Multilingual Education: Contexts, theories and practices

4th International Conference on Language and Education: Multilingual Education for All in Asia and the Pacific – Policies, Practices and Processes

Bangkok, 6-8 November 2013

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Introduction: Clarifying the basics

Terminology

Multilingualism & multilingual education are not new

Context

Understanding of multilingualism & multilingual education differs
• between the global South & global North
• among settings of the global South

Globalisation & diversity

Globalization ≠ reduction of linguistic diversity, ≠ only one international language

Rather globalization = increased diversity = multilingualism, increased repertoires of languages

Be careful of inappropriate/ incorrect interpretations of terminology; & incorrect historical accounts of linguistic diversity

Imprecise use of vocabulary, reduction of meaning and context
⇒ gets us into trouble
⇒ continues cycles of inequality
Who has what to say about linguistic diversity?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Languages of the world</th>
<th>Linguistic diversity / multilingualism is greater in:</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Africa: 2150</td>
<td>Asia and Africa = 66.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asia: 2304</td>
<td>Africa, Asia, Pacific = 86%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pacific: 1311</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Americas: 1060</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Europe: 284</td>
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<td>Total: 6700</td>
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http://www.ethnologue.com/

But:
- most of what is published about multilingualism & multilingual education is from:
  Europe and North America
Outline: Different understandings & use of terminology

Global North vs. global South

Countries of global South
- long history of linguistic diversity & multilingualism

Global North
- 18th & 19th C notion
- 1 nation state = 1 national language;
  late 20th early 21st C recognition of multilingualism

Literal vs. Figurative meanings

Limitations & inexactness of meaning

Be careful of models from other contexts which may not work here

Revalue/acknowledge local & regional interventions & expertise

Language education terminology

Mother-tongue education
- Mother language
- Langue maternelle
- Língua materna

Bilingual education

Multilingual education

History of the term:
- Mother tongue-based bilingual/multilingual education
What led to the term: Mother tongue-based bilingual / multilingual education in the African context?

Africa

120 years of reports & recommendations for education ⇒ use of local languages/mother tongue for first few years, then switch to English or French

1953 UNESCO Report on the Use of Vernacular languages in education

But: after independence – 1960s – 1990s

Most ‘Anglophone’ countries reduced MTE, and switched to international language earlier

‘Francophone’ & ‘Lusophone’ countries – usually zero MTE

↓

Low retention, high repeater rates; poor achievement; low throughput to secondary
South Africa

Apartheid 1948-1994

1953 Mother tongue education (MTE)
- MT medium for 8 years + English + Afrikaans for African Children;
- Bilingual education for other children:
  - MT [Afrikaans or English] + L2 [English or Afrikaans]

Influence of post-independence policy decisions in other African countries + internal political resistance
- reduction of MTE from 1976
- because of resistance to unequal political intentions – the terms ‘mother tongue’ and ‘bilingual’ education had negative connotations in South Africa
  - Few people noticed high level achievement of all students in this period (Heugh 1999)

Post-apartheid language education policy from late 1990s
- need to show differences from previous unequal system
Mother tongue-based bilingual / multilingual education [MTB-BLE, MTB-MLE]

Post-apartheid Language-in-education policy, 1997

Informed by multilingual education research findings 1930-1995 in Africa + terminology borrowed from North America & Europe

Additive bilingual/multilingual education:
  Use MT as medium and add other languages; with Home language (mother tongue/local language) as foundation for learning

Additive bilingual education explained as ‘based on home language (L1 / MT) and English’
  • Minimum of 2 languages for each child

Additive multilingual education explained as ‘based on home language (L1 / MT) and English’
  • different MTs across the country + English
  • where possible, also to include 3rd and even 4th language for each student

[Heugh 1995, 2000, 2002]
Despite Additive bilingual/multilingual Language in Education Policy,
language education debates – 1995-2013 - in South Africa caught up in political & pedagogical misunderstandings of:

- how children learn to read and write – most efficiently
- best, fastest route to access English for political and economic empowerment
- recollections of the political and educational history
- belief that – the most modern and sophisticated education systems come from the global North
- high value placed on research from the UK / USA
- belief that African research cannot be as knowledgeable, valid or reliable as that from the global North
Debates between stakeholders and attempts to clarify the policy of additive bilingual and multilingual education:

Colleagues in the Project for the Study of Alternative Education in South Africa (PRAESA) began to use the earlier explanations

**Additive bilingual education** [bilingual education based on home language (MT) and English]

→ **Mother tongue-based bilingual education (MTB-BLE)**

**Additive multilingual education** [multilingual education based on home language (MT) and English] different MTs across the country + English; system is multilingual

