


CHAPTER 2

Linguistic Analysis of Most Commonly Spoken Languages in New York State





IN TEACHING LANGUAGE ARTS to students in bilingual programs, it is important to become cognizant of the linguistic differences among languages, especially in those commonly taught in New York State. Developing an understanding of the linguistic features of English and the native language will facilitate the transference of language skills and promote strategies for integration of native language arts standards into the curriculum, instruction, and assessment. This information is also of great value to teachers of English as a second language.

Language is a medium of communication that enables us to exchange meaningful messages with our fellow human beings by means of discourses and texts, which are structured according to the rules and conventions of that particular language (Jackson & Stockwell, 1996). Language is an organized system of symbols. In oral language, the symbols (speech) are auditory; in written language the symbols (print) are visual. Oral language and written language work in different ways. As we speak, we can vary stress, speed, volume, pauses for breathing, and tones, as well as speech sounds (Goodman, 1993). On the other hand, writing systems are codes for spoken language. Letters are arbitrary symbols for sounds in speech. One important consideration is that some LEP/ELLs may come from cultures and countries where there is no literate tradition, but a vast and rich oral tradition.

In alphabetic languages such as Spanish and English, the system of symbols is arbitrary. For example, the words *gato* (Spanish) and *cat* (English) do not bear any relationship to the animal. However, in nonalphabetic languages like Chinese,

which uses ideographs, the written symbols are visual illustrations of the concepts they represent. As depicted in the following chart, the linguistic rules on which each language is based may vary from language to language; however, the presence of these features demonstrates the universal aspects of all languages. These rules determine how the systems—phonology (the sound system), syntax (the grammatical system), and semantics (the meaning system)—of a language work.

English, Haitian Creole, Polish, and Spanish are alphabetic languages using the Roman alphabet, while Russian uses the Cyrillic alphabet. These languages belong to the Indo-European family of languages. On the other hand, Arabic, Bengali, and Korean which are also alphabetic languages, use different sets of characters from a variety of language families. Chinese, which is a logographic language, uses individual ideograms that represent ideas. It belongs to the Sino-Tibetan language family.

The following pages will present a brief linguistic analysis of English, along with the most commonly spoken languages by LEP/ELLs in New York State: Arabic, Bengali, Chinese, Haitian Creole, Korean, Polish, Russian, Spanish, and Urdu. This chart will familiarize native language arts and English as a second language teachers with the different linguistic features in each language and its relationship to English. In addition, included in this chapter is a map of the world with countries and languages identified. For further information on language families of the world, please see Appendix A.

