

Language and Education Policy in Multilingual Contexts

Spring 2020

The merits or demerits of mother tongue education are dependent on the particular context in which learners find themselves. – Zubeida Desai



Lectures: Wednesdays 3-5:30

Location: Page-Robinson Hall 402

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Office: 164 Angell Street – 2nd floor

Office Hours: Mondays and Fridays 1-4 PM. [Sign-up here.](#)

Course Website: <https://canvas.brown.edu/courses/1080890>

Please check the course website frequently for important announcements, readings and assignments.

Course Description

Millions of children around the world, especially in low- and middle-income countries, begin school learning in a language to which they have had little exposure. Children who learn and are assessed in a language different from that spoken at home or in their community are more likely to drop out of school and demonstrate lower learning outcomes than their peers, on average. Designing multilingual education systems, however, is not always feasible or desirable and requires a different set of resources than monolingual systems. This course explores how multilingual countries and communities design and implement language policies, and the major factors at play when increasing the number of languages used in a school system.

The course has **three main learning objectives**: develop foundational concepts related to language in education policies, apply them critically to specific contexts, and develop research and writing skills necessary for policy and practice work. The course will serve as an introduction to vocabulary and topics related to language policy development and implementation. This will be done through exploring individual cases of systems around the world attempting to include multiple languages in a formal school system. Attention will be paid to the policy implementation cycle from policy design to implementation. Throughout the course, students will be engaged in a project focused on one region or country to analyze its specific sociolinguistic and structural context, and apply concepts learned in class.

This course is designed for students interested in language and literacy acquisition, and international education policy. There are no pre-requisites for this course, and there will be opportunities to learn and grow for students with a range of different backgrounds.

Course Overview

Date	Topic	Assignment
Week 1 – Jan 22	<i>Overview – living in a multilingual world</i>	
Week 2 – Jan 29	<i>Language policy and planning</i>	
Week 3 – Feb 5	<i>Language and Power</i>	
Week 4 – Feb 12	<i>Language development theories</i>	
Week 5 – Feb 19	<i>Language policy in the United States</i>	
Week 6 – Feb 26	<i>Multilingual Classrooms</i>	Proposal
Week 7 – Mar 4	<i>Linguistic Minorities in the Nation-State</i>	First Reading Brief
Week 8 – Mar 11	<i>Community engagement in literacy acquisition</i>	
Week 9 – Mar 18	<i>Immigration, refugees, and displacement</i>	
Week 10 – Apr 1	<i>Teacher recruitment, training and deployment</i>	Context description
Week 11 – Apr 8	<i>Orthography development and support</i>	
Week 12 – Apr 15	<i>Assessments for multilingual settings</i>	Second Reading Brief
Week 13 – Apr 22	<i>Course Wrap-up</i>	
		Final paper

Course Requirements

The assignments for this course are designed to build on each other and culminate in the final submission. The goal of this structure is to provide regular feedback to support the learning objectives of this course.

Students will be evaluated based on the following elements:

Attendance and class participation:	20%
Reading briefs	30%
Proposal	10%
Context description	10%
Final paper	30%
Total	100%

Attendance and participation – This course is built around discussions of complex topics and requires active participation to meet its learning objectives. Participation from all students is important for several reasons. First, we will all benefit from listening to as broad a range of perspectives as possible. Second, active participation will ensure your attention is focused on peers and the material discussed. Finally, effective communication is a practiced skill and class provides an opportunity to practice. If you are unable to attend all sessions, please contact the instructor to design an opportunity to make-up the work.

