Conference Report:

International Conference on Language Development, Language Revitalization and Multilingual Education in Ethnolinguistic Communities

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# Table of Contents

1. Introduction ...........................................................................................................3

2. Mother Tongue Based Multilingual Education: A Global Perspective ..............6

3. Plenary Session on Language and Language-in-Education Policies.....................16

4. Other Reflections
   4.1 The MLE Bridge by Dr Susan Malone .........................................................18
   4.2 Language and Conflict ...............................................................................14
   4.3 Living Proof: How Papua New Guinea Delivers Education .......................17
       In Hundreds of Languages

Appendix I: Conference Announcement .................................................................24

Appendix II: Conference Programme .................................................................29

Appendix III: Conference Partners .....................................................................39

Appendix IV: Conference Organising Committee .............................................41

Contributors ............................................................................................................43
1. Introduction

Marginalized...Disadvantaged...Undeveloped...Hopeless...Forgotten...All these terms have been attached to people from ethnolinguistic minority groups.

But that is changing. Educators, linguists, development agencies, and local communities are coming together to demonstrate how education can harness the potential of ethnic languages and cultures to create powerful resources for socioeconomic development.

The Second International Conference on Language Development, Language Revitalization, and Multilingual Education in Ethnolinguistic Communities (the successor to a 2003 conference of the same name) was convened to support and encourage these efforts. Nearly 400 participants from 33 countries on six continents, representing a multitude of languages and cultures, met for three days in Bangkok to share experiences, seek advice, and encourage one another through academic presentations, panel discussions, working sessions, plenary speeches, and project exhibits.

A key focus of the conference was Mother tongue-based multilingual education (MT-based MLE) and its benefits to children and adults who do not speak or understand the official language(s) of education when they begin school. Worldwide research has demonstrated that ethnolinguistic minority children perform better in school when they develop basic literacy and numeracy skills in the language they speak best—their mother tongue—before systematically bridging to national and international languages, so that learners can fluently use two or more languages for ongoing learning and communication. Commonly cited obstacles—lack of alphabets for minority languages, unsupportive government policies, inadequate funding, limited personnel, etc.—can be overcome through cooperation.

Common points agreed upon by most participants included:

- Multilingualism should be viewed as a resource, not as a problem.
- MT-based MLE programmes hold great potential for both cultural preservation and academic advancement.
- Advocacy demonstrating the benefits of MT-based MLE is crucial at policy, implementation, and community levels.
- Many countries will not achieve their Education for all (EFA) UN Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) unless minority language issues are seriously addressed.

Participants also noted that:

- The number of countries implementing MT-based MLE programmes has been growing since 2003.
- Mother-tongue literacy is becoming valued in communities.
- MT based-MLE yields especially great benefits to girls and women in disadvantaged communities.
With conference participants renewing their commitments to advance the agendas of MT-based MLE, language development, preservation and revitalization, more positive developments and progress can be hoped for and expected before the Third Conference convenes in five years.

The conference was organized by SIL International, UNESCO-Bangkok, UNICEF, The Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization (SEAMEO), Mahidol University, CARE International, and Save the Children UK.
2. Mother Tongue Based Multilanguage Education: A Global Perspective

In this increasingly competitive and globalized world, what does it take to make a developing country a success story? Why do some race ahead, posting impressive economic gains and turning the tide on poverty, while others struggle and lag far behind? For many leaders, national unity is the bedrock upon which progress is built. A country united is a country where people put their differences aside and cooperate for the common good. Economic prosperity follows, and politics are a workable means for advancing the development of the nation. The goals are laudable, but how can they be achieved? How can unity and progress prevail over conflict and destruction where disparate peoples and cultures share the same national boundaries?

For many leaders and policy makers, an essential tool for achieving unity is to promote a national language. Through one language citizens can communicate clearly, solve problems, build harmony and work side by side towards national goals. Education is, therefore, standardized and conducted in one officially sanctioned tongue. Language diversity is discouraged and discarded. Minorities are pressured to assimilate. Some countries go so far as to ban or suppress non-official tongues. The sooner children learn the national language, policy makers reason, the sooner they will be integrated into mainstream society. It’s a basic blueprint, they believe, for making better citizens.

There is just one problem with this model: research from the world over shows that it simply does not work. Imposing a language not spoken in a child’s home – although it is the national language – as the medium of instruction as soon as they begin school, more often than not produces children who fail in academics and society. Ironically, their abilities in the national language may actually be damaged by this approach. “The best way to ensure children do not master a language that is not their mother tongue, is to use is as the only language of the classroom in the first grade,” says Sheldon Shaeffer, Director of UNESCO Asia and Pacific Regional Bureau for Education. Children need to begin their schooling in the language they speak at home, making a well-planned transition to the national language once they have mastered basic skills in their mother tongue. The evidence, overwhelmingly, supports that approach.

Numerous studies of multilingual education show that, when done correctly and with the right balance, students who are educated first in their mother tongue are more likely to become fluent in their national language. They tend to do better in school, and grow up to become educated, multilingual adults who contribute to and strengthen society. And in this day and age, when competition between countries is ever intensifying, nations need to make the most of their human, cultural and knowledge resources if they want to prosper.

That’s a message that many governments and policy makers are only just beginning to understand, and that others still have not grasped. But increasingly, members of ethnic communities, supported by linguists, academics, policymakers, and nongovernmental organizations, are determined to make their voices heard on these issues – and bring about change.
From July 1-3, 2008 in Bangkok, Thailand, nearly 400 language specialists from 33 countries on six continents, representing a multitude of languages and cultures, gathered at the Second International Conference on Language Development, Language Revitalization and Multilingual Education in Ethnolinguistic Communities. They exchanged research, experiences, ideas and plans for creating a future in which endangered languages are preserved, mother tongue-based education is the norm, and multilingualism is more prevalent and valued than it is today.

The conference, which coincided with the United Nations’ International Year of Languages, was sponsored by UNESCO, UNICEF, the Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization (SEAMEO), SIL International the Institute for Language and Culture for Rural Development at Mahidol University in Thailand, Save the Children UK and CARE.

Despite the diversity of peoples, organizations and disciplines represented at the conference, participants were in agreement on some fundamental ideas. Governments that promote a national language at the expense of linguistic diversity and mother tongues usually do so because they are convinced a common tongue is the key to a united society and efficient economic and social development. That’s a misconception. On the contrary, language specialists now “believe the mother tongue is a bridge for education, and multilingualism is a tool for building bridges between people,” said Dato’ Dr. Ahamad bin Sipon of Malaysia, Director of the SEAMEO Secretariat, during his opening remarks. Deputy Permanent Secretary of Education Dr. Chinnapat Bhumirat from host country Thailand echoed those sentiments in noting that studies show “linguistic factors have a role in eradicating poverty and hunger. People’s fundamental rights are affected by languages.”

With few nations on track to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and Education for All (EFA) objectives, advocates of mother tongue-based multilingual education (MT-based MLE) are certain their approaches can help countries reach these important targets for equitable development. It does that by making education more accessible to minorities, recognizing that development is more likely to be sustained when all population groups are educated and empowered. “The impact of literate, educated mothers on their communities in terms of better health for them and their children, higher incomes and more schooling has been well documented,” says Barbara Trudell, who has overseen programmes for SIL in several African countries. But those mothers are unlikely to attend or succeed in school when classes are taught in a dominant language that is essentially foreign to them. Recognizing and supporting language diversity, therefore, is essential for sustainable development. Linguistic diversity, says UNESCO’s Shaeffer, “is a treasure, not a problem.”

On a positive note, there has been progress in recent years. The number of countries implementing mother tongue-based multilingual education programmes has been growing since 2003 when the First International Conference on Language Development, Language Revitalization and Multilingual Education took place. “Since then, we’ve seen mother-tongue literacy becoming valued in communities, and laws being written that show a belief in the value of education” said Susan Malone, an SIL International Consultant for Multilingual Education and Chair of the Organizing Committee. “We are seeing children paying attention in school because they understand. We see them writing their own stories
in their own language for the first time. We see girls getting an education where they never
had a chance before. We see schools where there were none before.”

