

Sociolinguistics

98-653 Benson, Phil (U. of Hong Kong).

Language rights and the medium-of-instruction issue in Hong Kong. *Hong Kong Journal of Applied Linguistics* (Hong Kong), **2**, 2 (1997), 1–21.

Language policy and human rights are both areas of lively debate in Hong Kong. Language rights, where language policy and human rights intersect, are less frequently discussed. Nevertheless, rights are often mentioned in connection with language policy. For example, in the field of education some argue for Chinese-medium education on the grounds that the right to mother-tongue medium education is fundamental, while others argue that parents should have the right to choose between Chinese- and English-medium. This paper aims to establish the extent to which statements of these kinds can be grounded in recognised principles of language rights that are applicable to the unique sociolinguistic setting of Hong Kong. The first part of the paper discusses general principles of language rights as they apply to Hong Kong. The second part discusses the medium-of-instruction issue in Hong Kong from the perspective of language rights.

98-654 Extra, Guus (Tilburg U.). Allochtone talen in het voortgezet onderwijs. Status in het voortgezet onderwijs en een vergelijkend perspectief. [Non-indigenous languages in secondary education. Their status in a comparative perspective.] *Levende Talen* (Amsterdam), **528** (1998), 122–8.

Since 1987, official Dutch education policy allows secondary schools – in certain circumstances – to teach non-indigenous minority languages to native speakers of these languages. On this basis, eight to ten non-indigenous languages were taught in the years 1992–1996 to a total of 7,000 to 8,000 pupils per year, with Turkish and Arabic together accounting for some 70% of them. The author proposes to deal with non-indigenous minority languages on a European scale. In the European Union (EU), minority languages such as Turkish and Arabic outnumber indigenous minority or regional languages such as Basque, Welsh or Frisian. Nevertheless, the teaching provisions for indigenous or regional minority languages are usually motivated from the perspective of cultural diversity, whereas this argument hardly ever figures prominently in the argumentation for teaching non-indigenous languages. A complicating factor in the EU framework is the variation in the different national systems of implementing language policies: France exercises strong national control in this area; Germany puts the

main responsibility at the level of the federal states; England and the Netherlands have implemented a combination of national and local responsibilities. The author argues that, in any case, the increasing internationalisation of European schools calls for a language policy in which the traditional difference between foreign-language teaching and mother-tongue education is broken down.

98-655 Lin, Angel M. Y. (City U. of Hong Kong).

Hong Kong children's rights to a culturally compatible English education. *Hong Kong Journal of Applied Linguistics* (Hong Kong), **2**, 2 (1997), 23–48.

This paper discusses why the right of access to the socio-economically dominant symbolic resource, English, is a fundamental language right of Hong Kong children. The author also discusses why current English curricular design and practices do not provide such access and how they can be changed in order to provide Hong Kong children with access to an English education that is compatible with their native culture. In a culturally compatible curriculum, emphasis is placed on affirming and capitalising on what children bring to the classroom: their indigenous linguistic, discourse, and cultural resources. It aims at building on and expanding the child's existing resources to bridge the gap between his/her native resources and the socio-economically important language of the society. Some directions are also proposed for future research and curricular development that researchers, teachers, and teacher-educators can take in the context of Hong Kong in order to develop a culturally compatible English curriculum that will deny neither the Cantonese child's rightful linguistic and cultural identities and resources, nor her/his right to have access to English.

98-656 Luk, Jasmine C. M. Hong Kong students' awareness of and reactions to accent differences. *Multilingua* (Berlin, Germany), **17**, 1 (1998), 93–106.

This paper reports on a study which investigated a group of Hong Kong English as a Second Language students' awareness of the existence of a localised Hong Kong accent, and their reactions to both this local accent and to Received Pronunciation (RP). Participants were 66 students aged 14 to 16 in two secondary school classes. It was hypothesised that the participants would demonstrate greater empathy with the local accent, out of a desire to maintain group solidarity and identity. The results, however, indicate the opposite: an overwhelmingly high majority of the participants showed preference for RP. Social and pedagogical implications of the findings are discussed.