

**MULTILINGUALISM:**

Empowering  
Individuals

Transforming  
Societies

## MULTILINGUALISM: EMPOWERING INDIVIDUALS, TRANSFORMING SOCIETIES

**Standard languages, norms and variation:  
new perspectives within a multilingual research  
project**

Wendy Ayres-Bennett, University of Cambridge



# The MEITS team

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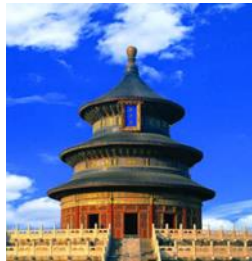
- 4 UK HEs
  - Cambridge, Queen's Belfast, Edinburgh, Nottingham



- 34 researchers + 1 project manager
  - PI: Wendy Ayres-Bennett
  - Deputy PIs: Janice Carruthers, Nicola McLelland
  - 11 Co-Is, 14 PDRAs, 6 PhD students



- International HE partners
  - Peking University
  - The Chinese University of Hong Kong
  - University of Bergen
  - University of Girona



# Objectives

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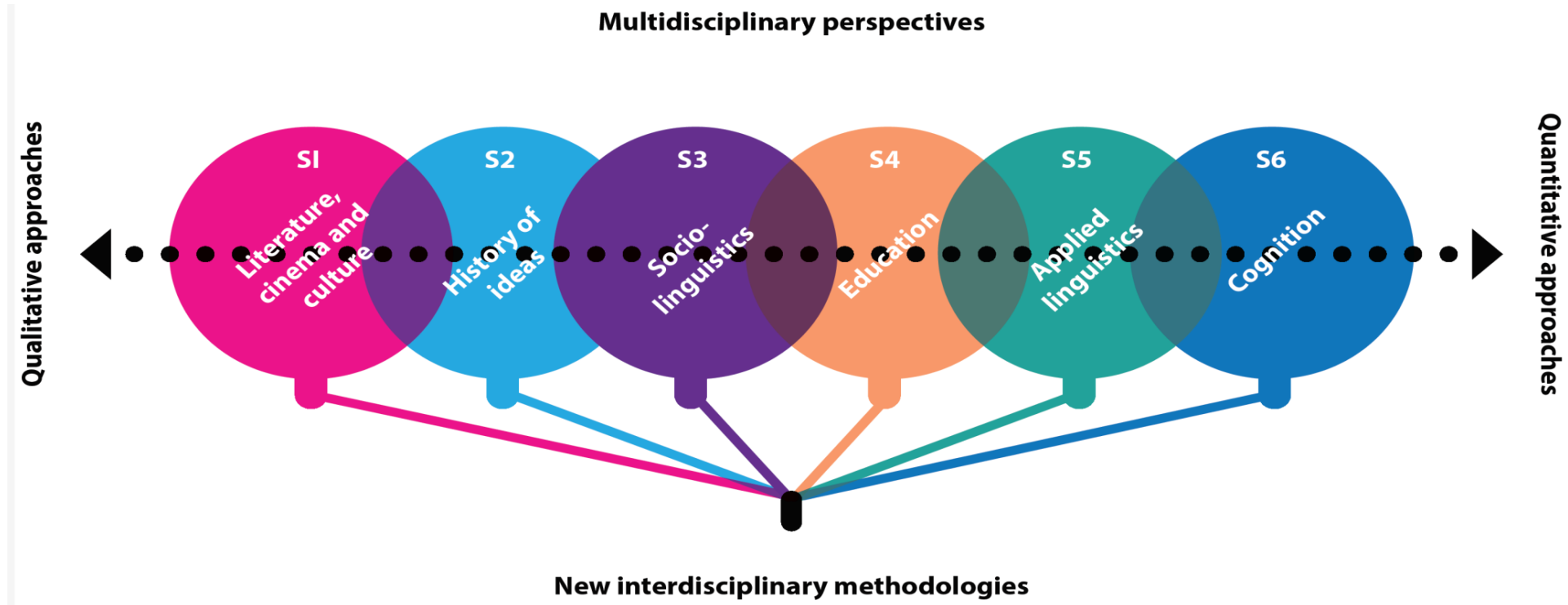
- How modern languages can address **key issues of our time**
- The “**value**” of different languages in radically different **linguistic, political & socio-cultural contexts**
- Role in **cultural production**; links with questions of **identity, diversity & social cohesion**
- Impact on **policymakers, stakeholders & the attitude of the general public** towards multilingualism
- New **interdisciplinary methodologies** contributing to reinvigorating Modern Languages nationally