Reading Briefs – You will choose readings from two sessions and write a brief containing a reaction to the readings. Briefs are meant to be short analytic and reflective memos that examine the topic from the week selected. You are encouraged but not required to pick weeks that relate to the focus of your final paper. The structure of the brief is flexible, but the writing should demonstrate an understanding of the readings, as well as connections to your personal or professional experiences and, ideally, the final paper. Briefs should end with two or three substantive questions that could be asked in a class discussion. Briefs should be no longer than 3 double-spaced pages. **Briefs are due the day before class by noon.**

Final Paper – The final paper is a core part of the learning experience in this class. It is designed to apply topics developed during the course to a specific setting and synthesize it into a written piece. The paper will include a descriptive and analytical piece. The first part will include (i) a description of the sociolinguistic environment; (ii) a summary of the current education language policy/practice; and (iii) a description of the formal or informal education environment. The second part of the paper will focus on one aspect of policy or practice relevant to improve access, quality or equity in the provision of education. The final paper should be 8-10 pages double spaced. Progress toward the final project will be supported through the following activities:

- *Proposal* (10%) – The proposal should be 1-2 pages single spaced and include a brief description of the context, as well as the policy or issue related to access, quality or equity that you want to focus on.

- *Context description* (10%) – You will submit a full draft of the context description part of the paper. This early submission will enable you to receive feedback as you make progress toward the final paper. The context should be between one third and half of the final paper, or 3-5 pages double spaced.
- *Class workshop (ungraded)* – During one of the last classes, a structured protocol will take place in small groups to give you a chance to present findings and receive feedback.

Project partnerships. In order to make this final paper as practical as possible, you may choose to focus on a partner organization you have a relationship with, or one the teaching team proposes. If you choose this option, you must contact the instructor in the first two weeks of the semester to ensure the project will meet the requirements of the final paper.

Working in pairs. Working in pairs offers additional learning opportunities to students, in large part because it mirrors work done outside the classroom, but can also present challenges. Students who would like to work in pairs for the final paper must contact the instructor to discuss the possibility. Groups of more than two will not be allowed. If students work in a pair, each student will submit a 1-page summary of how each member shared the work.

If any student would like to propose an alternative final project/paper more aligned to their personal learning objectives, please approach me by February 28th to discuss. These alternatives could include designing a curriculum, website, podcast, or video related to the course content.

Credit Hours

The total of in-class hours and out-of-class work for all full-credit courses at Brown is approximately 180 hours. In this course, students can expect to spend ~30 hours in class (2h 30min per week for 13 weeks), ~100 hours preparing for class by reading assigned materials (8 hours per week), ~50 hours researching and writing assignments.

General Expectations

Building Community and Respecting Our Stories

This class is founded on the principle that we learn best by learning together. This course requires engagement and participation from each one of us. A successful class session is built upon these expectations:

- Come with an open mind. Be ready to listen, learn from others, and leave the class with a broader view that is based on our collective experiences.
- Come prepared to each class having completed all course readings and assignments.
- Share openly and listen respectfully. Your stories and experiences are an important part of our learning experience, so be ready to engage with others.

A note on office hours and communication

I view office hours as a time to discuss a range of topics including: material from the course; assignments for the course; your experience outside of the university related education; personal and professional topics that are of interest to you. I encourage you to reach out and come meet with me. I check email regularly but please don't expect immediate responses unless you include URGENT in the title of your message.

Timely Submission of Assignments

All written assignments for the class are due 10:00 PM, usually the Friday before our Monday class. This will hopefully help to ensure that assignments do not unnecessarily cause sleep deprivation. I expect all assignments to be submitted on time. If you are encountering difficulty in completing an assignment on time, please get in touch with me. It is always better to communicate with me directly rather than avoiding the situation. *Late submissions without prior notice or a dean's note will affect your grade.*

On Learning Tools

In this class, you will engage in discussion with your classmates, work independently or with others in groups, and listen to lectures. Notetaking in these various settings will be an important part of your learning. I strongly discourage use of laptops and tablets in the class. While they may enhance your learning in some ways, they can be a distraction (to you and to others) as well and I prefer that they are not used in class unless it is a necessary part of your learning experience. If you have questions about this policy or accommodations that require the use of a laptop, please let me know.

Academic Support

Brown University is committed to full inclusion of all students. Please inform me early in the term if you have a disability or other conditions that might require accommodations or modification of any of these course procedures. You may speak with me after class or during office hours. For more information, please contact [Student and Employee Accessibility Services](#) at 401-863-9588 or SEAS@brown.edu. Students in need of short-term academic advice or support can contact one of the deans in the Dean of the College office.

