

Ofelia García, Tove Skutnabb-Kangas, and María Torres-Guzmán (eds): *Imagining Multilingual Schools: Languages in Education and Glocalization (Linguistic Diversity and Language Rights)*

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Imagining Multilingual Schools is an inspiration for language policymakers, language education program developers, practitioners and researchers who seek to understand and nurture linguistic diversity on the local and global levels through education, broadly defined. This edited volume includes twelve cases that situate us in a range of multilingual situations throughout the world. These cases illustrate in ethnographic detail creative ways that actors open and work spaces to promote multilingualism on the local level given the particular sociopolitical realities they face.

García, Skutnabb-Kangas, and Torres-Guzmán, the editors of this rich volume, introduce the case studies with a chapter entitled “Weaving Spaces and (De)Constructing Ways for Multilingual Schools: The Actual and the Imagined.” The chapter begins with five guiding questions, which the authors explicitly relate to words and phrases in the United Nation’s 2004 Human Development Report linking language rights to human development, beginning with:

- How do we imagine schools that would build on and support the multiplicity of languages and literacies in our globalized world, and where people can ‘use their native languages’?

The next four questions ask us to ‘unstack’ the ‘economic, social and political returns’ that are currently stacked against mother tongues in the world; look critically at issues that educators, linguistically and culturally diverse youth and their parents, educational authorities and politicians must face; identify multilingual options; and, consider factors beyond the schools that impact the design and implementation of multilingual education programs. This chapter sets the stage for the case studies that follow, which are intended to provide multiple perspectives on the above questions. With this chapter, the editors clarify their positions on

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multilingual education, review their stance on important questions about languages and speakers of languages in multilingual schools, and identify major threads that pull these diverse chapters together; threads that they maintain need to be considered when designing spaces where multilingual education is possible. They conclude their introduction moving “between dispossession, anger, and hope.”

The first thematic part, “Pedagogies, Values and Schools”, includes four case studies which illustrate creative ways that educators use schooling to elevate the status of minority languages and identities. Cummins describes a multilingual literacies project in linguistically and culturally diverse classrooms in Toronto, Canada that encourages students to write dual language identity texts as a means of promoting multilingual literacy development, identity investment, and maximum cognitive engagement at school. Hélot and Young present a language awareness project in a primary school in Alsace, France that introduces children to 18 languages and cultures to legitimate regional and immigrant languages in the eyes of the children. McCarty, Romero, and Zepeda examine the role of native languages in the lives and aspirations of Native American youth in five tribal communities in southwest United States, and discuss examples of indigenous educational initiatives that counter language shift in these communities. Etxeberría-Sagastume investigates language learning attitudes and motivations among high school students learning Euskara, Spanish, and English since implementation of the 1983 Spanish bilingual law in the Basque Autonomous Community.

The second thematic part, “Extending Formal Instructional Spaces”, includes two case studies which illustrate innovative ways that actors outside of formal schools promote multilingualism. Edwards and Newcombe use the example of Twf, a marketing campaign in Wales that promotes the benefits of bilingualism to parents, to suggest ways that advocates can use modern marketing strategies to counter myths about bilingualism in other contexts. Ogulnick describes two grassroots movements in Chiapas, Mexico through which indigenous people have organized their resistance to the enforced acculturation process in public schools, and demonstrates how these movements are succeeding in reviving and promoting indigenous languages in Chiapas and inspiring similar movements beyond the Mexican borders.

The third thematic part, “Tensions Between Multiple Realities”, includes three chapters that show conflicts between the goals of multilingualism imagined in this volume and dominant trends toward monolingualism in different contexts. Shohamy identifies specific mechanisms (e.g., language policies, language education policies, high-stakes testing policies, language myths, and propaganda) that prevent multilingualism from becoming a reality for immigrants in the United States and Israel, and suggests steps that can be taken to bring us closer to the imagined. Escamilla criticizes the focus on English-only tests in the United States and, using empirical evidence demonstrating that Spanish speakers in Colorado perform better on achievement tests given in Spanish, advocates for achievement testing in both Spanish and English. Nyati-Ramahobo describes a primary school in Botswana as a linguistic and cultural battlefield between government efforts that promote English and Setswana as the only languages used in public life, and societal movements that

counter this position by using the unrecognized non-Tswana languages in everyday communication on the ground.

The final thematic part, "Negotiating Policies of Implementation", includes three case studies that illustrate the dynamic nature of policy formulation and implementation on the local level. Hornberger considers how well US schools are fulfilling US Supreme Court decisions mandating equal educational opportunities regardless of racial or linguistic background, and draws on ethnographic work in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania and internationally to illustrate different ways that schools can promote multilingualism and educational opportunity for minority populations on the local level. López describes the cases of Bolivia and Guatemala in which indigenous peoples constitute national majorities, and argues that although intercultural bilingual education has emerged as a recognized national model in these contexts, we see the emergence of alternative educational proposals which seek more cultural relevance for indigenous peoples. Mohanty analyzes the nature of multilingualism in India to show that although policies encourage the maintenance of mother tongues, the combination of the hegemonic role of English and the lack of a clear multilingual framework leads to the marginalization of minority languages in this context.

Together these cases contribute to our understanding of: (1) the complexity of the diverse sociolinguistic situations surrounding multilingual education within and across contexts in the world today, (2) how the symbolic domination of languages and speakers of languages structure language policies, language education policies, and implicit practices with attention to the implications of those policies and practices for speakers of those languages, and (3) how specific actors choose to resist and challenge language policies that restrict or kill linguistic and cultural diversity as they open spaces to imagine and enact multilingual schools and societies. Researchers, policymakers, and practitioners will leave this book stimulated by realistic possibilities for promoting multilingualism on the local level.

Author Biography

Rebecca Freeman Field is a sociolinguist and educator who is dedicated to promoting multilingualism through education. She has conducted ethnographic and discourse analytic research on bilingualism and education in multilingual communities in the US for 15 years, and has written two books based on this work: *Bilingual Education and Social Change* and *Building on Community Bilingualism*. Now she advises teachers and administrators in the US and internationally on language policy, program development, implementation and evaluation, instruction, and assessment. She is also the Director of the Language Education Division of Caslon Publishing in Philadelphia.