# Disciplines

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Research Council



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of EDINBURGH



The University of  
Nottingham

UNITED KINGDOM • CHINA • MALAYSIA



Queen's University  
Belfast

# Which languages?

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Major European and world languages:

- traditionally studied : French, German, Spanish
- newly introduced into UK education: Mandarin Chinese

Minoritised languages:

- in the UK: Scottish Gaelic, Irish, Welsh
- in mainland Europe: Catalan, Ukrainian

Community languages:

- in the UK: Bengali, Polish, Cantonese
- adding case studies as appropriate: Arabic, Urdu



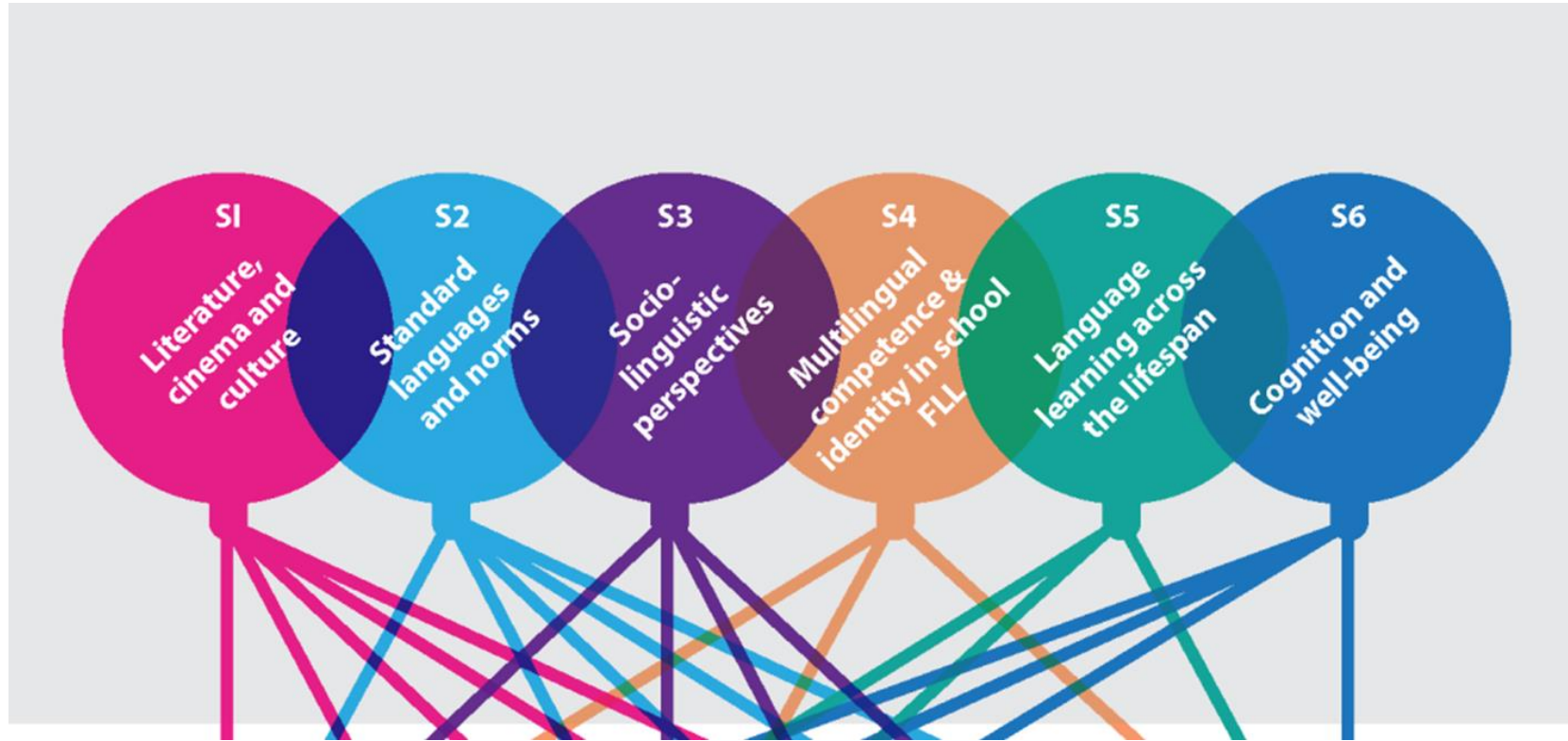


# Our six research strands

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# External partners I

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- Language associations and language policy
  - Routes into Languages, Speak to the Future, NALDIC, ALL, Association of Language Testers in Europe, NI Department for Communities
- Schools and language teaching/assessment bodies
  - British-Chinese Language Teaching Society, Jack Hunt School Peterborough
