (CUC). His research interests include language planning, computational linguistics, interlinguistics and dependency grammar.