Despite these advances, some programmes remain weak and do not build on current
research-based evidence. The purposes and benefits of multilingual education, language
development and language revitalization are still not widely understood or accepted. Policy
makers often do not realize that in good bilingual and multilingual programmes, children
transfer the literacy and numeracy skills developed in their mother tongue to the other
languages they eventually learn, including the national language. For that transfer to be
successful, research shows that initial instruction must be in the language the child speaks at
home. If it’s not, the chances of achieving literacy are diminished. The possibility of
becoming multilingual is slight. “People learn to read, to become literate, only once, and
they build on that experience to learn other languages,” Shaeffer says. “But most education
systems are hostile to ethnic minority languages.” With the barriers and hurdles to linguistic
diversity in education still high, organizers set four main objectives for the conference:

- Raise awareness regarding the threats to the world’s linguistic and cultural diversity
  and to the social, cultural, political, economic and educational injustices faced by the
  people who come from non-dominant ethnolinguistic communities;
- Raise awareness regarding the purposes and benefits of MT-based MLE programmes
  that enable speakers of non-dominant languages to achieve educational success;
- Learn about good practices in planning, implementing and sustaining strong language
development, language revitalization and MT-based MLE programmes from the
people who are “on the ground”, engaged in such programmes; and
- Encourage participants – especially members of ethnolinguistic communities – to
develop and expand their networks of individuals and organizations engaged in these
efforts.

The more than 100 presentations at the conference were organized along five main themes:
preserving intangible cultural heritage; language development and language revitalization;
experiences in establishing MT-based MLE programmes; language and education policies;
and research studies. Furthermore, policy makers and language specialists conducted three
working sessions to discuss ways to advance the agendas of language development,
language revitalization and MT-based MLE. Exchanging ideas and experiences is important,
but creating road maps for positive change is key. “Language professionals have to ask
themselves, from what they’ve learned here, what will they do differently when they get
back home,” says Cliff Meyers, Education Adviser for UNICEF East Asia and the Pacific
Regional Office. “Otherwise, there is no point in attending an international conference.”
In many ways, linguists and language specialists have begun adopting the methods and
strategies used by those working on other major issues of global importance, such as HIV
and AIDS, and child protection. They are putting a greater emphasis on research and
evaluation to strengthen the evidence base for their theories and practice, sharing the
knowledge gained through these efforts in newly-established networks of like-minded
professionals, and using the results to advocate for their cause with policy makers and
improve the effectiveness of programmes.
Resistance, however, is still strong. The challenges can appear daunting. Among the reasons national leaders and policy makers oppose MT-based MLE are economic and political factors, concerns over national unity and colonial legacies, misunderstanding of language and issues of multilingualism, gaps in policy implementation, and technical and logistical challenges. Nonetheless, UNESCO’s Shaeffer insists these are not deadly or fatal obstacles. “All of these challenges have been successfully addressed in many countries. Therefore, they are not real obstacles if there is political will to start addressing them,” he says.

One of the most common objections raised by governments to MT-based MLE is the price tag. In countries containing dozens or even hundreds of spoken languages, governments initially recoil from the notion of providing education in all or most native languages. They assume the cost must be astronomical, and the logistical difficulties enormous. How can language advocates overcome the argument, especially in poor and developing countries, that MT-based MLE is just too expensive? “One way is to ask, what is the cost of not supporting multilingual education,” says Cliff Meyers of UNICEF. “What about the cost of drop outs and the waste of human resources as compared to the cost of implementing MLE?” he asks.

Comparisons are difficult, however, when language specialists have not put a price tag on their own programmes. “Ministries want to see these programmes costed, but even consultants designing the programmes do not do that,” says Toya Nath Battharai from Nepal. Bernard Spolsky, of Bar-Ilan University in Israel, adds, “If I’m the Minister of Finance, how can you show me this is worthwhile? They are accountants, not linguists or education experts.” Shaeffer agrees, and says research studies need to be done on the longer-term costs and benefits of implementing MT-based MLE in order to persuade the politicians. Nonetheless, the fact that Papua New Guinea, one of the poorest countries in the region, is implementing MT-based MLE in approximately half of their 800-plus languages shows that it can be done.

Issues revolving around nationalism can also present barriers. Some government officials believe that promoting language diversity fragments, rather than unites a nation. “If you talk about [rights and diversity in] language and culture you are labeled anti-state, anti-religion, anti-establishment,” says Dr. Tariq Rahman of the National Institute of Pakistan Studies in Islamabad about the situation in his country.

History supports his view. In Thailand, a Central Thai dialect was promoted as the national language as one of several tools to build a modern nation-state. Today, many government and security officials still oppose allowing an ethnic Malay minority in the Deep South to use their mother tongue as a language of instruction in schools, fearing it will fuel a separatist rebellion that has claimed more than 2,000 lives since 2004. The irony is that grievances over being forced to adopt the dominant Thai language and culture are often cited as being among the reasons for the revolt. It is not insignificant that dozens of schools have been burned down, and scores of teachers assassinated by the rebels.

Dr. Tariq noted, however, that India has allowed a great deal of linguistic diversity and for the most part is a nation a peace with its languages, so positive models do exist. While admitting that many governments do not buy the argument, Shaeffer nonetheless insists,
“linguistic diversity can support national unity.” When minority languages are respected and supported, speakers of those languages are more likely to feel they are part of their nation.

A better understanding of MT-based MLE on the part of policy makers could be the key to fostering that respect and support for minority languages, and building national unity. Rather than undermining a national language, MT-based MLE strengthens it by giving students the foundation they need to learn it: literacy and numeracy in their first language, the language spoken in their home. “Literacy in their first language provides the bridge for them to learn the national language and culture. It works because it starts with what they know, to help them learn what they do not know. Some children can make the leap across this great divide without that bridge and eventually learn the national language and learning system. But the majority of the children drop out,” says Susan Malone. Students who have dropped out are more likely to feel alienated from the national culture. It is an unlikely recipe for national unity. MT-based MLE can contribute to solving this problem.

Almost half of the world’s 6,000 languages are spoken in the Asia-Pacific region. Considering the sheer number of languages involved, it’s no surprise that advocates of MT-based MLE have not had all the success they’ve hoped for in convincing policy makers to adopt such programmes. However, Edilberto de Jesus, a former Minister of Education from the Philippines said a good strategy is to recruit the business community as an ally. Advocates were able to convince the Philippines government to support MT-based MLE when the business community became involved. The business sector once supported mandating English as the language of instruction, but eventually changed its mind when it saw the policy was not producing a well-educated workforce. “The business community had more respect for the empirical evidence than the politicians and the bureaucrats,” de Jesus says.

Policies can also change over time. Israel, for instance, has long had a policy of teaching Hebrew, Arabic and English in its schools. Hebrew was given great emphasis because it had essentially been dead for centuries as a vernacular language and needed to be revitalized as a unifying means of communication for the diverse peoples of the Jewish state. However, as Jewish people from Russia, Africa and other countries have immigrated to Israel in waves, the country has had to grapple with how to adjust its language in education policies to reflect the learning needs and cultures of these varied populations. It has had to move from a strong trilingual approach to more of a pluralistic language policy. But there is no single road map or magic formula on how to accomplish this. “Pluralism will have different
meanings in different places," says Bernard Spolsky, a world-renowned scholar of language policy. “Given the complexities, each society will have to work it out for themselves,” he says.

India has one of the more liberal language policies, with each of its 28 states allowed to adopt two official languages. Like Israel, its language in education policy is trilingual, with Hindi, English and one regional language used as media of instruction. However, over 1700 languages and dialects are spoken in India. Of these, 234 have at least 10,000 speakers. “In India there are still 30,000 to 40,000 schools where children are being taught in languages they do not understand, and so no learning takes place,” said Dhir Jhingran, Asia Regional Director of Room to Read. There is no policy preventing MT-based MLE, and so when parents pressure school administrators to introduce it, sometimes they do. “The benefits are direct,” Jhingran said, although with research and evaluation in early phases there is no evidence yet to present. Nonetheless, says de Jesus of the Philippines, “it is becoming increasingly clear that governments will not achieve their MDG and EFA goals unless children are taught in the language they know best.”

The country with the most inclusive language in education policy is Papua New Guinea. Despite having three official languages, the government has declared that all of the 800-plus languages spoken in the nation may be used in the classrooms in the communities where they are spoken. “We have yet to develop complexities in our policy making process, so it is still quite liberal,” says Andrew Ikupu of the Department of Education. “The name of the game is getting the child to understand you in the classroom.”