Weekly Readings

Week 1 – Overview: Living in a multilingual world

Week 1 will focus on understanding the scope of multilingualism and the mismatch between languages spoken by children at home and in their communities and those used in formal schooling systems. Language mismatch can take place for several reasons: as a result of monolingual policies or practice, multilingual policies that incorporate few languages, heterogeneous classrooms, or early transitions to the official language. The questions guiding our inquiry will be:

- What does it mean to live in a multilingual world?
- Which children enter a school system in a language they are not proficient in and why?

Readings

Explore the [Ethnologue website](#). Identify one language you had never heard about before and prepare to share two or three facts about that language.

Kosonen, K. (2017). [Language of instruction in Southeast Asia](#). (18 pages)

USAID. (2015). [Report on Language of Instruction in Senegal](#).

Week 2 – Language Policy and planning

Week 2 will focus on language policy and planning theory and practice. Policymakers developing language policies need to engage in three interrelated types of planning: status, corpus, and acquisition. These processes result in a wide range of policies and programs that differ in the extent to which multiple languages are used in the formal system.

- How do policy makers acknowledge multilingualism and address it through language planning?
- What are the explicit and implicit goals of multilingual education policies?

Readings:

Hornberger, N. H. (2002). Multilingual language policies and the continua of biliteracy: An ecological approach. *Language Policy*, 1(1), 27–51

Paulston, C. B., & Heidemann, K. (2006). Language policies and the education of linguistic minorities. *An introduction to language policy: Theory and method*, 292-310. (14 pages)

Ruiz, R. (1984). Orientations in language planning. *NABE: The Journal for the National Association for Bilingual Education*, 8(2), 15–34.

UNESCO. (2010). [Policy Guide on the Integration of African Languages and Cultures into Education Systems.](#)

Week 3 – Language and Power

Week 3 will introduce sociolinguistic concepts crucial to understand non-pedagogical factors that influence language in education policy choices. The difference between official language, national language and dialect are not features of the languages themselves but of the way in which societies give status to these languages. Specifically, we will examine the following questions:

- How do local, regional and global factors affect language power and impact the stakeholders involved in language planning?
- What are historical factors that allow or hinder current attempts to introduce multilingual education policies?

Readings:

Chumbow, B. S. (2005). The language question and national development in Africa. In *African intellectuals: Rethinking politics, language, gender and development*. London, UK: Zed Books. (pages 164-178 & 185-190)

Mazrui, A. A., & Mazrui, A. M. (1998). *The Power of Babel: language and governance in the African experience*. University of Chicago Press. (ch10 – pp141-159)

O'Donnell EB. Developing Bilingual Global Citizens in the City of Brotherly Love. Independence Charter School—Case B

Meyerhoff, M. (2006). *Introducing Sociolinguistics*. Routledge. (ch 6 – pp 102-117)

Additional Readings:

wa Thiong'o, N. (1986). *Decolonising the Mind: The politics of language in African literature*. London: James Currey.

Week 4 – Language development theories

Week 4 will focus on examining language development theories and how they relate to models of multilingual policies. Psycholinguistic research has attempted to understand how monolingual

children develop literacy, and more recently, how bilingual individuals learn a second language using their knowledge of their first language. This research has served as a basis for many language in education policies. Specifically, we will focus on the following guiding questions:

- How monolingual and bilingual develop language and literacy skills?
- How does a multilingual environment support or hinder literacy acquisition?
- What are the explicit or implicit goals of language in education policies in terms of multilingual language development?

Readings:

Crawford, J. (2004). *Educating English learners: Language diversity in the classroom* (5th ed.). Los Angeles, CA: Bilingual Education Services. (Chapter 2 – pp 28-54)

Garcia et al. (2008) [From English language learners to emergent bilinguals](#). (Part II pp18-25)

García, O., & Wei, L. (2014). Language, Bilingualism and Education. In *Translanguaging: Language, Bilingualism and Education* (chapter 3 - pp. 46–62). Springer.