→ **Mother tongue-based multilingual education (MTB-MLE)**

Principles of the language in education policy for South Africa (1997)

- explanations became new terminology in order to clarify historical and political misunderstandings in the South African context
- not intended to go beyond this context
- still inexact and may be misunderstood
MTB-BLE / MLE based on research in Africa

- Research on bilingualism in South Africa in 1930s
- Research on extended use of MT and delayed exit to English after Grade 6 – Nigeria in 1970s
- Research on failure of early-exit from MT to English, French & Portuguese in Africa
  - e.g. Bamgbose 1980s, Heugh 1990s, Alidou et al 2006, Ouane & Glanz 2010, 2011, ongoing studies in Ethiopia, Uganda, Mozambique, Burkina Faso etc. 2005-2013

- Research across Africa confirms that:
  - Students are retained for more years in primary with MTE + international language
  - The longer the use of MTE medium, the higher student achievement
  - 3 years of MTE is better than none, 4 years increases opportunities,
  - 6 years increases opportunities to reach secondary,
  - 8 years offers best chances to reach end of secondary successfully
  - Children can learn to read and write in 2 orthographies and 3 languages better than one or two languages
  - 3 languages may be more beneficial than 2
Myths and efforts to avoid: MTB-BLE and MTB-MLE

**FALSE CLAIMS**

Mother tongue: term is out-dated or not valid

People don’t know what their MT is – they mix languages – therefore – just provide the international language

‘Mother tongue’ discriminates against men – literal meaning

MTB-BLE does not offer students adequate access to international language

**CONFUSION of MEANING**

Some critics misunderstand terms or misuse them and

⇒ this causes confusion for parents, teachers and education officials

**REALITY**

Mother tongue/language is used across Africa, Southeast and South Asia.

If people and communities use the term widely – then the term has validity

The language that children use a standard language, a variety, a dialect, or a mix of languages

⇒ is the mother tongue

& it is used figuratively not literally

Bilingual and multilingual education always offers access to the international language – but some approaches are better than others

MTB-BLE/MLE offers the best approach we know
How do we understand multilingualism in education?

Global North

Debates (apparently) emerge from:

- Monolingual ‘nation-state’ ideologies
- Dominant discourses/languages
- Theory of bilingual education
  - Two separate systems
  - But practices more complex, thus gives rise to a northern understanding of
- Multilingual education
  - As subset of bilingual education
  - Multiple forms of bilingual education (often)
- Pedagogy: direct method, communicative language teaching
  - Separation of languages

Majority language vs. minority diversity

Global South

Horizontal and Vertical systems co-exist:

- Vertical monolingualism: colonial ‘nation state’ ideology
  - placed over existing horizontal system of multilingualism with
  - Education theory from the North
    - models of bilingual & multilingual education that do not fit our contexts

Horizontal systems

- Informal education, economies,
  - Bi/multilingual educational practices/repetories
What Africa & Asia might share and use more productively

• **Expertise in understanding** of
  • multilingual education
  • how people actually communicate in their daily lives in contexts which are linguistically and culturally diverse
  • how languages change as one moves from one village or town to the next
  • how people manage these changes in order to communicate for practical purposes

• **Re-appropriate vocabulary & terminology**
  • *which were ‘borrowed’* by the North, reinterpreted and changed to suit the northern context

• **Resist buying back** our terminology & knowledge which have been changed to suit a northern context, and which does not fit our contexts
1. Gondi: वायो ने बिले अनी काल ओड़ केतीनी
2. Bundeli: आैै ना जावे. टांग अड़वे
3. Khorta: आवा ना जावा हे, बीच बाजार में घोड़ा दौड़वा हो
4. Bangla: पारे ना किशुई, ऐशोधे गान गाइते
5. Hindi: आता ना जाना- तबला बजाता
कभी-कभी इकट्ठे रहने से ही, वो आई लोगों के छाया इकट्ठे पूरी प्राइड के उपर उभर करते है और अपना आभास और गति उस प्राइड पर बनाने की कोशिश करते है। किसी प्राइड का हिस्सा बनने के लिए इनको प्राइड के बड़े नर शेरों से लड़कर मौजूदा है। ये काम आसानी से नहीं हो पाता है, इसलिये कभी-कभी जवान नर शेरों को कुछ साल अकेले ही रहना पड़ता है।

खाने की तालाब करते समय कोई अकेली माना (लड़की) शेर मिल जाये तो कुछ समय बहोत कर नीचे दिखते है। कहा जाता है इकट्ठे रहने है और इकट्ठे रहने है कि उनकी ताकत बन पाये। या तो कुछ और नर (लड़के) इकट्ठे
What does this have to do with multilingual education in the 21\textsuperscript{st} century?