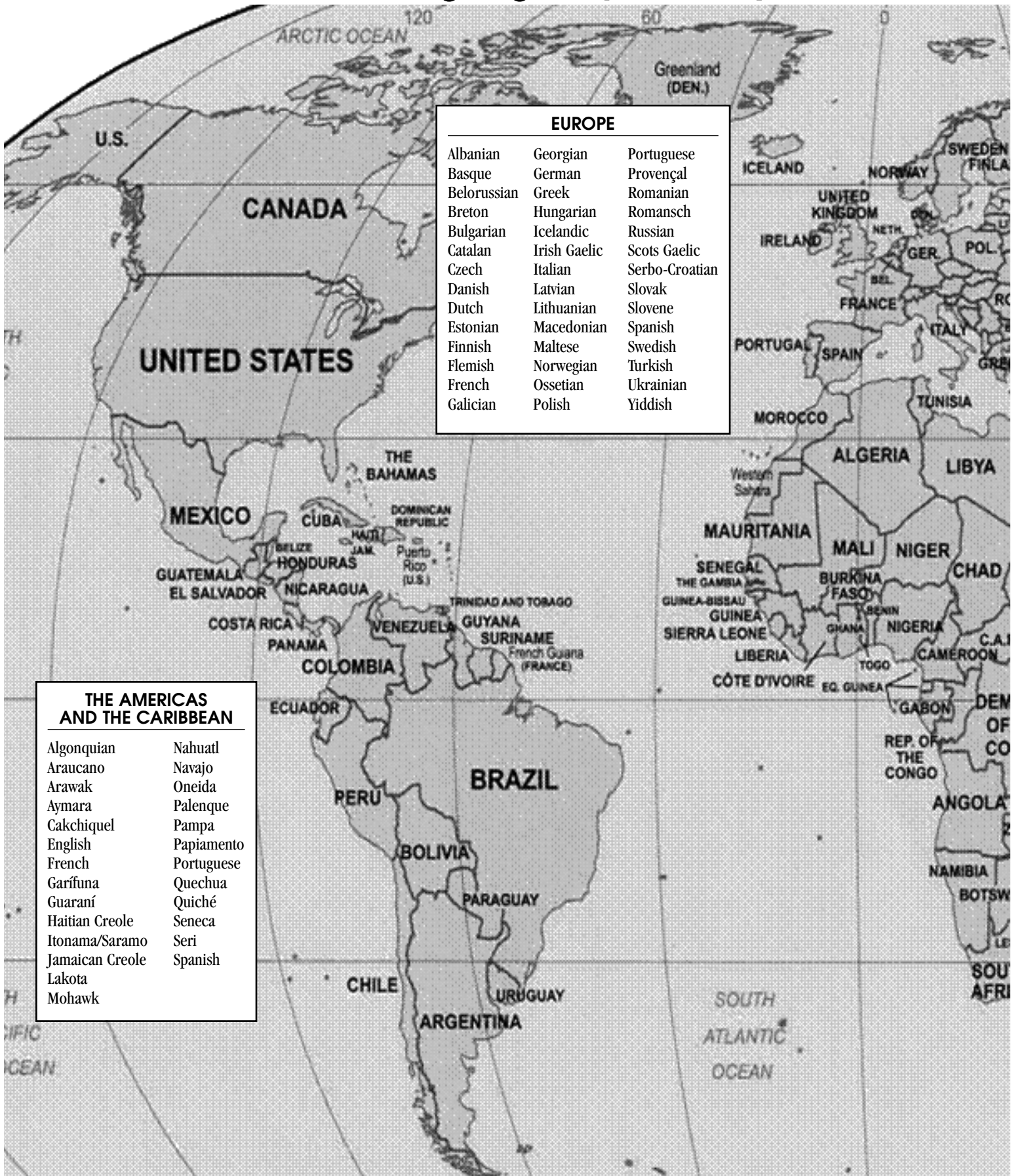
Linguistic Analysis of Most Commonly

LANGUAGE	Writing System	Orthography	Phonology
ENGLISH	Alphabetic 26 letters (Roman)	Both manuscript (printing) and cursive writing, as well as upper- and lower-case letters are used; writing is from left to right, top to bottom of page.	5 vowels 21 consonants Vowel and consonant cluster sounds may vary.
ARABIC	Alphabetic 28+ symbols	Cursive only, written from right to left.	3 vowel sounds 26 consonant sounds
BENGALI	Alphabetic 50+ symbols	A descended form of Sanskrit, the characters hang from a horizontal line, with no distinct upper- and lower-case; writing is from left to right, top to bottom of page.	11 vowel symbols/graphemes 42 consonants symbols/graphemes Nasalization is a distinctive feature.
CHINESE	Logographic up to 50,000 characters	Chinese uses logographs of several types, including pictographs, ideographs, and compound ideographs. There are also traditional and simplified versions of the logographs. Traditional forms are written from the top right hand corner down to the bottom and then from the top down on the next line to the left. Simplified forms are written left to right and top to bottom.	Depending on the form of spoken Chinese, there are up to 15 vowels, 27 consonants and 7 tones. All Chinese languages share a common literacy language in characters and based on a common body of literature. A speaker of Chinese reads texts according to the rules of pronunciation of his own language.
HAITIAN CREOLE	Alphabetic 26 letters (Roman)	Both manuscript (printing) and cursive writing, as well as upper- and lower-case letters are used; writing is from left to right, top to bottom of page.	7 non-nasal and 3 nasal vowel sounds 7 non-nasals: <i>a, e, è, i, o, ô, ou</i> 3 nasals: <i>an, en, on</i> 17 consonant sounds
KOREAN	Alphabetic 40 symbols	Hangul script, invented under the leadership of King Sejong was instituted in 1446 A.D. In former times, it was written in vertical columns; however, modern Korean is written horizontally from left to right.	10 cardinal vowels 11 compound vowels 19 consonants.
POLISH	Alphabetic 32 letters (Roman)	Both manuscript (printing) and cursive writing as well as upper- and lower-case letters are used; writing is from left to right, top to bottom of page.	9 vowels 23 consonants Additional phonology to 26 letters: nasal vowels, soft consonants, consonant clusters, and 2 kinds of <i>u</i> sounds.
RUSSIAN	Alphabetic 33 letters (Cyrillic)	Both manuscript (printing) and cursive writing as well as upper- and lower-case letters are used; writing is from left to right, top to bottom of page.	10 vowels 21 consonants, Two letters without sound soft sounds and hard sounds.
SPANISH	Alphabetic 27 letters (Roman)	Both manuscript (printing) and cursive writing as well as upper- and lower-case letters are used; writing is from left to right, top to bottom of page; accent marks indicate stress; uses different punctuation devices: <i>¿...?</i> for questions and <i>¡...!</i> for exclamations.	5 pure vowels 24 consonants Four diphthongs; the letter <i>b</i> is the only silent letter; the only double consonants are <i>ch, ll</i> and <i>rr</i> each of which has a unique sound.