Getting policy makers to understand just how important, effective and beneficial MT-based MLE can be, and to devote some of the limited resources they have to it, requires evidence. That can only come from research and evaluation. While such research and evaluation is relatively plentiful in the developed world, it is sparse in the developing world. Lack of research and evaluation is often used by policy makers to avoid or reject MT-based MLE, said Dennis Malone of SIL. “Whenever we’re asked to implement a program, education officials always ask us where is the research and evaluation that shows us this will work,” he says.

While research and evaluation is beginning to be carried out in settings as diverse as South Africa, Viet Nam and Malaysia, more needs to be done. Not all research should be quantitative, says Carol Benson, an international consultant on multilingual education. Test scores alone give an incomplete picture of the child’s progress. “Qualitative data shows us a lot of good things about bilingual programmes that are not reflected in quantitative data,” she says. Malone adds that “we need both together to give us the true picture of the child.” A crucial area where more research and evaluation is needed is teacher training programmes, he says. Teachers are being asked to do a lot in MT-based MLE. Unless their training programmes are well designed they will not be able to accomplish what is being asked of them. Research and evaluation can tell if they are able to handle these responsibilities, and how to improve their training if they are not.

Malone says there are three guiding principles for research and evaluation. First, it must be collaborative. MT-based MLE includes more than the school and classroom. It includes the home and community. These need to be part of research and evaluation. Second, results
need to be presented in a way that is understandable so they can be acted up. A minister or policy maker may not have the ability to understand technical analysis, or the time to read an extensive report. Results must be in language they can understand and enables them to take appropriate action. Lastly, research and evaluation needs to be participatory. In thinking of the people who are subjects in any research and evaluation project, a phrase to remember is “Don’t do anything for us, without us.”

Why go to the trouble and expense of designing and implementing programmes to teach languages that are not the national language, have a small number of speakers, or may be dying out? What is the point of preserving languages? “There is a lot of emphasis today on preserving biodiversity, and rightly so. But we also need to emphasize preserving language and cultural diversity,” says UNESCO’s Shaeffer. “In a region as rich as Asia-Pacific, the large-scale death of languages and the cultures they support would be devastating. If we lose a rain forest or a plant species, we may lose a cure for an illness or disease. But we will also lose that cure if we lose the indigenous knowledge of that plant species because we lost the language and the culture.”

At the end of the three-day conference, nearly all of the nearly 400 delegates attended the closing ceremony, signaling the deep commitment among those working on language issues.

During the five year period between the first and second conferences, UNESCO’s Shaeffer said, efforts to save, develop and revitalize languages had increased. MT-based MLE programmes had become more plentiful. Advocacy had been stepped up and awareness had been raised. And yet, there is still so much more to do if languages are to be revitalized and EFA achieved. “We cannot get all children in school, or adults literate if the rights and needs of communities are not recognized. Unless we realize what is essential and children can understand what is being said in a classroom,” Shaeffer said. “During the next five years, we hope to see an acceleration of the progress that has already been made.” He called for more evidence systematically presented on what works and why, and more pilot projects evolving into programmes for MT-based MLE.

Each country has its own situation with respect to resources, budgets and policies. But the from the rich discussions at the conference, the forming of new networks and strengthening of old ones, language professionals and those concerned with these issues are gaining the resources to advance the agendas of language development, language revitalization and MT-based MLE.

Their work is already under way in every part of the world. It is taking place in Kenya where Jenny Jones and SIL are studying the implementation of the minority Sabaot language as a medium of instruction in primary schools. It is being furthered in Bolivia where after decades of repression of tribal cultures and languages, Luz Jiminez Quispe and members of the Aymara community are reintegrating indigenous wisdom and languages into the school curriculum. It is being advanced in southern Thailand where Suwilai Premsrirat and others from Mahidol University are promoting education in Pattani Malay as one means of solving communal violence. And it is being carried out on the Northern Cheyenne reservation in Montana, where Dr. Richard Littlebear and his colleagues have been developing positive
approaches – such as word coinage programmes in which the Northern Cheyenne have created their own terms for such modern phenomena as “microwave” and “ipod” among others – to keep their language not just alive, but vibrant and growing.

But it is the growth of MT-based MLE that holds the key to the future for countless children and others who have been struggling in schools and ending up on the outside of societies. In places such as India, where in more 30,000 schools children cannot understand the language of instruction, Dhir Jingam states, “The benefits of MT-based MLE are direct. Children in MLE programmes are now learning.” The same holds true for Cambodia where children in remote indigenous communities are going to schools for the first time in their lives, taught in a language they understand, taught by teachers from their own communities who understand their culture. And in the isolated villages of rural Pakistan, where MT-based MLE programmes are succeeding in educating young women who never had the opportunity to attend school before, allowing them to use their knowledge to strengthen the foundations of their communities and families.

The benefits extend of MT-based MLE beyond mere literacy. They extend to national commitments, development and competitiveness. Countries that have signed on to Education for All will have little hope of meeting that goal unless they adopt MT-based MLE. “We can not get all children in school if they can not understand what is being said in school,” says Sheldon Schaeffer. According to Carol Benson, research shows that “children who have more than one language are very creative in math and science. They can think in different ways and come to answers in different ways.” Considering the rapid advances in science and technology taking place today, countries that have a strong pool of people successfully educated in these disciplines will be better able to compete in terms of economics and development. And while national unity is admirable, by its very nature the world will always be diverse. “In a multilingual world, a society with many multilingual people will have an advantage,” says Bernard Spolsky. Every leader wants an advantage for his country and his people. It is becoming increasingly clear that the key to acquiring that advantage is Mother Tongue-based MultiLingual Education.
3. **Plenary Session on Language and Language-in-Education Policies**

Government policies on language in education vary widely from country to country. Some countries have policies supportive of Mother Tongue-based Multilingual Education. Others are still following models that promote only dominant languages. To discuss experiences in formulating and working under various language-in-education policies, a plenary panel was convened with five specialists from countries spanning the breadth of Asia and the Pacific.

The panel participants were:

- Andrew Ikupu of the Department of Education in Papua New Guinea
- Bernard Spolsky of Bar-Ilan University in Israel
- Dhir Jingran, Asia Regional Director of Room to Read in India
- Edilberto C. de Jesus, former Director of the Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization and former Secretary of Education in the Philippines
- Tariq Rahman of Quaid-I-Azam University in Pakistan.

Devising successful language in education policies that include MT-based MLE is a challenge in a multilingual society. Most countries have dozens to hundreds of languages spoken within their borders. Developing policies that will allow and facilitate instruction in all or most of them can be daunting.

India and Israel have three-language formulas for education. However, many more languages are spoken in these countries. Mother tongue-based multilingual education is not a universal right in India, Israel or the Philippines, although it is the policy in Papua New Guinea. In India, each state has the leeway to choose appropriate languages of instruction.

Israel faces a unique obstacle in that an enormous amount of energy was required to modernize Hebrew so it could be used as the spoken language of the country. That strong stake in Hebrew has made it challenging to advocate for language pluralism.

In Pakistan, language and education policies are highly political. The official national language is spoken by a small minority. This creates a class system based on language. Those who speak the official tongue have more opportunities in society. Because the majority language, Punjabi, is not taught in schools, students whose mother tongue is Punjabi tend not to do well and not advance in society. The language in education policies have created and reinforced class and tribal divisions.

In formulating policy, there is confusion over whether or not it is better to promote English, national languages or minority languages, especially as in most locations there is competition for limited resources as far as the education budget is concerned.

Papua New Guinea has the most mother-tongue friendly language-in-education policies. The government has declared that all of the country’s 800-plus languages may be used in the
classrooms of the communities where they are spoken. As PNG is a nation with limited resources, this is a challenge.

Typically, even when language-in-education policies are supportive, there are also gaps between policies and implementation.

Panelists said the benefits of pluralistic language-in-education policies that lead to strong MT-based MLE programmes are direct and obvious. Children understand what is being spoken and taught in the classrooms and therefore become better educated. Not using the mother tongue is a waste or education resources, as the child generally will do poorly or fail. And in a multilingual world, countries with more multilingual citizens will have an advantage. Using the mother tongue also has the potential to build a stronger and more positive identity among ethnic minority children and people.