Definitions may structure inequality

Is multilingual education for:

**Minority (indigenous & migrant) communities in monolingual dominant systems?**

Navaho, Spanish in the US
Saami, Urdu in Sweden
Frisian, Turkish in Amsterdam

**Majority communities give way to International Languages of Wider Communication?**

Hindi vs. English in India
Mandarin/Cantonese/ Korean vs. English

**Most minorities give way to Regional, National and International Languages of Wider Communication?**

Soara gives way to Oriya, Hindi, English
Fingo gives way to Xhosa, Afrikaans, English
Chabacano gives way to Filipino, English
Tatar gives way to Mandarin, English …

From whose perspective?

Multilingualism as a phenomenon associated with:

- contemporary, modern, 21\textsuperscript{st} C ‘super-diversity’ in Europe
- poverty, vulnerable & mobile people in the South
- human rights issues
- transformation of education

AND

- Is multilingualism or multilinguality the lingua franca of South and South East Asia and Africa?
- Implications of multilingual scholarly texts (in Arabic script) of 7\textsuperscript{th} - 12\textsuperscript{th} C in West Africa
- What of early scholarly texts in Asian languages?
Implications for multilingual education and globalization in the Asian & African contexts

• Reappropriate our own terminologies, multilingual resources, expertise, practices
• Reappropriation of Asia & Africa-centred understanding of MLE
• Multilingualism is hierarchical – and it does not guarantee equitable access to education
  • Owing to degrees & layers of marginalization, majoritization, minoritization, multilinguality
• Unless
  • All children have access to and make maximum use of BOTH / All sets of repertoires:
    • local, regional, national and international systems of language use
    • multilinguality, functional multilingualism, horizontal ‘languaging’
  • That guarantee empowerment of people to make their views heard and their expertise acknowledged
Research Evidence From Africa and Asia – collections in

**Africa**
- Ouane & Glanz 2010, 2011 – UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning, website
  Summarises most of the recent research of differences of achievement of students who learn through local languages vs. the former colonial languages

**Global South**
- Skutbabb-Kangas & Heugh 2012
- Shoba & Chimbutane 2013
- Benson & Kosonen 2013
  Implementation of Ethiopian languages in Education since 1994 – together with system-wide data of achievement at Grade 8 – best information for Africa, Asia and the global North of differences in achievement of students who learn through the local language
Economics has taught us that nations should compete for market share, natural resources, and human capital. What is often omitted in these theories is that nations should also promote the use of their own terminologies. The main task for Chinese artists, writers, journalists, and academics ... is to prefer the correct Chinese names and terms each and every time over misleading English translations.

Why? Because, ... if we give our names, ideas and inventions away to another group, we risk losing something valuable....

Eastern cultures should defend their key terminologies, find the untranslatable words and promote them. If the Chinese don’t bring their own vocabularies ... our so-called world history will forever be a Western tale.

Thorsten Pattberg, The Strait Times, 8 June 2013
Linguistic Diversity

South - centre of global diversities

- Multilingual universities, West Africa from 12th C – 400,000 manuscripts
- Informal multilingual education
- Large-scale research bilingualism 1930s, South Africa, Malherbe 1942.
- Language planning from below Bamgbose and Chumbow - 1987
- Language chains across Africa Djité 1991
- ‘Multilingualism is the lingua franca of Africa’ Fardon & Furniss, 1994
- Multilinguality Agnihotri 1992/5
- Multilingual Education:
  - Large-scale initiatives India, Nepal, Niger, Mali, Mozambique, Uganda
  - System-wide Ethiopia, South Africa

North - periphery of diversities

- Fear of diversity – Crusades & Orientalism;
- Nation-state monolingualism: 18th century onwards
- Research on bilingualism later that in South
- New names, e.g. translanguaging
- For old practices, code-switching?
- Multilingualism as the new linguistic dispensation, Aronin & Singleton 2012
- Focus shifts from strong bi/multilingual programmes towards the dominant language?
Be careful of giving way to models from the global North:
Africa, Asia & Pacific have greater expertise in diversity

What Africa and Asia share
- Languages of wider communication (LWC)
  - Local, regional (RLWC), national (NLWC), international (ILWC)
- Pre-colonial highly diverse linguistic ecologies
- Existing systems of education, oracy, literacy
- Centuries of scholarship
- (Mis)management of linguistic, cultural, faith-based, economic, political diversities
- Together with the Pacific, the custodians of 86% of the world’s languages