

# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

### *Describing the Scope of the Study*

#### 1. INTRODUCTION

In organising this survey of the language situation in the Pacific Basin, we have tried to justify the choices we have had to make. In the end, these choices may be seen as somewhat arbitrary, based on a restricted definition of the Pacific Basin and at least in part on our collective experience. Essentially, we want to differentiate between countries of the Pacific Rim, which generally have a continental orientation (including great nations of vast size and substantial wealth—the United States, Canada, the west coast of Central and South America on the eastern rim, and the Russian Federation, China and mainland south-east Asia on the western rim) and the Pacific Basin—which includes the thousands of islands suspended between the two vast continental enclaves of North and South America and Asia.

#### 2. WHAT IS THE PACIFIC BASIN?

Before undertaking any discussion of the 'Pacific Basin,' it is perhaps useful to try to define the area; the term 'Pacific Rim' is in wide circulation, but *rim* implies the edges rather than the centre. Furthermore, the term *rim*, as applied in common usage, ignores the fact that all of Central and South America also borders the Pacific Ocean. The Pacific Rim, as commonly conceived, consists largely of major players on the world scene—i.e., Canada, China, Japan, Russia, South Korea, the United States. All of these polities are relatively wealthy, relatively large, and relatively monolingual.<sup>1</sup>

The Pacific *Basin*, on the other hand, in its broadest sense subsumes a vast area, covering more than a third of the world's surface, reaching from the Arctic to the Antarctic Oceans on its north-south axis and from the edges of the American continents on the east to the edges of Asia on the west. If the Rim as defined previously is excluded, the Basin includes more than 45,000 islands (not counting the islands that constitute Japan and The Philippines), and accommodates some 300 million people. Although polities<sup>2</sup> in the basin recently have been the subject of greater focus due to their internal problems (e.g., Indonesia, Fiji or the Solomon Islands) this large multicultural and multilingual expanse is often overlooked—overshadowed by the more important Pacific Rim.

*Table 1. A Summary of Key Characteristics of Independent Pacific Basin Politics*

<b>Polity</b>	<b>Pop (Est 97)</b>	<b>Area Sq M</b>	<b>Languages</b>	<b>Status</b>
<i>Pacific Rim (21 independent politics)</i>				
Cambodia	10,385,000	70,238	Khmer, French, English, Viet	Ind
Canada	30,287,000	3,849,675	English, French, Indig, Migr	Ind
Chile	14,583,000	292,135	Spanish, Indigenous	Ind
China, PRC	1,227,740,000	3,696,100	Chin, Dialects, Minority Lang	Ind
Columbia	36,200,000	440,762	Spanish, Indigenous	Ind
Costa Rica	3,468,000	51,100	Spanish, Indigenous	Ind
Ecuador	11,952,000	272,045	Spanish, Indigenous	Ind
El Salvador	5,662,000	21,041	Spanish, Nahuatl, Poton	Ind
Guatemala	11,242,000	42,042	Spanish, Indigenous	Ind
Honduras	5,823,000	43,433	Spanish	Ind
Japan	126,110,000	145,877	Japan, Eng, Ainu, Okin, Kor	Ind
Korea, North	24,317,000	47,399	Korean	Ind
Korea, South	45,368,000	99,268	Korean, English	Ind
Mexico	94,275,000	1,958,201	Spanish, Indigenous	Ind
Nicaragua	4,632,000	31,812	Spanish, Indigenous	Ind
Panama	2,719,000	29,157	Spanish, Indigenous	Ind
Peru	24,371,000	50,893	Spanish, Quechua	Ind
Russian Federation	147,231,000	6,592,800	Russian, Indigenous	Ind
Thailand	60,602,000	198,115	Thai, Chinese, Malay	Ind
United States	267,839,000	3,679,192	English, Spanish, Indigenous	Ind
Vietnam	75,124,000	390,759	Vietnamese, Chinese, Hmong	Ind
<i>Remaining Pacific Basin (24 politics)</i>				
Australia	18,508,000	2,966,200	English, Indigenous, Migrant	Ind
Brunei	308,000	2,226	Malay, English, Indigenous	Ind
Cook Islands	17,000	91	Māori, English	In/NZ
East Timor (UN)	c.500,000	5,743	Port, Tetum	UN
Fiji	778,000	7,056	Fijian, Hindi	Ind
Hong Kong, SAR	6,304,000	422	Cantonese, English, Mandarin	Ch Ter
Indonesia	199,544,000	1,919,371	Indonesian, Javanese, Indig	Ind
Kiribati	82,400	313	I-Kiribati, English	Ind
Malaysia	21,767,000	127,311	Malay, Chinese, Tamil, Indig	Ind
Marshall Islands	60,300	70	Marshalese, English	Ind
Nauru	10,200	8	Nauruan, English	Ind
New Zealand	3,653,000	104,454	English, Māori, Migr, PaclIs	Ind
Niue	2,200	100	Niuean, English	In/NZ
Palau	17,200	188	Palauan, English	Ind
Papua New Guinea	4,496,000	178,704	English, Tok Pisin, Indig	Ind
The Philippines	70,539,000	115,860	Filipino, English, Indigenous	Ind
Samoa	169,000	1,093	Samoan, English	Ind
Singapore	3,104,000	249	English, Mand, Malay, Tamil	Ind
Solomon Islands	411,000	10,954	Pisin, English	Ind
Taiwan	21,463,000	13,969	Mandarin, English, Indig	Ind
Tokelau Islands	1,700	10.1	Tokelauan, English	NZ
Tonga	27,600	290	Tongan, English	Ind
Tuvalu	10,300	9.9	Tuvaluan, English	Ind
Vanuatu	176,000	4,707	Bislama, English, French, Ind	Ind