Several strategies were cited to aid the adoption and implementation of progressive language-in-education policies. Most involved advocacy. Among them were:

- Start with the community, get the community involved
- Ensure that advocacy is grassroots based
- Get local or provincial government on your side
- Use religious organizations if they can be helpful
- Involve key players and stakeholders, including donors

In conclusion, Bernard Spolsky summed up the situation with the following statement:

“Each country needs to develop its own language-in-education policies, and pluralism will have different meanings to different peoples. We know it is better to teach a child in their mother tongue, but there are different kinds of pressures against it, not just from the establishment, but also from the beliefs of the parents. To deal with all of this, one has to really understand each issue. To accept the principle of pluralism is obvious to us. But the complexity of how to plan it for a given society is the key. This is something everyone has to work out for themselves.”
4. Other Reflections

4.1 The MLE Bridge by Dr Susan Malone*

“Good multilingual education programmes should help learners to build a strong foundation in their first language and a good bridge to the second, and third and fourth languages.”

On one side of the divide is the ethnic minority language and culture—the learners’ way of life, the things that they know best. On the other side is the larger national culture.

If there is a weak bridge the children do not have any foundation, they basically start with things that they do not know, things that are strange to them. Some make the leap across the great divide, the great chasm, they can eventually get in to the second language learning system. But the majority of the children drop out. The result is that they do not gain the knowledge and skills that they need to feel confident in interacting with the majority culture.

The strong foundation and good bridge enables students to develop listening, speaking, reading and writing skills in their mother tongue first. And then, it helps them develop the skills and the confidence to bridge to the new language and culture, because it starts with what they know, to help them learn what they do not know. Then instead of a weak bridge, or no bridge, they have a strong, 2 way bridge."

(From Susan Malone in UNESCO Bangkok’s DVD, Promoting Mother Tongue-based Multilingual Education.)

4.2 Language and Conflict

Famed Italian educator and physician Maria Montessori once said “establishing lasting peace is the work of education.” But when education is imposed on a community in a language that is not their mother tongue, conflicts, and even rebellions, can arise. Government often takes the view that linguistic diversity fragments national unity. But from the Americas to Asia, advocates of mother tongue-based multilingual education (MT-based MLE) believe that suppressing or devaluing the languages and cultures of minority groups can be a factor in fueling civil conflicts, and even civil war.

Pakistan is a prime example of how non-inclusive language policies can embitter and radicalize portions of the population, according to Dr. Tariq Rahman of the National Institute of Pakistani Studies. Since its independence from India in 1948, Pakistan has endured a series of conflicts and wars, and discriminatory language policies have played a part in some of them, Rahman claims. Although there are 77 linguistic communities in Pakistan, Urdu, a minority language spoken only by 6% of the population, has been imposed as the national language. This played a role in the 1971 civil war which saw East Pakistan break away and become Bangladesh. Says Rahman, “The Pakistani elite ruled over them as if they were an internal colony, and this was expressed through language.” The Bangladeshis were told not
to use their own language, Bengali, as it was associated with neighboring India and a communist movement. Bengali-speakers, however, weren’t about to surrender their identity that easily. Even today, Bengali speakers say with pride, “Our fathers died for our language.”

Meanwhile, in Pakistan children from upper class families attend schools with strong programmes in English. This simply isn’t available to most middle and lower class families. Their children are taught in Urdu, which for most is not their mother tongue, with the result that many don’t advance very far in the education system. Furthermore, most good jobs go to English speakers, and so the social and economic divide continues to widen. This creates a “ghetto-ization” or “language apartheid”, asserts Rahman. Poor students unable to afford or succeed in government schools often end up attending madrassas, or religious schools, where the quality of education is low. Consequently, in the middle and lower classes “there is a lot of anger. Islamic militancy rises. It’s almost a civil war,” he says. It also creates a vicious cycle. In Pakistan, media containing a more liberal world view are almost always in English, while those in local languages are narrower, omit broader information and opinions, and promote a closed, conservative and at times militant point of view. Instead of attempting to suppress the local languages, if they were recognized and strengthened, more informative media would be produced in them, broadening the views of their speakers.

To understand how suppressing native languages can make people angry, one only needs to listen to the voices of the indigenous peoples of Bolivia. A landlocked nation in South America that was once a colony of Spain, over the past half century Bolivia has endured countless coup d’etats and outbreaks of civil unrest. While the country is home to 36 indigenous ethnic groups with their own distinctive languages and cultures, “before 1955 indigenous people did not even have the right to an education,” says Luz Jiminez Quispe, an anthropologist and educator who is a member of the Aymara tribe. Quispe is working on an MT-based MLE project for the Aymara. It wasn’t until 1982 that the Bolivian government recognized the need, and the right, to provide education in any language except Spanish. Until then, members of ethnic minorities felt completely disenfranchised.

When researchers asked members of the Aymara and other tribes how they felt about being educated in Spanish, their answers were filled with bitterness. Some of the comments were:

- We had a second class education
- The teachers spoke a language we didn’t understand
- It made us ashamed of our own history, language and culture
- We felt useless
- In the school our knowledge, wisdom and culture were killed
- The school only taught Western knowledge, and disregarded our indigenous knowledge
- We were punished morally and physically
- The school repressed our creativity and imagination
- The school severed the relationship between generations
With changes in laws and the election of an indigenous president, Bolivia is now making strides in MT-based MLE, but many other nations in conflict are still struggling with these issues.

Thailand has been battling a renewed and increasingly violent Islamic separatist movement in its five southernmost provinces, and language is one element of the conflict. The imposition of Thai as the only official language and the language of instruction has been cited as a grievance. “There is a real fear that education is being used to destroy their (local Muslim) language and religious identity,” says Prof. Suwalai Premisrirat of Mahidol University’s Institute of Language and Culture for Rural Development. More than a million Muslims living in those provinces speak Pattani Malay. A government-appointed panel tasked with finding measures to promote reconciliation between Thai Buddhists and Muslims recommended allowing Pattani Malay to be used as an official language in the five provinces, but resistance within the government is strong.

Nonetheless, Professor Suwalai and other educators are taking action at the local level to give Pattani Malay the space and respect it deserves. A nine-year programme of MT-based MLE using Pattani Malay began last year in four schools in four provinces. It employs Pattani Malay as the language of instruction the early years of school while systematically building bridges to Thai. Local Muslims participated in designing the courses and content, and also helped develop an orthography for the language. Although Jawi, an Arabic-based script used for the Central Malay dialect, was preferred by some for it’s cultural symbolism, as a compromise the community adopted a Thai-based script for the early years of school. Dr. Suwalai says the programme has been well received. “Pattani Malay is the language these people are most comfortable using and it gives them confidence,” she says.

The history of conflict in southern Thailand stretches back more than a century. With the MT-based MLE programme only piloted in four schools, it is too soon to tell what effect this approach may or may not have on reducing the tensions and violence. “Despite the problems, the programme has earned the trust and support of local people,” Dr. Suwalai says. “They see this move to preserve their language as a positive step towards reconciliation.” And that provides hope, which is something that has been in short supply in recent years in that troubled region.

Another troubled region where language plays a role in violent conflict is northeastern India. This narrow strip of land bordering Burma contains eight states, and scores of languages are spoken there. The state of Manipur alone has 33 communities, each with a distinct language. India’s trilingual education policy (Hindi, English and one local language) is relatively liberal, but of the country’s 1000-plus languages and dialects, only about 100 have scripts. Many of the languages in the eight states have no scripts or have fewer than 150 speakers, and so they don’t qualify as languages of instructions. Consequently, “there is alienation within our country, and this can’t be denied,” says Lienjang Zeite, who has been studying the region while pursing her doctorate at the Centre for Linguistics, Jawaharlal Nehru University.

Over the past two decades, several separatist rebellions have erupted in the eight states. Some members of the ethnic groups cross back and forth over the Burma border, where
there are also ethnic rebellions against that country’s government. As relations have warmed between the two governments, their militaries have begun cooperating in efforts to suppress the revolts. But the border regions remain difficult to control, and they provide conduits for the movement of drugs, arms and people.

Language and identity are closely related, Zeite says, and from her studies, she believes the “rebellions are due to the unequal treatment of language. This had led to the formation of militant groups. But this approach has more often than not led to disappointment rather than victory.” She says that youths especially feel a “deprivation of their cultural and native elements and the loss of age-old traditions and folklore.” In the span of half a century, most young people from minority language groups can no longer understand their traditional folklore. History, and oral traditions, are being lost. More languages are endangered and being abandoned, and pidgin and code switching are common. The government’s language policy has caused ethnic rivalries, regional divisions and antipathy towards the official languages. On the other hand, Zeite says, with over 800 languages in the country, it’s difficult to blame the government for selecting a few to serve as official languages. So far, there have been no significant attempts at MT-based MLE in the region of the eight states, although it has brought positive results in other parts of the country where it is being used. And so far, there is no sign that the conflicts and rebellions in this region will end any time soon.