Cummins, J. (2017). Teaching Minoritized Students: Are Additive Approaches Legitimate?. *Harvard Educational Review*, 87(3), 404-425.

Vogel, S., & Garcia, O. (2017). Translanguaging. In *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Education*. (pp.1-2 & pp. 8-12 *Section: Translanguaging & Education*)

Week 5 – Language policy in the United States

The United States has a rich linguistic diversity due to the large number of Native American languages spoken, as well as the important role immigration has played in its formation. Education in the United States is largely decentralized and policies at the federal, state and district level influence the experience of multilingual learners.

- How does the federal government influence language of instruction policies in the United States?
- What do states and district do to support multilingual classrooms?

Readings:

Flores, N., & Rosa, J. (2015). Undoing appropriateness: Raciolinguistic ideologies and language diversity in education. *Harvard Educational Review*, 85(2), 149-171.

National Council of Teachers of English. (2008). *English Language Learners: A policy research brief*.

Zacarian, D. (2012). *Serving English learners: Laws, policies, and regulations*.

Massachusetts Teachers Association (2018). LOOK Act provides needed flexibility. ([link](#)).

Viadero (2020). How Many English-Learners Do Districts Serve? Data Are Inconsistent. ([link](#)).

Week 6 – Multilingual Classrooms

Week 6 will focus on linguistically heterogeneous settings such as large cities that result in multilingual classrooms. Specifically, we will examine the following questions:

- How can effective instruction be delivered in classrooms with a large number of home languages?

Readings:

Benson, C., & Young, C. (2016). How can mother tongue-based MLE be carried out in classrooms where three or more local languages are represented as mother tongues?. In Trudell, B., & Young, C. (2016). [*Good Answers to Tough Questions in Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education*](#). SIL International. (6 pages)

WIDA Introduction – https://www.uen.org/core/englishlanguage/downloads/wida_intro.pdf (3 pages)

Week 7 – Linguistic Minorities and the Nation-State

Week 7 will explore how linguistic minorities are included or excluded by education policies.

- How do communities with a small number of speakers fit in national language planning and education policies?

Readings:

Batibo, H. (2005). *Language decline and death in Africa: Causes, consequences, and challenges* (Vol. 132). Multilingual Matters. (Chapter 4; pages 51-61).

Gil Garcia, P. (2018, February 20). [Children Thriving in Many Languages: In a land of a hundred languages, children are finally allowed to learn in their own](#). Island Life Magazine.

Otsuka Y. (2007) [Making a case for Tonga as an Endangered Language](#). (pages 446-458).

Roche (2020). [Language revitalization and radical politics](#).

Week 8 – Community Engagement in literacy acquisition

Week 8 will focus on how parents and communities are engaged in supporting literacy development of their children, specifically in multilingual settings.

- What is the role of parents and communities in supporting literacy development in multilingual settings?

Readings:

Baquedano-López, P., Alexander, R. A., & Hernández, S. J. (2013). Equity issues in parental and community involvement in schools: What teacher educators need to know. *Review of Research in Education*, 37(1), 149-182.

Mango Tree (n.d). [Technical report on Mango Tree's Civil Society Strengthening](#). (Section 5.2; pages 6-13)

School-to-School International (2018). [Engaging Families and Communities to Support Student Reading Skills Development](#).

USAID (2014). Out-of-School Parental and Community Involvement Interventions. Literature Review. [ON CANVAS]

Week 9 – Immigration, refugees and displacement

Week 9 will focus on the experience of individuals who migrate by choice or by force. We will examine how government and international institutions design policies and programs to support these groups.

- What are the sets of factors that shape how migrants, refugees, and internally displaced persons experience schooling in their new setting?
- What is the role of host communities, governments and international organizations in supporting the multilingual development of displaced communities?

Readings:

British Council. (2016). [Language for Resilience: The Role of Language in Enhancing the Resilience of Syrian Refugees and Host Communities](#).