- National bodies and charitable foundations
  - Age UK, U3A, Royal College of Speech & Language Therapists, British Chambers of Commerce, Bell Foundation, Co-operation Ireland
- International bodies
  - UNESCO, Institut Ramon Llull
- Grassroots bodies
  - Cambridge Ethnic Community Forum, East Belfast Mission, Polword



## Strand 2 external partners

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- Association of Language Testers in Europe (ALTE)
- Cambridge Assessment English
- European Federation of National Institutions for Language
- HarperCollins Publishers
- Nottingham Writers' Studio
- Nottingham City Council's IDEAL





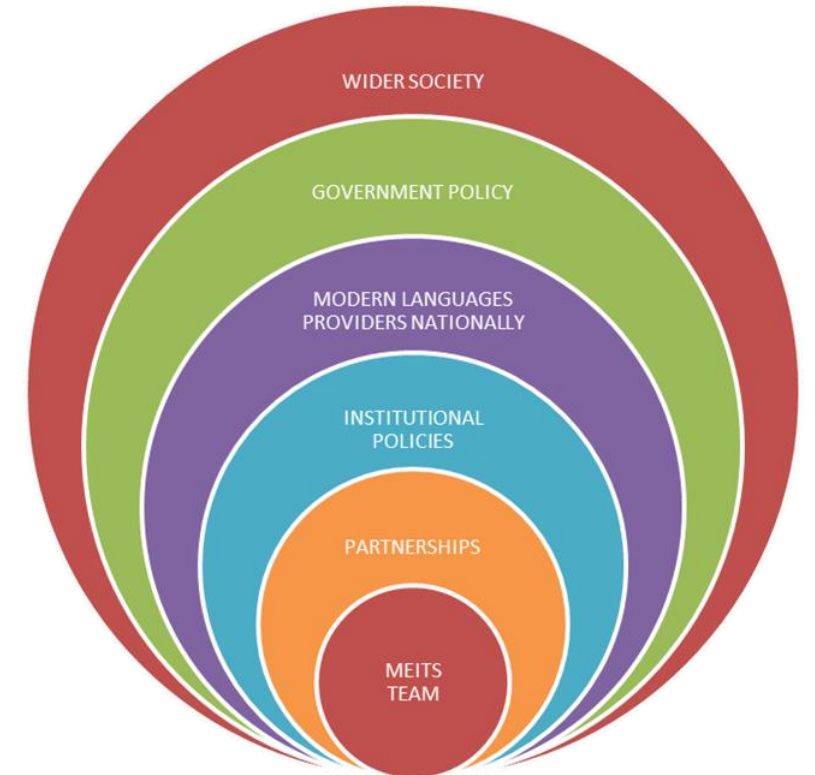
# The MEITS impact agenda

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- **New kinds of non-HEI partnerships** to help us disseminate our research
- Focus on **education, communities and government, shaping attitudes *and* policy**
- **Influencing government** via policy fellows, workshops, briefings, policy journal, *Languages, Society and Policy* (<http://www.meits.org/languages-society-policy>)
- **Wider cultural change** through public engagement events, creative arts, pop-up museum, media, schools programmes