Although no one is suggesting that enlightened language policies will end all conflicts, they can certainly be a positive part of comprehensive solutions to many violent disputes. By their very nature they communicate to disaffected minorities that the central government is moving to more inclusiveness and tolerance, and is trying to build bridges. “If every one has a share in the center then maybe nation building will become stronger,” Rahman says. When everyone’s language and culture is a respected part of a nation, it is more likely that nation will be at peace.

4.3 Living Proof: How Papua New Guinea Delivers Education in Hundreds of Languages

In countries where a multitude of languages are spoken, government naturally resists the notion that education can be delivered in all or many of them. Issues of nationalism or nation building aside, contemplating the costs and logistics of providing education in dozens or hundreds of languages would create questions for any politician or bureaucrat. And yet, one country in the developing world is enthusiastically attempting to deliver MT-based MLE in as many of its 850 native languages as possible. That nation, home to more than one tenth of the world’s spoken languages, is Papua New Guinea.

A mountainous, rain-forested land of six million in the South Pacific, Papua New Guinea, which gained independence in 1975, is in the relatively early stages of development. Being a young nation turned out to be an advantage, says Andrew Ikupu of the Department of Education. Existing policies were neither complicated nor entrenched. And government officials and educators realized they would need innovative approaches to education considering the incredibly diverse ethnic and social structures of the population. “We have
more than 800 tribes, and each one has its own language and culture,” Ikupu says, adding the country actually has 872 languages, but 850 are officially recognized.

There are three official national languages in Papua New Guinea: Tok Pisin (Melanesian Pidgin), Hiri Motu and English. English is spoken by only 2% of the population. And yet, with PNG’s rough terrain leaving many communities in relative isolation, not everyone speaks even one of these three languages. Educators realized a new approach would have to be taken, and so they called in nongovernmental organizations and consultants.

Several determinants went into Papua New Guinea’s search for an appropriate language policy. It had to be line with the constitution’s call for integrated human development, and it had to be based on the rights of the child and the rights of communities. The policy states that “the future direction for language use in the formal school system ... is that the language of the community, together with its cultures, spiritual and work practices will form the basis for the activities of the school.” The language used and selected by the community will be the language used in the process of teaching and learning in schools.

“Our language policy is clear,” Ikupu says. “Each of the 850 languages may be used in the classroom, especially at the elementary level. This policy is very new. Agencies like SIL International and other NGOs started to use it for their adult education programs, and general literacy programs. About 1995, it was used to conceive and construct a language policy for all schools.” The technical assistance offered was incorporated in the country’s education reform, and the state eventually began taking over the roles of some NGOs.

Under the policy, during the first 3 years of school, instruction is completely in the child’s home language—the mother tongue. Children in the fourth term of their third year of school are introduced to oral English, after they have mastered literacy skills in their mother tongue. Whereas children must be encouraged to learn and use English, all schools at all levels should not discourage free communication in vernacular languages that the children speak in and out of school grounds.

Formulating such an inclusive policy is admirable, but the real question is how to actually implement it, especially in a nation with as limited resources as Papua New Guinea. First, parents nominate men and women from within their community to be trained as vernacular language teachers. The government teacher training division then trains these teachers using a ‘mixed-mode’ of training. The vernacular teacher training is a three-year programme located in the trainee teacher’s community. “In each community, parents volunteer to sit on a ‘cultural committee’ that helps develop the lessons for the children. They are not paid for this. This model is cost effective,” Ikupu says.

One area where such programmes have been underway is the remote, isolated reaches of the Sepik River and its tributaries where the people of the Abau tribe live in 25 villages. There are 7,500 Abau, and 2,000 have so far received MT-based MLE. The most important element for success in delivering the program, says Arjen Lock of SIL, is a framework or infrastructure. “Lack of proper infrastructure, rather than lack of money, is the major threat for the well-being of an MLE program,” Lock says. A framework should give clear directions
on topics like procedures, logistics, training and reward systems. “A life-embracing infrastructure is more than a framework, it takes into account people’s search for meaning, need for belonging and desire to find joy in life,” Lock says.

In the Abau MLE program, developments and initiatives took place as answers to the expressed educational and social needs of the community. The infrastructure followed, rather than directed the literacy efforts. In 1990, the first Abau village school started. In four years time the vernacular school system spread to all 25 Abau speaking villages.

Teachers are selected by the community. The need to train village teachers for the various village schools resulted in the gradual development of the Abau Training Centre. It became a Centre for Adult Learning.

An effective learning programme has to be adapted to the culture of the learners. The Abau prefer group activities. They even like reading as a group, and so that is how it is done in class. “Learning is a social event.

The Abau view building relationships not as an incidental by-product of an MLE program, but they see it as vital and fundamental,” Lock says.

Lock adds that a successful programme builds interconnectedness, has relevance to the learners, and is energizing and enjoyable. “The biggest enemy of sustained literacy is not the use of outside funding, but community disinterest, which is defined as the lack of conviction that vernacular education is worth having or worth fighting for,” he says. When the programme contents are valued as meaningful to the personal life goals of the students, it makes a student willing to invest time and money. “The crucial question is not so much whether ongoing vernacular education is deemed affordable, but whether it is viewed as vital and life changing,” he says.

MT-based MLE in Papua New Guinea is not without its problems. Educators have been disappointed with the difficulties some students are experiencing in bridging from the mother tongue to the national languages. Research and evaluation is underway to pinpoint why this aspect of the programme has not had as much success yet as other aspect, or programmes in other countries. Few programmes anywhere, however, don’t experience some unexpected obstacles and need refinement based on monitoring and evaluation. Educators are optimistic they will overcome this hurdle.

In the meantime, Papua New Guinea is serving as an inspiring model for advocates MT-based MLE all over the world. These programmes provide a useful example for those proposing MT-based MLE to governments that say that providing education in hundreds of languages for small groups of speakers is financially or logistically impossible. “Papua New Guinea breaks the stereotype. There are weaknesses in the programs, but the fact is what Papua New Guinea teaches us is that it is not impossible,” says Susan Malone. “It can be done.”

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Appendix I:
Conference Announcement

Second International Conference on Language Development, Language Revitalization and Multilingual Education in Ethnolinguistic Communities

1-3 July 2008
Twin Towers Hotel, Bangkok, Thailand

Conference sponsors: SIL International, UNESCO, UNICEF, SEAMEO, Mahidol University, Care International and Save the Children UK

The 2nd ANNOUNCEMENT

Purpose

Over the past decade, ethnolinguistic communities, supported by governments and NGOs in several countries of Asia and the Pacific, have begun implementing mother tongue-based multilingual education programs. Also during that time, a number of NGOs and universities have begun supporting ethnolinguistic communities in their efforts to develop, revitalize and maintain their heritage languages.

In spite of these efforts, the purposes and benefits of language development, language revitalization and multilingual education are still not widely understood or accepted. Many efforts remain weak and do not build on what has been learned through research and experiences elsewhere. More information is needed about what is involved in planning, implementing and sustaining strong language development and multilingual education programs.

This conference is meant to address those information needs. Its purposes are to:

1) Raise awareness about the purposes and benefits of mother tongue-based multilingual education (MT-Based MLE) programs,

2) Share information about good practices in language development, language revitalization and MT-Based MLE in ethnolinguistic communities, especially from the people who are actively engaged in such programs,

3) Develop and expand networks of individuals and organizations engaged in these efforts.

Tracks

The conference will include the following tracks (all focusing on languages in multilingual settings):
1. **Language development and language revitalization of non-dominant languages**
   Topics include indigenous people’s efforts to revitalize and sustain their heritage languages and cultures; linguistic and sociolinguistic research; orthography development and orthography testing; preservation of oral literature and development of written literature in previously unwritten languages.

2. **Language policy, language-in-education policy and policy implementation**
   Topics include the role of ethnic or indigenous (non-dominant) languages in society and education; language policy and language-in-education policy and their implementation in multilingual contexts; comparisons of policies across nations; the ways that languages are promoted by written and unwritten policies and practices and the factors (including economics) that support or hinder the use of local languages in society and in education systems.