URDU	Alphabetic 39 letters + diacritic marks, numerals, punctuation marks	Similar to Perso-Arabic script. Cursive writing is used. Written from right to left. The alphabet consists of only shapes for the consonants. The graphic representation of each consonant has more than one form depending on its position and context in the word. Urdu has its own numerals written left to right (also uses the English numerals)	4 vowels. The vowels are part of the basic letters. In addition to vowels there are diacritic marks that appear above or below a character to specify a vowel or emphasize a particular sound. 35 consonants. There are consonants with similar phonetic sounds (homonyms).

Spoken Languages in New York State

Morphology	Word Order	Sample Sentence
Plurals of nouns require markers, and verb tenses can involve both markers and modal auxiliaries.	Subject-Verb-Object	The teacher greets the students.
Markers are not needed for objects in a sentence, but are always required for the subject.	Verb-Subject-Object	المعلمة تحيي الطلاب
Noun phrases are marked for number and case, subject position is sometimes left empty.	Subject-Object-Verb	শিক্ষকগণ ছাত্র-ছাত্রীদেরকে সাদর সম্বাষণ জানায়।
In an ideograph, one character = one concept and one morpheme. There are combinations of ideographs which, when placed side by side form new concepts. Chinese languages do not have inflections. Particles may attach to nouns, verbs and adjectives to denote grammatical notions. The word stem does not change in form.	Subject-Verb-Object	老師歡迎學生
Verb tenses not nouns assign gender; words can have multiple meanings depending on content.	Subject-Verb-Object Word order varies; articles are often noun heads; intonation can replace Subject-Verb-Object rule.	Pwofesè a salye elèv yo.
Tenses are expressed by agglutinating a tense infix to the verb. The future tense is often expressed by the present tense. Nouns are followed by a particle to indicate functions in a sentence.	Subject-Object-Verb No agreement in number or case is manifested between the noun and verb in a sentence.	선생님께서 학생들을 반기신다.
Gender and case of nouns is marked; verb tense is accented; inflections indicate singular or plural.	Subject-Verb-Object Subject pronouns not used for 1st and 2nd person; subject pronouns not always used for 3rd person.	Nauczyciel wita uczniów.
There are no articles; in general, there is only one verb form for each of the past, present, and future tenses; adjectives must agree with nouns.	Subject-Verb-Object Word order does not play a significant role.	Учитель приветствует учеников
Some subject pronouns are used, others are understood through verb markers; nouns, adjectives, and articles have masculine and feminine markers; subjunctive mood is used frequently.	Subject-Verb-Object Word order can vary; adjectives tend to follow nouns; adverbs are not placed between auxiliary and main verbs; Spanish uses double negative; no use of auxiliary for negation.	El maestro saluda a los estudiantes.
Markers are used for the subject. Diacritic marks are used for vowels. Uses past, present and future verb tense.	Subject-Object-Verb	استاد نے طلباء کو خوش آمدید کہا۔

