Language as a Means of Peacebuilding: A Case for School Curriculum in Sri Lanka

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Rationale for Research

• Education for peace is an essential component for a sustainable society
• Sri Lanka is facing issues related to the post-conflict period.
• The study accumulated and compared similar experiences in other Asian countries.
• It focused on school education and its role based on curriculum in nation building
• The specific focus was on the Language aspect of education
Language policies in Sri Lanka and Singapore

- The language policy in Sri Lanka
- Second National Languages (2NL) in Sri Lanka
- The language policy in Singapore
Purpose of the study

To review the state of art and suggest policy options for the curriculum of second national languages for policy makers and other stakeholders in schools so that there are positive, sustainable changes in the school education system in Sri Lanka.
Objectives

• To review the policy documents through the lens of peace education
• To review curriculum of second national language subjects through the lens of peace education
• To compare the Sri Lankan second national language curriculum with the curriculum of Singapore second national languages
• To review the stakeholder perceptions of second national language curriculum
• To suggest suitable framework for policy and practice of second national language curriculum
Research methodology

Data analysis techniques

- Documentary analysis techniques belong to survey research method was incorporated in the policy research
- Structured interviews for language professionals
- Two way analyzing of curriculum materials
  Syllabi and Teachers’ Guides of second national language subject from Gr. 6-11 were analyzed in Sri Lanka
  The mother tongue language (Tamil) in the secondary level in Singapore (1A, 1B, 2A and 2B) was compared with Sri Lankan Tamil text books
- Questionnaires for teachers
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>No. of Schools</th>
<th>Sinhala as a 2NL</th>
<th>Tamil as a 2NL</th>
<th>Chinese as a mother tongue</th>
<th>Malay as a mother tongue</th>
<th>Tamil as a mother tongue</th>
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</thead>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Gr. 7</td>
<td>Gr. 8</td>
<td>Gr. 7</td>
<td>Secondary 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Singapore</td>
<td>1</td>
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<td>1</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Limitations of the research

• The research was done in the secondary level in both countries and not done in the primary classrooms
• Only two schools from war affected areas in Sri Lanka were selected
• Out of 3 second national languages taught in Singapore only Tamil language was selected to compare with Sri Lankan curriculum
• Out of 3 Second National Language courses implemented in Singapore was selected only normal academic course textbooks
Data presentation and analysis

- Educational Policy documents through the lens of peace education
  - Policy in Sri Lanka
  - Policy in Singapore
- Curriculum of Second National Language subject through the lens of peace education
- Peace concepts embedded in curriculum in Sri Lanka and Singapore
- The stakeholder perceptions on Second National Language curriculum (Interview data)
  - Background information
  - Curriculum
  - Teaching learning process of Second National Language
  - Output and outcome of Second National Language
• Classroom practice on Second National Language (Observation data)
  ○ Physical environment of classrooms
  ○ Teaching learning process of Second National Language

• Questionnaire data on Second National Language
  ○ Information about the school
  ○ Background information of the teacher
  ○ Curriculum
  ○ Teaching learning process of Second National Language
  ○ Output and outcome of Second National Language in the school system
Suggestions for a suitable framework for policy and practice of Second National Language curriculum for Sri Lanka

Education policy

- English as a common language
  - It could help to develop citizens for global business, commerce and technology for future Sri Lanka
  - Good communication with different communities
Suggestions for a suitable framework for policy and practice of Second National Language curriculum for Sri Lanka

Teacher recruitment policy

- Recruit native language speaking teachers
- Teachers should have basic training programme before recruit to schools
  - For example: Singapore conduct basic training programmes at National Institute of Education according to the education qualification of teachers
- Appoint qualified 2NL teachers suite for 21st century
Suggestions for a suitable framework for policy and practice of Second National Language curriculum for Sri Lanka

Curriculum policy

- Both Sinhala and Tamil 2NL curriculum lessons in the textbook should be similar.
- Textbooks should be related to day to day life
  - For example: my family/my friends/our school/home garden
- Capacity development programmes according to the 2NL pedagogy

Cont.
● Curriculum updated with new initiatives:
  ○ 21st century skills/21st century education
● More importance on oral communication in the 2NL curriculum
● Following lessons have to include to improve further regarding peace building:
  ○ Love and kindness towards animals
  ○ Good attitudes
  ○ Respect to elders
  ○ Not only respect to your religion but also other religions
  ○ Gain basic knowledge on other religions
  ○ Improve good customs
  ○ Cultural values
Singapore framework for 21st century competencies and student outcomes
Malay language students practice oral language skills
Suggestions for a suitable framework for policy and practice of second national language curriculum for Sri Lanka

Curriculum implementation policy

- Use internet for activities
  - For an example: Grade 6- Second National Language (Sinhala) from house to house
  - Discover their home from road map
- Usage of IT as a platform to teach and make the lessons more engaging such as quizzes, interactive lessons
- Include more videos, role play and real life case studies.
Thank you