3. **Mother tongue-based multilingual education (MT-based MLE)**
   Topics include planning, implementing and sustaining MT-based MLE for children and adults in formal and non-formal education systems, including schools with multiple mother tongues; good practices in conducting preliminary research, advocacy and mobilization at local, district, national and international levels; developing teaching and learning materials and recruiting and training teachers and other staff.

4. **Community-centered efforts to preserve intangible cultural heritage**
   Topics include community-centered efforts to analyze and maintain oral literature, traditional dance and music and traditional medicines. Theoretical links between folk and traditional arts revitalization and language development are especially relevant. This topic also will include ethnographic studies of informal music education practices, as well as case studies demonstrating the integration of traditional music and arts into formal and non-formal education programs.

5. **Information and communication technology that supports language development and MT-based MLE**
   Topics include using appropriate ICT tools to develop, produce and communicate information and relevant materials in non-dominant languages.

6. **Research and evaluation studies of language revitalization and MT-based MLE programs**
   Topics include principles and practices in planning, conducting and disseminating research and evaluation studies of language revitalization and MT-based MLE programs; case study research for small language projects; longitudinal research studies; community-centered / community-owned research and evaluation.

**Plenary Speakers of the Conference**

**Keynote address**

1. Dr. Sheldon Shaeffer  
   Director of UNESCO Asia and Pacific Regional Bureau for Education
## Language development and language revitalization of non-dominant languages

1. **Dr. Ana Taufeulungaki**  
   *Ministry of Education, Tonga*

## Language and language-in-education policy and policy implementation

1. **Dr. Edilberto de Jesus**  
   *The Former Director of Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization Secretariat, Philippines*

2. **Dr. Andrew Ikupu**  
   *Department of Education, Papua New Guinea*

3. **Mr. Dhir Jhingran**  
   *Asia Regional Director - Room to Read, India*

4. **Dr. Bernard Spolsky**  
   *Professor emeritus, Bar-Ilan University, Israel*

5. **Dr. Tariq Rahman**  
   *Distinguished National Professor, Quaid-I-Azam University, Pakistan*
### Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual education (MT-Based MLE)

1. Dr Carolyn J. (Carol) Benson  
   Centre for Teaching and Learning Stockholm University, Sweden

### Community efforts to preserve intangible cultural heritage

1. Mr. Ik Pahon Joyik  
   Bidayuh Language Community, Sarawak Malaysia

2. Attorney Liezeil Zabanal  
   Agutaynen Language Community, Philippines

3. Dr. Richard Littlebear  
   Northern Cheyenne Language Community, USA

4. Mr. Muhammad Shafiq Khalil  
   Punjabi Language Community, Pakistan

### Research and evaluation relating to MT-Based MLE programs

1. Dr. Dennis Malone  
   International Consultant in Multilingual Education, SIL International
Registration Fees

Three-day registration fee includes the conference kit, morning and afternoon refreshments and lunches.

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<th>Non-Thai Participants</th>
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Conference date: 1-3 July 2008

Venue: Twin Towers Hotel, 88 Rong Muang, Patumwan, Bangkok 10330 Thailand

For Information about conference program, please contact: langdevelbkk_info@sil.org

Registration deadline: Friday 13 June 2008

For registration methods, registration form, and information about hotels, please refer to the conference web-site: http://www.seameo.org/Id2008
### TUESDAY, 1 JULY 2008

**Emcee: Susan Malone, SIL International**

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<tr>
<td>07.30-08.30</td>
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<td>08.45-09.15</td>
<td>Keynote “Languages in and for education: The importance of language development and use”</td>
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<td>Dr. Sheldon Shaeffer, Director of UNESCO Asia and Pacific Regional Bureau for Education</td>
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<td>09.15-10.30</td>
<td>Plenary Panel “Preserving intangible cultural heritage”</td>
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<td>Ik Pahon Joyik, Bidayuh Language Community, Sarawak Malaysia</td>
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<td>Muhammad Shafiq Khalil, Punjabi Language Community, Pakistan</td>
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<td>10.30-11.00</td>
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<td>11.00-12.00</td>
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<td><strong>Room A: Language and Education Policies</strong></td>
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<td>◆ Ricardo Ma. Nolasco (Philippines). <em>The prospects of multilingual education and literacy in the Philippines</em></td>
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<td>◆ Anna Smey (General). <em>Local languages and national policies in early childhood education in Asia</em></td>
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<td><strong>Room B: Preserving Intangible Cultural Heritage</strong></td>
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¹ The location in parentheses after the presenter’s name may refer to the geographic focus of the paper or to the author’s home country or both.
Lynn Harata Te Aika (Aotearoa New Zealand). *Sustaining language and culture through indigenous perspectives on environmental education and working in partnership with Māori tribal communities in teacher education*

Savi Munjal (India). *Afghanistan’s endless war: A post 9/11 perspective*

**Room C: Research and Evaluation**

Dörthe Schilken (China). *The impact of language switch in early schooling on the cognitive development of children aged 5-7*

Te Hurinui Clark (Aotearoa New Zealand). *Issues of retention in mainstream secondary school Māori language programmes: A pilot research project*

**Room D: Multilingual Education**

Pamela Mackenzie (India). *Mother tongue-based multilingual education among tribal minorities in India*

Joseph Khakha (Bangladesh). *Training mother tongue teachers: Strategies and challenges in Bangladesh*

**Room E: Language Development and Language Revitalization**

David Bradley (China). *Language policy for China’s minorities: Orthography development for the Yi*

Isara Choosri (Thailand). *The use of Northern Khmer in community radio programs in Thailand*

12.00-13.00 *Lunch*

13.00-14.00 **Session II**

**Room A: Language and Education Policies**

Cidalio Leite (Timor-Leste). *Commitment to helping children learn in Timor-Leste*

Tariq Rahman (Pakistan). *Language and education policy in Pakistan*

**Room B: Preserving Intangible Cultural Heritage**

Todd Saurman & Mary Beth Saurman (Asia, general). *Incorporating relevant cultural art forms and oral traditions into community-based education programs*

Ernesto Toquero and Elena Toquero (Philippines). *The Yogad and Gaddang rituals of Isabela: Meaning and significance*

**Room C: Research and Evaluation**

Graham Cameron (Myanmar). *Demonstrable developmental gains*

Room D: Multilingual Education
- Jan Noorlander & Wain Churk (Cambodia). *Cambodia’s Highland Community Education Program*
- S. Brahma & D Barkataki (India). *The mother tongue literacy programme of Rabha community*

Room E: Language Development and Language Revitalization
- Fredrick Boswell (Solomons). *Cheke Holo orthography: Ethnic language community decision-making and the role of trained linguists*
- Umberto Ansaldo & Lisa Lim (Sri Lanka). *Preserving and revitalizing creole languages: The experience of Sri Lanka Malay*

14.00-15.00 Session III

Room A: Language and Education Policies
- Ayaz Muhammad Rana (Pakistan). *Punjabi language: Government policies and traditional multilingual classrooms in Pakistan*

Room B: Language and Education Policies
- Nikhat Shameem (Fiji). *The role of technology in data gathering for post-colonial language-in-education policy and planning: A case study*
- Greg Dekker and Rose Dumatog Camacam (Philippines). *A multilingual education policy pathway: Working from pilot project toward national policy*

Room C: Research and Evaluation
- Yahya Che Lah & Nor Hashimah Hashim (Malaysia). *Testing reading comprehension in students’ mother tongue*
- Ng Bee Chin (Singapore). *Linguistic pragmatism, globalisation and the impact on the patterns of input in Singaporean Chinese homes*

Room D: Multilingual Education
- Barbara Trudell (Africa general). *Local-language adult literacy programs and sustainable development in Africa*
- Goihan (China). *The quest to improve the trilingual education system in ethnic minority schools in Inner Mongolia: Energizing the mother tongue*

Room E: Language Development and Language Revitalization
- Mayuree Thawornpat (Thailand). *Orthographies for “endangered languages” in Thailand: A case study of Lavua at Pa Pae Village, Mae Hong Son Province*
- Paulette Hopple (China-Burma border). *Linguistic variation among a highly endangered speech community: Angkuic people of the Palaungic sub-branch of Mon-Khmer*
15.00-15.30  Tea Break