Languages Spoken by LEP/ELLs

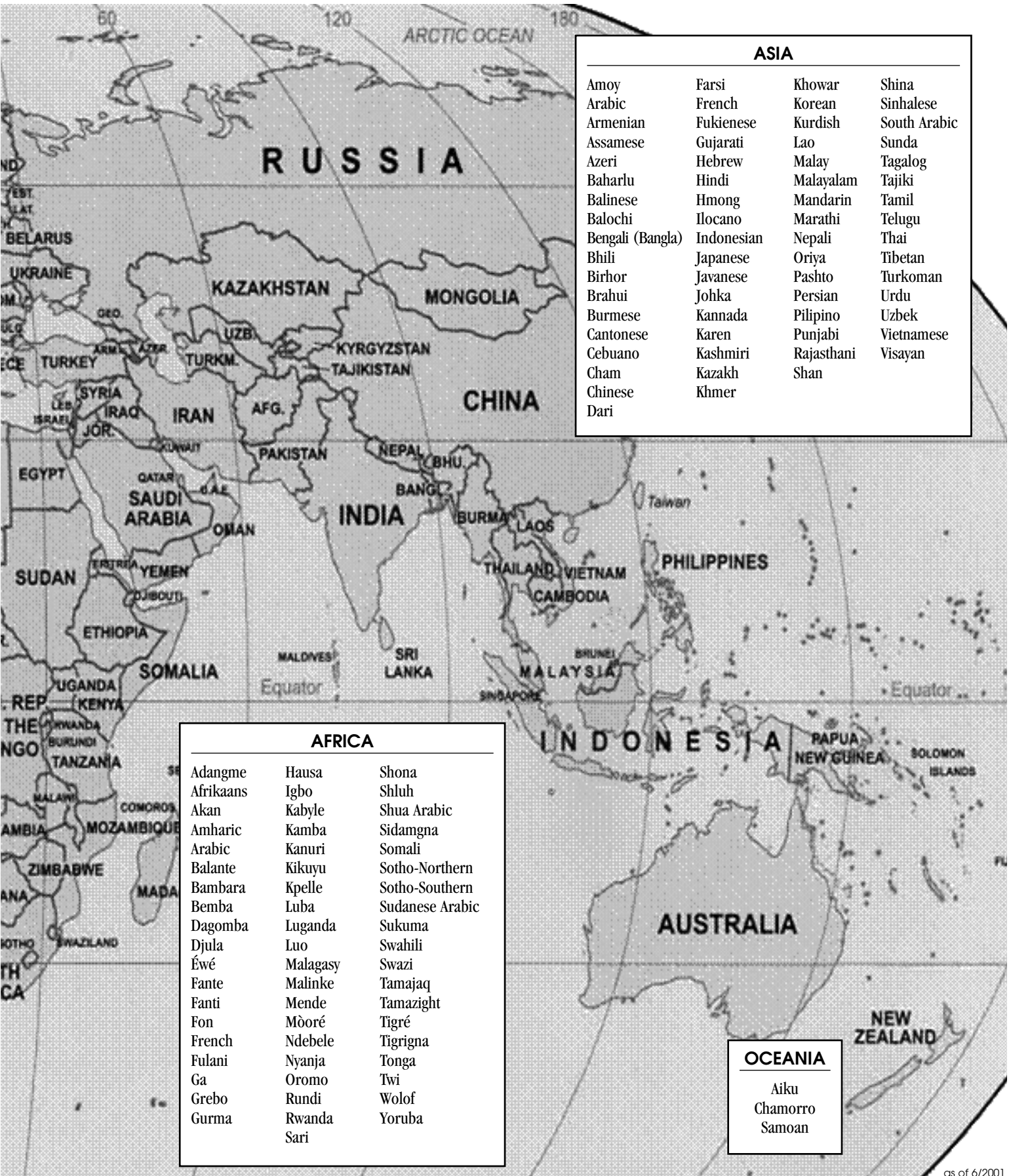


EUROPE		
Albanian	Georgian	Portuguese
Basque	German	Provençal
Belorussian	Greek	Romanian
Breton	Hungarian	Romansh
Bulgarian	Icelandic	Russian
Catalan	Irish Gaelic	Scots Gaelic
Czech	Italian	Serbo-Croatian
Danish	Latvian	Slovak
Dutch	Lithuanian	Slovene
Estonian	Macedonian	Spanish
Finnish	Maltese	Swedish
Flemish	Norwegian	Turkish
French	Ossetian	Ukrainian
Galician	Polish	Yiddish

THE AMERICAS AND THE CARIBBEAN	
Algonquian	Nahuatl
Araucano	Navajo
Arawak	Oneida
Aymara	Palenque
Cakchiquel	Pampa
English	Papiamentu
French	Portuguese
Garfuna	Quechua
Guaraní	Quéché
Haitian Creole	Seneca
Itonama/Saramo	Seri
Jamaican Creole	Spanish
Lakota	
Mohawk	

in New York State

For further information on additional world languages, please see Appendix B



ASIA			
Amoy	Farsi	Khovar	Shina
Arabic	French	Korean	Sinhalese
Armenian	Fukienese	Kurdish	South Arabic