Broadly defined, the Pacific Basin includes some 54 politics. These politics represent a wide variety of language policy efforts. Politics represented in the Basin range from what are termed *developed* politics (e.g., Canada) to *developing* or

*under-developed* polities (e.g., Papua New Guinea)<sup>3</sup>, thus implicating rather different levels of governmental spending on language policy, on education, on language-in-education planning, and on teacher training. Some of the polities have one or more *de jure* national or official languages (e.g., Canada, The Philippines, Singapore); others have one or more *de facto* national languages (e.g., The United States), while still others are, for all practical purposes, monolingual (e.g., Japan, the two Koreas). Some have designated *de jure* 'first foreign languages' (e.g., Japan, South Korea), while others have implicit policies essentially representing responses to market forces (e.g., Chile, Colombia). Some have strongly centralised authority in relation to language, education and educational language matters (e.g., Singapore, North Korea), while other authorities operate on a highly decentralised basis (e.g., The United States, with no national Ministry of Education and with educational language decisions being made independently in each of its fifty states—in some cases even at the local school level). The relative political, linguistic, and educational histories of policy development vary from polities with a long-standing educational history (e.g., The People's Republic of China with a history going back over 1,000 years) to polities only recently emerged into independent status having yet to develop education histories (e.g., The Federated States of Micronesia, which achieved independence only in 1986). Some polities are dependent on expatriate policy (e.g., American Samoa, Hawaii, Guam, Alaska) while others have policies interrupted by the events of World War II and other political upheavals (e.g., Indonesia, South Korea, Malaysia, Taiwan). The definition of free compulsory education varies widely from 6 to 12 years. The polities of the Pacific Basin have been exposed to quite different religious influences (e.g., Brunei—an Islamic Kingdom, the Māori people of New Zealand, Tonga to Christianity). The polities are vastly different in population, from mega-states like China with more than a billion people to tiny polities like the Tokelau Islands with a population of only 1,430 individuals. In some cases, the best efforts of various polities may often be frustrated by the linguistic behaviour of various diaspora (e.g., the Chinese and 'Indian' Diaspora around the Basin). In sum, the diversity among the fifty-five polities in the Pacific Basin is great along every conceivable dimension, in part because language is no respecter of political boundaries. Some of the key characteristics of these polities are summarised in Tables 1 and 2. (Also see Appendix A, Figure 4.)

*Table 2. Some Key Characteristics of Pacific Basin Polities—American and French*

Polity	Pop (Est 97)	Area Sq M	Languages	Status
<i>French possessions and United States states and territories (9)</i>				
Alaska	550,000	591,004	Eng, Ind, Migr	US St
French Polynesia	188,000	402	Fr, Tahitian	Fr
Guam	139,000	541	Eng	US Ter
Hawai'i	1,160,000	6,471	Eng, Hawai'ian	US St
Mariana Islands	44,800	184	English, Chamorro	US Ter
Fed St Micronesia	111,000	271	Indig, English	US Pro
New Caledonia	183,000	7,172	Indig, French	Fr
Samoa, American	57,000	199	Samoaan, English	US Ter
Wallis and Futuna	14,700	106	Wallisian, French	Fr

Language and Language-in-Education Planning in the  
Pacific Basin

Kaplan, R.B.; Baldauf Jr., R.B.

2003, XII, 277 p., Hardcover

ISBN: 978-1-4020-1062-0