15.30-17.00  Session IV

Room A: Work Session: Language and Education Policies
Kimmo Kosonen, Facilitator

Room B: Preserving Intangible Cultural Heritage

♦ Samantha Ross Hepworth (Tanzania). Absorption or displacement: Kiswahili and minority languages in Tanzania
♦ Manuel Noronha & Ian Chaplin (Macau). Preserving and interpreting intangible cultural heritage in an ethnolinguistic community: The case of the Portuguese language, patois and creole in Macau
♦ Diane Gordon-Burns (Aotearoa New Zealand). Notable descendant ancestresses of Tainui—their stories and how these have been maintained

Room C: Work Session: Research and Evaluation
Dennis Malone, Facilitator

Room D: Multilingual Education

♦ Helen Pinnock (General). Mother tongue-based multilingual education: How can we move ahead?
♦ Muhammat (China). The challenges of bilingual education in Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region, People’s Republic of China
♦ Muhammed Zaman Sagar (Pakistan). A multilingual education project for Gawri-speaking children in northern Pakistan

Room E: Language Development and Language Revitalization

♦ Willem Burung (Indonesia). Melayu Papua: A hidden treasure
♦ Aditya Prakash (India). Language maintenance and shift: A case study on the use of Kumauni language in Delhi
♦ Naita Saecho (USA). Point of Criticality: Mien Language Shift in the U.S.

18.30  Reception

WEDNESDAY, 2 JULY 2008

Emcee: Katy Webley, Save the Children UK

08.30-09.45  Plenary Panel “Language and language-in-education policies”
Andrew Ikupu, Department of Education, Papua New Guinea
Bernard Spolsky, Professor Emeritus, Bar-Ilan University, Israel
Dhir Jhingran, Asia Regional Director, Room to Read, India
Edilberto C de Jesus, Former Director of Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization Secretariat, Philippines
Tariq Rahman, Distinguished National Professor, Quaid-I-Azam University, Pakistan
09.45-10.30  **Plenary Presentation.** “Language development and revitalization in the Pacific with particular reference to Tonga”  
‘Ana Maui Taufe'ulungaki, Ministry of Education, Tonga

10.30-11.00  **Tea Break**

11.00-12.00  **Session V**

**Room A: Language and Education Policies**
- Vu Thi Thanh Huong (Vietnam). *Ethnic minority languages in Vietnam: Policy and implementation issues*
- Pushparani Subramaniam (Malaysia). *Implementing vernacular languages through ICT in national schools to fulfill the Education Development Master Plan (EDMP) in Malaysia*

**Room B: Preserving Intangible Cultural Heritage**
- Dorji Thinley (Bhutan). *Secondary students’ response to oral literature in their mother tongue: Insights and observations from an action research project in a Bhutanese school*
- V. Jayarajan (India). *Tevyam and oral tradition*

**Room C: Work Session: Research and Evaluation**
*Dennis Malone, Facilitator*

**Room D: Multilingual Education**
- Noro Andriamiseza (General). *Mother tongue matters: UNESCO’s actions in mother tongue instruction to promote inclusion and enhance quality learning for children in linguistically diverse societies*
- Colleen Koolaard & Poh Suan Soh (China). *Four mother tongue-based bilingual education projects in China: Introducing the Bai, Dai, Dong (Kam) and Dongxiang pilot MLE projects in the P.R. China*

**Room E: Language Development and Language Revitalization**
- Martin Hosken (Mainland South East Asia). *Minority languages in the digital age: Unicode update*
- Arup Kumar Nath (India). *Revitalizing Tiwa language: The phenomena of language shift and maintenance*

12.00-13.00  **Lunch**

13.00-14.00  **Exhibition of language and education materials**
*Participants are invited to view and learn about materials that have been produced for language development, language revitalization and multilingual education programs around the world*
14.00-15.00  **Session VI**

**Room A: Language and Education Policies**
- Christopher Stroud & Quentin Williams (Republic of South Africa). *Debating multilingualism in a transformative South Africa*
- Yogendra Yadava (Nepal). *Linguistic diversity in Nepal: Perspectives on existing language policy*

**Room B: Multilingual Education**
- Anna Smeby (Asia, General). *The use of early childhood standards to support mother tongue-based multilingual education in Asia*
- Mere Kepa & Linita Manu’atu (Aotearoa New Zealand). *Talanoa Mālie: An innovative ‘space’ in early childhood education for revitalizing and maintaining Tongan language and culture in the University*

**Room C: Research and Evaluation**
- Daisy Pillay, Harsha Kathard & Mershen Pillay (Republic of South Africa). *“Troubling Communication”: Exploring spaces for socially just dialogue*
- Quynh Thi Ngoc Nguyen (Vietnam). *Towards a workable theoretical framework for the teaching of Vietnamese as a second language for ethnolinguistic minority learners*

**Room D: Multilingual Education**
- Lynn HarataTe Aika (Aotearoa New Zealand). *Reo Kura: Developing teachers' Maori language proficiency and tribal dialect proficiency in an in-school professional development programme*
- Suwilai Premsrirat (Thailand). *Language for national reconciliation: A role for Pattani Malay in formal education in Thailand’s Deep South*

**Room E: Language Development and Language Revitalization**
- David Blundell (Taiwan, Philippines). *Endangered languages in revitalization, development and mapping with local indigenous communities of Taiwan, Orchid Island, and the Batanes*
- Kedar Bilash Nagila (Nepal). *Revitalizing and maintaining Dura language and culture*

15.00-15.30  **Tea Break**

15.30-17.00  **Session VII**

**Room A: Work Session: Language and Education Policies**
*Kimmo Kosonen, Facilitator*
Room B: Work Session: Preserving Intangible Cultural Heritage  
*Catherine Young and Susan Malone, Facilitators*

Room C: Language Development and Language Revitalization  
- Karsten Legère (Tanzania). *Language endangerment in Tanzania: The case of the Vunda language*  
- Mershen Pillay, Harsha Kathard & Daisy Pillay (Republic of South Africa). *Loss across language colonies: A Tamil past, A Xhosa present, An Arabic present-perfect*  
- Sue Hasselbring (General). *Fostering acceptance of written standards by speakers of all dialects*

Room D: Multilingual Education  
- Erona Paschal, Poonam Paschal & Lalchand Paul (Pakistan). *Mother tongue-based multilingual education in southern Pakistan: The Parkari program*  
- Anne Thomas (Cambodia). *Community ownership strengthens multilingual non-formal education in the Cambodian Highlands*  
- Lou Chunfang (China). *Bilingual education in Qinghai Province, China*

Room E: Multilingual Education  
- Dat Bao (Thailand & Australia). *A proposed framework for enhancing teachers’ preparation for classrooms with language minority students*  
- Eliott Prasse-Freeman (Thailand). *Building community-based support systems that facilitate sustainable multi-ethnic education opportunities: Experiences of EDC and partners in Phang Nga, Thailand 2007-2008*  
- Iqbal-ur-Rehman Sharif (Pakistan). *Mother tongue-based multilingual education in Pakistan*

19.30-21.00 **Session VIII**

**Work Session: Multilingual Education** *(Room to be announced)*  
*Susan Malone and Carol Benson, Facilitators*

**Work Session: Language Development and Language Revitalization—focus on ICT** *(Room to be announced)*  
*Martin Hosken, Facilitator*

**THURSDAY, 3 JULY 2008**

Emcee: Jan Noorlander, CARE International, Cambodia

08.30-09.15 **Plenary Presentation** *“Designing effective schooling in multilingual contexts: An alternative to bilingual models”*  
Dr. Carol Benson, International Consultant in Multilingual Education, Sweden
09.15-10.00  **Plenary Presentation** “Research and evaluation of mother tongue-based multilingual education programs: Issues and innovations in ethnolinguistic settings”
Dr. Dennis Malone, International Consultant in Multilingual Education, SIL International

10.00-10.30  **Tea Break**

10.30-12.00  **Session IX**

**Room A: Language and Education Policies**
- SEAMEO Secretariat: Ahamad bin Sipon, Kimmo Kosonen, Catherine Young, Yolanda Quijano, Suchin Petcharugsa (Southeast Asia). *Using the mother tongue as bridge language of instruction in Southeast Asia: Policy, strategies and advocacy*