Assamese	Gujarati	Lao	Sunda
Azeri	Hebrew	Malay	Tagalog
Baharlu	Hindi	Malayalam	Tajiki
Balinese	Hmong	Mandarin	Tamil
Balochi	Ilocano	Marathi	Telugu
Bengali (Bangla)	Indonesian	Nepali	Thai
Bhili	Japanese	Oriya	Tibetan
Birhor	Javanese	Pashto	Turkoman
Brahui	Johka	Persian	Urdu
Burmese	Kannada	Pilipino	Uzbek
Cantonese	Karen	Punjabi	Vietnamese
Cebuano	Kashmiri	Rajasthani	Visayan
Cham	Kazakh	Shan	
Chinese	Khmer		
Dari			

AFRICA		
Adangme	Hausa	Shona
Afrikaans	Igbo	Shluh
Akan	Kabyle	Shua Arabic
Amharic	Kamba	Sidamgna
Arabic	Kanuri	Somali
Balante	Kikuyu	Sotho-Northern
Bambara	Kpelle	Sotho-Southern
Bemba	Luba	Sudanese Arabic
Dagomba	Luganda	Sukuma
Djula	Luo	Swahili
Éwé	Malagasy	Swazi
Fante	Malinke	Tamajaq
Fanti	Mende	Tamazight
Fon	Mòoré	Tigré
French	Ndebele	Tigrigna
Fulani	Nyanja	Tonga
Ga	Oromo	Twi
Grebo	Rundi	Wolof
Gurma	Rwanda	Yoruba
	Sari	

OCEANIA
Aiku
Chamorro
Samoan

as of 6/2001