Dryden-Peterson & Chopra. Burundi Case Study.

Reddick, C., & Dryden-Peterson, S. (Forthcoming). Refugee Education and Medium Instruction: Tensions in Theory, Policy and Practice. [ON CANVAS]

UNHCR (n.d.). [Curriculum Choices in Refugee Settings](#). (7 pages)

Week 10 – Teacher recruitment, training, and deployment

A successful multilingual policy requires that classroom teachers are willing and able to teach in the language(s) that are prescribed. Recruiting and training teachers for a multilingual education system requires a different infrastructure.

- What are the human capital and financial consequences of introducing a multilingual education policy?

Readings:

Anderson (2018). [The controversial Silicon Valley-funded quest to educate the world's poorest kids](#). Quartz.

Evans, D. [Teachers are not the problem](#). (2018). World Bank Development Blog.

Ministry of Education and Sports, & UNESCO. (2014). [Teacher Issues in Uganda: A shared vision for an effective teachers policy](#). (Chapter 3 – pp 59-82)

Piper, B., Sitabkhan, Y., Mejía, J., & Betts, K. (2018). *Effectiveness of Teachers' Guides in the Global South: Scripting, Learning Outcomes, and Classroom Utilization*. RTI Press.
<https://doi.org/10.3768/rtipress.2018.op.0053.1805>

Week 11 – Orthography development and support

The majority of languages spoken around the world are not written or do not have an adequate orthography. Two specific aspects of orthographies are important when assessing the appropriateness of multilingual education policies: the adequacy of the codification of written languages used in the classroom, and the extent to which writing systems are similar across languages. In week 11, we will examine the following questions:

- What are the processes involved in developing a new orthography, or updating an incomplete or inadequate one?
- Who is responsible for corpus planning, and how does it influence language policies?

Readings:

Bradley (2003). Issues in orthography development and reforms.

Chambers and Trudgill (1998) *Dialectology*. 2nd edition. (Chapter 1 – pp 3-12)

Malone, S. (2017) MTB MLE Resource Kit: Including the Excluded: Promoting Multilingual Education. Bangkok: UNESCO.

Markowski (2009). So Orthography Committee and Revision Process. [CANVAS].

Oltermann (2019). [Germany's dialect iron curtain still divides the country, study find](#). The Guardian.

Week 12 – Assessments for multilingual settings

Assessing student learning serves different purposes for stakeholders in education systems. Formative assessment is essential to provide feedback to teachers and learners about the current level of understanding and inform instruction, whereas summative assessments are meant to describe learning achieved at a certain point for reporting to parents or policymakers. In week 12, we will discuss the following questions:

- How do education systems assess student learning across languages?
- What are the challenges in developing multilingual assessments to support multilingual policies?

Readings:

Bartlett, L., Dowd, A. J., & Jonason, C. (2015). Problematizing early grade reading: Should the post-2015 agenda treasure what is measured? *International Journal of Educational Development*, 40, 308–314. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijedudev.2014.10.002>

Dubeck, M. M., & Gove, A. (2015). The early grade reading assessment (EGRA): Its theoretical foundation, purpose, and limitations. *International Journal of Educational Development*, 40, 315–322. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijedudev.2014.11.004>

Patrinos, H. A., & Velez, E. (2009). Costs and benefits of bilingual education in Guatemala: A partial analysis. *International Journal of Educational Development*, 29(6), 594–598. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijedudev.2009.02.001>

Piper, B., Sitabkhan, Y., Mejía, J., & Betts, K. (2018). *Effectiveness of Teachers' Guides in the Global South: Scripting, Learning Outcomes, and Classroom Utilization*. RTI Press. <https://doi.org/10.3768/rtipress.2018.op.0053.1805>

Week 13 – Course wrap-up

In the last week of class, part of the session will be used to run a *classroom workshop* during which students will follow a structured protocol to present their final project in small groups. This will serve as an opportunity to provide and receive feedback.

Depending on class size and interest, an additional topic may be discussed in the last week.