**Room B: Preserving Intangible Cultural Heritage**
- Charmaine Kaimikaua (Hawai‘i, USA). *The politics of preserving cultural heritage: Communicating identity through public performance of the Hula for Diaspora Hawaiians*
- Enongene Mirabeau Sone (Swaziland). *What kind of literature for ethical education in Africa?*
- Bagly Arsenio and Glenn Stallsmith (Philippines). *Performing living traditions: A music and dance troupe of the Kalangaya, Northern Philippines*

**Room C: Multilingual Education**
- Luz Jimenez Quispe (Bolivia). *Indigenous knowledge and wisdom to improve quality of education in rural communities of Bolivia*
- Mahendra Mishra (India). *Mother tongue-based multilingual education in Orissa: From theory to practice*
- Nguyen Thi Bich & Dinh Phuong Thao (Vietnam). *National networking and advocacy strategy on mother tongue-based multilingual education*

**Room D: Multilingual Education**
- Kay Ringenberg (Indonesia). *Planning and implementing MT-Based MLE programs for children and adults in Indonesia*
- Mathura Bikash Tripura (Bangladesh). *Shishur Khamatayan: children’s right to quality education in their mother tongue*
- Open

**Room E: Language Development and Language Revitalization**
- Anju Khadka (Nepal). *Conflicting language worldviews: Solutions from the children’s point of view*
- Bhim Narayan Regmi (Nepal). *Developing a Devanagari-based multi-language orthography for Nepalese languages*
- Bidya Nath Koirala (Nepal). *Language co-existence through reciprocal learning and teaching*
12.00-13.00  Lunch

13.00-14.30  Session X

Room A: Work Session: Language and Education Policies
Kimmo Kosonen, Facilitator

Room B: Preserving Intangible Cultural Heritage
♦ Schedar Jocson (Philippines). Further steps towards preserving oral literature
♦ Marc Wetz (Southeast Asia). The need to go beyond language: Including local/indigenous culture in the school curriculum
♦ Hemanga Dutta (India). A sociolinguistic appraisal of vocabulary items used in Assamese folk songs and proverbs

Room C: Research and Evaluation
♦ Sangsok Son (India). Learning through first language and linguistic and scholastic Achievement: The case of children in Pattani Language Community, India
♦ Sunita Agarwal & Rajul Bhargava (India). L1 proficiency = L2 competence: Prescription for a “smoother transition”
♦ Open

Room D: Multilingual Education
♦ Nthatisi Bulane (Republic of South Africa). Code-switching in South Africa’s township schools
♦ Sara Elena Mendoza (Mexico). Indigenous literacy in Mexico: Critical aspects from planning to educational practice

Room E: Language Development and Language Revitalization
♦ Lucy Bulan & David Lian Labang (Malaysia). Community efforts in developing and financing an MLE Project: The Kelabit language of Sarawak, Malaysia
♦ Gratien G. Atindogbé (Cameroon). First look at a Barombi orthographic system
♦ Mark Karan (General). The importance of motivations in language revitalization efforts

14.30-15.30  Session XI

Room A: Language and Education Policies
♦ Jenny Jones (Kenya). Teachers’ response to the implementation of the Kenyan language-in-education policy in a multilingual context
♦ Noriah Mohamed & Nor Hashimah Hashim (Malaysia). Language policy, language planning and the use of non-dominant languages in Malaysia: Sihan versus Standard Malay
Room B: Multilingual Education
- Diane Dekker, Stephen Walter & Norma Duguiang (Philippines). The “bridge” to Filipino and English: Initial results of the First Language Component MLE program in the Philippines
- Leela Pradham (Nepal). A study of the educational situation for ethnic minority children in selected primary schools of Nepal

Room C: Research and Evaluation
- Sriwilai Ponmanee (Thailand). Coaching a teacher in a multilingual school setting: A case study from a school in Pai District, Mae Hong Son Province, Thailand
- Gardiye Hewage Asoka (Sri Lanka). Needs survey on promoting Mother Tongue-Based Bilingual Education (BE) in Sri Lanka

Room D: Multilingual Education
- J. Aleta R. Villanueva & Ani Rosa Almario (Philippines). Dual language education program models in Philippine progressive schools
- Marilyn Gregerson (Cambodia). A multilingual non-formal program for language minority students in Ratanakiri Province, Cambodia: 10 years and going forward

Room E: Language Development and Language Revitalization
- Duk Geun Cha (Cambodia). Orthography development challenges in Western Cham
- Talib Jan (Pakistan). Present and future of Indus Kohistani

15.30-16.00 Tea Break
16.00-17.00 Summary of the Conference
Jan Noorlander, Provincial Coordinator, CARE International, Cambodia

Closing
Appendix III:
Conference Partners

UNESCO Bangkok promotes international co-operation, sets standards and disseminates information in the fields of education, the natural sciences, the social and human sciences, culture and communication. As the Asia and Pacific Regional Bureau for Education covering 47 countries, it is the technical advisory body to all field offices and Member States of the region and the site of regional programmes in most areas covered by the Education Sector. As a cluster office, UNESCO Bangkok is also the principal coordinator of UNESCO activities, across sectors, in the Mekong region, working directly with UNESCO National Commissions and other partners in Lao PDR, Myanmar, Singapore and Thailand.

Website:  http://www.unescobkk.org/

SIL International is a nonprofit organization committed to serving ethnolinguistic minority communities worldwide and building capacity for sustainable language-based development by means of research, translation, training and materials development. SIL recognizes that multilingualism promotes unity in diversity and international understanding and regularly participates in activities that highlight minority languages and cultures.

Since its beginning in 1934, SIL International's linguistic investigation has exceeded 2,400 languages spoken by over 1.7 billion people in more than 70 countries. As a nongovernmental organization, SIL has special consultative status with UNESCO and the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) of the United Nations.

Website:  http://www.sil.org/
The Institute of Language and Culture for Rural Development (ILCRD) was established in 1974, having the status of an independent faculty of Mahidol University.

Realizing the importance of language and culture as a means to promote good understanding among people, the main research and study areas of ILCRD have been geared towards the multiplicity of languages, cultures and beliefs of the people in the region. The institute provides training and research opportunities for MA and PhD students in the fields of Linguistics, Cultural Studies and Language and Communication for Development.

Website:  http://www.lc.mahidol.ac.th/
The **Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization** (SEAMEO) is a treaty organization founded in 1965 to promote regional cooperation in education, science, and culture. The SEAMEO Council, the Organization's governing body, is composed of the eleven ministers of education of the SEAMEO member countries. Over the years, SEAMEO has developed a network of fifteen specialized regional centers in eight of its ten Member Countries. These institutions are closely linked with the educational environment of the country hosting them. Each Centre has its own governing board with a representative from each Member Country.

Website: [http://www.seameo.org/](http://www.seameo.org/)

For 60 years **UNICEF** has been the world's leader for children, working on the ground in 155 countries and territories to help children survive and thrive, from early childhood through adolescence. The world's largest provider of vaccines for developing countries, UNICEF supports child health and nutrition, good water and sanitation, quality basic education for all boys and girls, and the protection of children from violence, exploitation, and AIDS. UNICEF is funded entirely by the voluntary contributions of individuals, businesses, foundations and governments.

Website: [http://www.unicef.org/](http://www.unicef.org/)

**Save the Children UK** is an international NGO working to right the fundamental wrongs that affect children. It works directly with children, using experience and influence to persuade government and others to deliver children’s rights. Save the Children seeks out the most marginalized children in the world, working in fragile states like Afghanistan and developed countries like the UK. Minority ethnic children are a key focus for its education work, as are children affected by conflict and natural disasters, and the poorest children. Save the Children UK works closely with the International Save the Children Alliance, both in programmes and in international campaigns and advocacy work. It currently works in 52 countries, running long-term programmes in addition to emergency responses.

Website: [http://www.savethechildren.org.uk/](http://www.savethechildren.org.uk/)

**CARE** tackles underlying causes of poverty so that people can become self-sufficient. Recognizing that women and children suffer disproportionately from poverty, CARE places special emphasis on working with women to create permanent social change. Women are at the heart of CARE's community-based efforts to improve basic education, prevent the spread of HIV, increase access to clean water and sanitation, expand economic opportunity and protect natural resources. CARE also delivers emergency aid to survivors of war and natural disasters, and helps people rebuild their lives.

Website: [http://www.care.org/](http://www.care.org/)
Appendix IV:
Conference Organising Committee

Conference Coordination Team

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