

English Bilingual Education in East Asia

Rationales, Reality, Risks and Rewards

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10 November 2010

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Learning through English can play an important role in progress towards the millennium development goals as a valuable component of mother-tongue based multilingual education.

The British Council's Charter

‘To advance any purpose which is exclusively charitable and which shall:

- promote a wider knowledge of the United Kingdom;
- **develop a wider knowledge of the English language;**
- encourage cultural, scientific, technological and other educational co-operation between the United Kingdom and other countries;
- or otherwise promote the advancement of education’.

Session Outline

- 1) Rationale for learning through English
- 2) Overview of research
- 3) Key findings
- 4) Implications for stakeholders

English Bilingual Education?

‘Learning through English’

‘Multilingual Education, with English as one of the languages of instruction, the other likely being the national language or language of wider communication of the country concerned.’

(Adapted from Johnstone, Richard (2010), *Learning through English: policies, challenges and prospects*, Kuala Lumpur: British Council)

Rationale

English?

- Lingua franca?
- Lingua economica?
- Lingua emotiva?
- Lingua cultura?
- Lingua bellica?
- Lingua academica?
- Lingua divina?
- Lingua Frankensteinia?
- Lingua Tyrannosaura?

(Phillipson, R. (2009), *Disciplines of English and Disciplining in English*, Asian EFL Journal 11/4)

English as a local language

Higgins, Christina (2009), *English as a local language*, Bristol: Multilingual Matters



To Lova Primus!

Quadriglossic language structure in DRC

Status	Type of Language
H1	Super-International Language <i>English</i>
L1 / H2	Ex-Colonial Language <i>French</i>
H3 / L2	Indigenous Lingua-Franca <i>Lingala</i>
L3	Indigenous Languages <i>Kicongo, Tshiluba, Ngbala, etc.</i>

(adapted from Batibo, 2006: 137)

Afrocentrism

“... a view of the world that puts Africa at the centre of global concerns and idealizes its role in human affairs ... to restore pride and confidence to black people in their own African heritage.” (Mazrui, 2004: 95)

“The linguistic challenge and dilemma confronting the Afrocentrist, then, has been how to articulate a counter-hegemonic and anti-Eurocentric discourses [sic] in a language of 'internal' imperialism.”
(Mazrui, 2004: 99)

The Research – learning through English

The goal of the research is to investigate:

- what is happening across the region with regard to policy
- what sort of approach MoEs might develop
- what are the potential risks and rewards of implementing learning through English
- how can risks be minimised, and chances of success maximised

The Research Publications

Bax, Stephen (2010), *Researching English Bilingual Education*, Malaysia: British Council

Johnstone, Richard (ed.) (2010), *Learning Through English: Policies, Challenges, and Prospects*, Malaysia: British Council

(including articles by:

Hadisantosa, Nilawati

Huong, To Thi Thu

Johnstone, Richard

Keyuravong, Sonthida

Lee, Won Key)

South Korea (Bax; Lee)

- Initial plan (political?) for immersion in all schools – deemed unfeasible
- Therefore Teaching English in English (TEE)
- Doesn't diminish prestige of Korean language
- MEST: increase number of TEE capable teachers from 58% to 80% in 2 years
- PEA's must train ALL teachers to ensure equality
- Incentives for schools to replace native speakers with local teachers
- Generally positive view from all stakeholders

South Korea: contributing factors to success

- Feasible
- Clearly defined model
- Respectful of local language / culture
- Clear, measurable goals
- Locally owned
- Equitable

Indonesia

Clegg, J. (2007), *The development of SBI schools in Indonesia. Report of a fact-finding visit to Indonesia undertaken for the British Council Oct 29 – Nov 03 2007*

Coleman, H (2009), *Teaching other subjects through English in three Asian nations: a review. Unpublished report commissioned by the British Council*

The SBI program – key challenges and criticisms

- Learning through English is not necessary in the legislation – but has become the de facto focus of the schools' development
- English is being introduced too early – Y1, not Y4
- Teacher competence is low – less than 25% competent (MoNE official), and therefore learning of English and subjects negatively affected
- No clear model for learning through English – even in the same school
- English is replacing local languages in the curriculum, and negative effect on perception of bahasa Indonesian
- Cultural depositing – inappropriate content, materials, and curriculum imported rather than teaching Indonesian curriculum through English
- Quantity over quality – demand and profit driven
- Poorly trained and unqualified native English speakers
- Inequitable funding – up to USD \$55k per year extra; disparity between schools growing, and even disparity within schools – divisive.
- 2 tier education system? Anti-constitutional?
- Testing and assessment still in bahasa Indonesian
- Open resistance to equitable plans for merit-based entry for %

Recommendations – government / MoEs

- Learning through English can play an important role in progress towards the millennium development goals as a valuable component of mother-tongue based multilingual education (not English monolingual education);
- Focus on the method and process with clear educational goals in planning policy, not economic output;
- Make the quality of education generally the focus for development, not the introduction of English;
- Clarify which model of learning through English;
- Focus on quality rather than quantity;
- English should be taught in addition to, not at the expense of MTs;
- Materials should be locally owned and developed;
- Equity and social inclusivity should be a guiding factor in planning and policy – through community schools (eg British Council in Papua), funding contingent upon merit-based outreach, English for all (not just in elite academies) etc.
- Restrictions on visas for under-qualified native speakers;
- Comprehensive teacher-training not just in English, but in teaching and learning through English (which are very different skills)
- Defocusing from fluency and acculturation to appropriation;

Recommendations for the international ELT sector (BC, TESOL, IATEFL, int. private language schools)

- English in Development as a specific branch of ELT, focusing on developing English as a local language
- Minimum qualifications for native English speaker teachers (DELTA equiv.)
- Informing partner governments about learning through English policies which are harmful or disruptive through research and dissemination
- Partnering local teachers and educators in English in development, not depositing
- Investment in local materials
- Take principled positions on issues such as the language of instruction – and follow them

Recommendations for the classroom: English in Fragile States (Whitehead, 2010)

- *Use critical praxis in my lessons, to develop English as a local language*
- *I will help my learners to explore who they are, who they want to be, and how English will help them get there.*
- *I will explore challenging issues in the classroom, ensuring that the environment is supportive.*
- *I will encourage my learners' pride in their MT and other local languages, and use them positively in the classroom.*
- *I will raise learners' awareness of embedded cultural hegemony in English and other language texts.*
- *I will encourage language mixing, and the development of learners' spontaneous grammar for complex language identities*

Thank You!

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