# Strand 2. Standard Languages, Norms and Variation: Comparative Perspectives in Multilingual Contexts

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University of Nottingham

Nicola McLelland (Strand Lead)



Hui (Annette) Zhou (PDRA)



Jiaye Wu (PhD student)



University of Cambridge

Wendy Ayres-Bennett (Project Lead)



John Bellamy (PDRA)



## Strand 2 Aspects of current research (1)

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- Contemporary and historical processes of language standardization  
Perspectives on standard and non-standard language, language norms and language variation in multilingual contexts:
  - ‘from above’: policy makers and regulatory bodies
  - key intermediaries: learning materials and language societies
  - ‘from below’: ordinary language users and language societies

## Strand 2 Aspects of current research (2)

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Standards, norms and reforms: implications for education sector

- The role of teachers, textbooks and curricula in the dissemination of norms
- Identifying needs and challenges for teachers and learners in highly multilingual and multicultural contexts

Informing policy in the intersection between language, identity and social cohesion

- Researching places and contexts where language issues are politically sensitive: Catalonia, China and Luxembourg
- Improved understanding of the spectrum of views on local, regional and national varieties leads to improved input on key policy decisions



# Strand 2 Engagement and activities

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## International conferences and workshops



- *The Emergence of Standard English in Multilingual Britain, April 2017*
- *European experiences of ‘good’ language, ‘bad’ language, July 2017*
- *Language Standardization and Linguistic Variation in Asia from Sociolinguistic Perspectives, December 2017*
- *Global approaches to multilingualism and standardisation, April 2018*



# Language rules? Languages, standards and linguistic inequality: multilingualism and variation in education, law and citizenship April 15-17, 2019



- The effects of **standard language ideologies, language planning, and lay notions of correctness, in education** (e.g. language testing) **and everyday life** (e.g. where failing to allow for minority and non-standard language patterns contributes to the kinds of inequality more usually associated with race, gender, and the income gap)
- Bringing together **researchers** and **practitioners**
- Outputs: short briefing papers for a non-specialist audience
- Keynote papers to include: *Language and the Law* (Prof. Douglas Kibbee, University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign); *Invisible languages and the Diversity agenda* (Prof. Bettina Migge, University College Dublin)

# Language rules? Languages, standards and linguistic inequality: multilingualism and variation in education, law and citizenship April 15-17, 2019



We envisage panels with stakeholders and practitioners on themes including the following:

- **Education:** e.g. Learner grammars and dictionaries
- **Language rights, language policy and language legislation**
- **Language and diversity at University** (i.e. lack of visibility of language competencies in staff and student body, lack of attention to this aspect of diversity in EDI agendas)
- **Language testing**
- **Language codification** – practitioners' perspectives
- **Language and citizenship** (in everyday life, e.g. access to services, visible and invisible languages in public life)

## Proposed panels (among others) where we would welcome EFNIL input - bringing together researchers and practitioners

- **Codifying diversity - Finding space for variation in codification, policy and planning**  
What kinds of variation can/should be recognized as part of codification?
- **Orthography** - Codification of spelling and lay attitudes to correctness/errors
- **Standard language as a monolingual ideal in a multilingual world**

There is still time to shape the programme too...

- **Supplementary / heritage language education**
- **Codification – killer or saviour of minoritized languages?**
- ...?

# Research in Luxembourg – John Bellamy

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- Research conducted in **Luxembourg**, Spring 2018, interviewing a range of stakeholders, including policymakers about their knowledge of, and views on, Luxembourg language policy and especially on the standardisation of orthography
- Since norms are disseminated by both **state institutions** and **private/commercial organisations**, both types of bodies were consulted. State institutions: Conseil permanent de la langue luxembourgeoise (CPLL), Lëtzebuerger Online Dictionnaire (LOD), Institut National des Langues (INL); private organisations: RTL.lu news website, Spellchecker.lu, publisher in Luxembourg
- The **process of norm transmission, diffusion and implementation** (via, for example, teachers, the media and publishers) has a considerable impact on the general acceptance and perception of linguistic norms and standards

