

BOOK REVIEW

Bolitho, R. & Rossner R. (2020). *Language education in a changing world challenges and opportunities. Bristol: Multilingual Matters*

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The recently published book by Multilingual Matters regarding foreign language education, is a landmark with a complete analysis of key issues in educational language policy and teacher practice. We can all agree on the basic idea behind Bolitho and Rossner's work, that the development of philosophies and theories is only possible by means of language knowledge. It is a fact that in our human society the learning process from a very early age is based on a key factor of social interaction which is embodied in our languages.

The authors intend to call the attention of policymakers, curriculum developers, textbook writers, or teachers, as well as teacher educators to the vast display of their extensive experience and knowledge about foreign language education. There is a long array of inspiring works, scholars and specialists, who investigate the main stream of language education, that substantially affected the education policy of countries all around the globe, and in particular the countries in the EU. First and foremost, EU and UK initiatives, like the Bullock Report, The Council of Europe's Language Policy Program, The European Centre for Modern Languages, and some other countries or international organization's efforts are discussed. The core component relates principally to significant issues, that have influenced the field of foreign language teaching.

Another interesting view of the authors is what the changes in attitude to language teaching, an altered curriculum in language education might convey for teachers in developing language awareness and improving the linguistic and communicative competence of their students. According to Éva Illés the international context and the widespread use of the Internet require different competences. In our age the World Wide Web is an immense store of data, we are overwhelmed with it, but to filter out what is important is the real challenge. Both the recent developments in the role of English as a lingua franca (ELF) and the computer-mediated communication (CMC) (Illés, 2012, pp. 505–506) make the carefully built up recommendations of Bolitho and Rossner towards language education necessary. On the one hand, in this altered cultural environment our "post-truth" era is pooled with media influences, which makes the use of English a must with an openness and with the acceptance of otherness, on the other hand, the CMC became part of our everyday life. The authors also call the attention to the idea of the

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causes of the pessimism, hate speech, threats we face day-to-day. The social media, with the far too common verbal bullying gave birth to another competence, namely how to interpret and how to sort out the harmful and fallacious impulses, as well as how to stay on the supportive, and more uplifting side.

The ten chapters of the publication are divided in main parts representing the key concepts in multilingual research, the significance of language educational policy, language teacher education and the role of literacy/oracy. The first three chapters raise issues of our modern society, introducing the main historical streams until the current state of foreign language education, and draws the attention to the changes in second and foreign language education with the growing, although controversial influence of English. The first part delivers a synopsis of key aspects of both language teaching and what the languages in education signify. The key purpose is to indicate what language represents in education and to list the aspects of prime importance in language education, in order to answer the changes of the world developments. From the pioneering theories of Lev Vygotsky, John Dewey, Benjamin Bloom, Morgan and Saxton, Barns and colleagues up to the more detailed mechanisms of how language enables the progress of concepts and their impacts on teaching is a huge variety of ideas, opinions incorporated. Just to mention only one interesting point from this part is Vygotsky's dual aspect of learning and education, which is seldom highlighted in modern education across the countries. This raises the issue of how young learners can be facilitated first and foremost, both in their learning abilities and in their perceptions about the world, while also developing their awareness and aptitudes in other areas. Furthermore, how can teachers achieve this by utilizing all the potentials of language and communication?

In the second part of the book, the fourth, fifth and sixth chapter are dedicated to the traditions, trends and relevance of initial language teacher education and the development and role of foreign languages on language professionals in general. The main challenge rests on teacher education when it comes to language education, and this is the key issue of the second part of the book. The urge for more proficient English teachers has brought a requirement to reconsider at policy level the ways in which teacher education is structured. The focus is on initial education of the language teachers, showing how teachers are prepared, and how they are fortified to continue their progress in their profession. This part also represents how language can be productively used in teacher education in general.

The next three chapters move away from teacher education to put an emphasis on the role and expectations of the numerous stakeholders in language education, and the quite tangled methods in which change is implemented through certain educational policies. The stakeholders include teachers, teacher educators and managers of teachers and their present perspectives in language education, and policy making in general are revealed. The key issue, which the authors hope to raise is the range of the values and goals of the different stakeholders and weather they consult with each other. The authors also call the attention to the fact that "decisions on language policy are usually motivated politically rather than by cultural concerns, though economic realities are sometimes also an important factor" (Bolitho & Rossner, 2020, p. 177).

The last chapter rounds up with future perspectives, the hopes of Bolitho and Rossner in the field of language – and teacher-education, which is a bit subjective and has deviated from the factual disclosure of previous chapters.

The realization of this writing stems from the authors' fascination in the role and power of languages and is due to their long-standing experience with respect to education. Based on their



own expertise as well as research findings, a wide array of global data and case studies demonstrate their aim to filter out the diverse views on how languages are taught and learnt world-wide, and how the various language policies infuse the language learning curriculum and its effects on learner's success. The strength of this book can be seen in the purpose of the authors to encompass a far wider field than the teaching of foreign or additional languages but it is more a synthesis of historical and recent trends with future perspectives of the field.

Bolitho and Rossner express that "language, in all its varieties and uses, remains a symbol of personal, local, regional and national identity (p. 55). The approach to the idea of language being a sort of cultural key, related to social realities is not a new invention but it is certainly well adopted and represented in a broad context, what makes this book a useful reading for the intended professionals as well as for those who are interested to learn about foreign and national language policies.

REFERENCES

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