# Research in Luxembourg – some key findings

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- Unsurprisingly, debates about language are often a **proxy for debates on other social/political issues**. In response to Pétition 698, calling for further promotion and expansion of Luxembourgish in official contexts, the state-funded Institut National des Langues opened up classes on Luxembourgish spelling assuming this represented a surge of interest in written Luxembourgish. Only 7 people turned up.
- State language institutions would benefit from incorporating a **more effective feedback loop** to ensure that public awareness of official policies/decisions. Key laws were passed in 1975 and 1999 which established an official spelling system. However, some of the people interviewed doubted that many Luxembourgers know about this. Similarly, in a previous Luxembourg study hardly any of the participants mentioned any of the above.



## Research in Luxembourg – some key findings

- The **private/commercial channels** are often more effective in reaching a wider audience; however, consistency of the rules is not ensured because these organisations do not always work together.
- In reality, **practical considerations can outweigh linguistic reasons**
  - The RTL.lu news website is one of the main resources for reading contemporary written Luxembourgish. However, the journalists work under strict time constraints and cannot always ensure every word they publish is ‘correct’ according to the official orthography.
  - In the publishing sector, commercial interests and concerns over readership size can take precedence over decisions whether to publish works in Luxembourgish. Books in Luxembourgish are confined to a smaller book market and geographical area. In any case, Luxembourgers are more used to reading in French, German or English.

# Teaching and learning Mandarin Chinese as an L2 to Mongolian learners in China since 1900 - Jiaye (Jenny) Wu

- Investigating the under-researched **history of the teaching and learning of Mandarin Chinese as a L2 to Mongolian learners within China** since 1900
- For minority language speakers in China, learning the national language is part of being bi- / multilingual. Thus, focusing on the case of the history of learning the national language among Mongolians in China can address the **benefits and challenges of multilingualism** in Chinese society, caught in the tension between the aim of **unifying and modernizing the country**, and **maintaining the cultural and language rights of ethnic minorities**

# Teaching and learning Mandarin Chinese as an L2 to Mongolian learners in China since 1900 - Jiaye (Jenny) Wu

- Focusing primarily on textbooks, but also drawing on policy documents, statements of pedagogical theory, interviews and classroom observations in Hohhot, Inner Mongolia
- Examination of the kinds of linguistic knowledge taught and the pedagogical methods employed (e.g. changing presentation of correct pronunciation)
- How Chinese national and ethnic identities been discursively constructed and presented to Mongolian learners and what impact this has/has had on the status of Mongolian and Mandarin language and culture

# Teaching and learning Mandarin Chinese as an L2 to Mongolian learners in China since 1900 - Jiaye (Jenny) Wu

- Examination of how a national language and national identities are promulgated within a minority ethnic group over time
- Addresses important questions about the impact of language policies on social cohesion and ethnic minorities' language and cultural rights in multilingual China
- This in turn can provide critical insights into the role of national language in multilingualism and generate some valuable comparisons with the UK situation when it comes to language policy

# Multilingualism and language variation in Shanghai and Ningbo – Hui (Annette) Zhao

## Research questions

- What are the effects of globalisation and multilingualism on the standard language in a recently reformed economy and society?
- How are languages and varieties used and perceived in China, specifically in Shanghai and Ningbo?
- How do young Chinese adults negotiate their linguistic and socio-political identity in an increasingly multilingual society with a rigid standard language ideology?

## Methodology

- Mixed method; collecting data from native speakers, educators and policy makers to help understand different perspectives on language standards and variation



# Multilingualism and language variation in Shanghai and Ningbo – Hui (Annette) Zhao

Results of a pilot study conducted on social media about language attitudes in Ningbo and Shanghai

- Regional varieties of the standard in Ningbo and Shanghai are considered non-standard on social media
- They are also considered feminine/effeminate and representative of popular linguistic and cultural stereotypes of different cities (Ningbo = harsh-sounding, unfashionable, etc.; Shanghai = soft-sounding, fake, stingy, etc.)
- Dialect preservation in Shanghai receives more attention in social media than Ningbo, though the latter has a smaller speaker population

# CUP Handbook of Standardisation

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## Part I: Revisiting models and theories of language standardization

### 1. Refining models of language standardization

Wendy Ayres-Bennett, University of Cambridge

### 2. Language standardization ‘from above’

Gijsbert Rutten, Leiden University and Rik Vosters, Vrije Universiteit Brussel

### 3. Language standardization ‘from below’

Stefan Elspaß, University of Salzburg

### 4. Transnational standards of language

Raymond Hickey, University of Duisburg-Essen

### 5. Comparing standardization between languages of Asian origin (‘East’) and languages of European origin (‘West’)

Patrick Heinrich, Ca’ Foscari University of Venice and Kiyoshi Hara, Joshibi University of Art and Design

# CUP Handbook of Standardisation



## Part II: Authority and legitimacy

### 6. Language standardization ideologies and practices in grammars and dictionaries

Nicola McLelland, University of Nottingham

### 7. State-appointed institutions

Darren Paffey, University of Southampton

### 8. Language policy and planning in the context of standard languages

Douglas Kibbee, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

### 9. New Speaker Target Varieties: Tradition or Innovation?

Michael Hornsby, Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań

### 10. Standardization and literature

Nicoletta Maraschio, University of Florence and Tina Matarrese

### 11. Standardization, Prestige and Acceptance: A Case of Hindi in Multilingual India

Anvita Abbi, Simon Fraser University, Vancouver BC



# CUP Handbook of Standardisation



## Part III: Education and norms

### 12. Polynomic standards: the enactment of legitimate variation

Alexandra Jaffe, California State University Long Beach

### 13. Standardisation and Indigenous languages in education settings

Samantha Disbray, Charles Darwin University, Australia

### 14. Norms, among the united representation of reality and the acknowledgement of internal diversity of languages

Francesc Feliu and Josep Maria Nadal, University of Girona

### 15. Standard languages in the context of bilingual education in California

Claire Kramersch, University of California, Berkeley and Robert Train, Sonoma State University, California

### 16. Setting standards for language learning and assessment in educational contexts - a multilingual perspective

Antony Kunnan, University of Macao and Nick Saville, Cambridge Assessment English



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## Part IV: Borderlands and boundaries

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### 17. Standardisation of a stateless language: The case of Romani

Yaron Matras, University of Manchester

### 18. Standardization of Minority Languages in China: Nation-State Building and Globalization

Minglang Zhou, University of Maryland

### 19. Creoles and decreolization

Bettina Migge, University College Dublin

### 20. Standardization across State Boundaries: the Case of Modern Ukrainian

Serhii Vakulenko, Kharkiv National Pedagogical University





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## Part V: Endangerment and revitalization in multilingual and multicultural contexts

### 21. Indigenous languages, standardisation, and curricular development: The case of the Māori language mathematics lexicon

Stephen May and Tony Trinick, The University of Auckland

### 22. When language ideologies and language boundaries mismatch: Standardization in multilingual situations

Sergio Romero, The University of Texas at Austin

### 23. Developed to kill: how standard language culture threatens the diversity it purports to protect

Friederike Lüpke, SOAS, University of London

### 24. Standardization and endangerment of a fourth world language: The case of Innu

Lynn Drapeau, Université du Québec à Montréal

### 25. Negotiating language standards and standard language in minority contexts: The case of the Irish language in Ireland

Noel Ó Murchadha, Trinity College Dublin



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## Part VI: Beyond traditional standardization

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### 26. Contemporary perceptions of standard languages

John Bellamy, University of Cambridge

### 27. The role of technology and 'new' media

Gerry Breslin and Helen Newstead, HarperCollins

### 28. Sign language standardization

Ronice Müller de Quadros, Federal University of Santa Catarina & Christian Rathmann, Univ. of Hamburg

### 29. Destandardization

Tore Kristiansen, University of Copenhagen

### 30. Standardization and New Urban Varieties: Focus on Arabic urban vernaculars

Catherine Miller, Aix-Marseille University



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