5th International Conference on Language and Education:
Sustainable Development through Multilingual Education

19-21 October 2016

Bangkok, Thailand

1st Announcement and Call for Papers

BACKGROUND

Since 2000, significant progress has been made in the Asia-Pacific region in expanding learning opportunities for all. Progress is reflected in improved school enrolment ratios, fewer out-of-school children, higher literacy rates, and improved gender parity. Despite this progress, retention, successful transitions from the home or preschool to primary school and then to secondary education, and the quality of education remain substantial challenges. There are still 17 million out-of-school children and close to 499 million illiterate adults in the Asia-Pacific region.[1] At least 250 million children worldwide are still not able to read, write, or count adequately even after at least four years in school.[2]

In order to complete the unfinished Education for All (EFA) goals, Target 4 of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development[3] has been developed to achieve "inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all." The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) will need to address all forms of exclusion and marginalization, disparities and inequalities in access, participation, and learning outcomes. However, in many cases, language and education policies fail to take into account the inherent linguistic diversity in schools and society and prevent ethnolinguistic minority learners from accessing quality education. An

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[1] UNESCO. 2015. Asia-Pacific Regional Education for All Report: A Synthesis of the National EFA Reports. Bangkok, UNESCO.

[2] UNESCO. 2014. Teaching and Learning: Achieving Quality for All: EFA Global Monitoring Report 2013-2014. Paris, UNESCO.

[3] The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development includes a set of 17 SDGs to end poverty, fight inequality and injustice, and tackle climate change by 2030. The new SDGs, and the broader sustainability agenda, go much further than the Millennium Development Goals (MDG), addressing the root causes of poverty and the universal need for development that works for all people.

estimated 2.3 billion people, nearly 40 percent of the world's population, lack access to education in their own language.[4] Experience in the Asia-Pacific region has shown that mother tongue-based multilingual education (MTB-MLE) can help break this cycle of marginalization in education. MTB-MLE ensures that all learners have equal opportunity to build strong foundational skills of literacy and numeracy as well as analytical, problem-solving, interpersonal, and social skills for further learning in a complex and rapidly changing world. Cambodia and the Philippines are examples of countries with new, pro-active, and evidence-driven MLE policies that strive towards increased quality education for all.

Since 2003, members of the Asia-Pacific Multilingual Education Working Group have been co-organizing international conferences on language and education every two to three years.[5] These conferences bring together hundreds of policy-makers, researchers, practitioners, and development actors. The conferences facilitate MLE advocacy, create momentum for stronger MLE programs, and contribute to the mainstreaming of MLE policies around the region. They also function as a platform to share views, good practices, and experiences, as well as to explore issues concerning the importance of mother tongue-based learning and broader language issues in sustainable development. The conferences also encourage researchers and practitioners to provide evidence to support MLE advocacy efforts in the region.

The 5th International Conference on Language and Education will take stock of recent developments in MLE policies and practices in the Asia-Pacific region, with a special focus on multilingual education in early childhood and primary education. It will likewise look at innovative pedagogies in the training of MLE teachers. Finally, it will examine challenges and lesson learned from the EFA experience and give opportunities for forward-looking discussions on both the role of language in achieving the new SDGs and preserving a harmonious relationship between the global and local contexts.

OBJECTIVES

- Showcase promising practices in MLE and local language use in education in order to increase understanding of the importance of expanding access to effective multilingual education and accelerating momentum for MLE in the Asia-Pacific region;
- Document challenges and lessons learned from existing MLE policies and practices;
- Identify innovative pedagogies in teacher training and MLE practice at early childhood and primary education levels;
- Enhance understanding of the linkages among language, social cohesion, and the SDGs;

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[4] UNESCO UIS and UNICEF. 2015. Fixing the Broken Promise of Education for All: Findings from the Global Initiative on Out-of-School Children. Montreal, UIS.
[5] 2003, 2008, 2010, and 2013.

- Support the mainstreaming of MLE policies by highlighting recent MLE policy developments in the Asia-Pacific region; and
- Discuss the role of and balance among different languages – local, national, and international – in MLE policies and practices.

The conference features **four thematic tracks**. Conference organizers welcome abstracts that address these and related questions.

Track 1: Towards Sound Policies on Multilingual Education: Language and Language-in-Education Policy and Planning in Asia and the Pacific

Objective: *To discuss recent policy developments related to multilingual education, particularly in Asia and the Pacific nations, and to learn from and build on these developments to enable language and language-in-education policies to be strengthened throughout the region.*

Some questions to be addressed:

- What are the essential components of sound policies relating to multilingual education in different contexts?
- What are the critical and analytical perspectives on the socio-political landscapes affecting language and language-in-education policies?
- What kinds of positive policy developments (for example, towards increased latitude for non-dominant languages and MLE) have taken place in the nations of the Asia-Pacific region, and what processes have enabled these pro-MLE policies to be put in place?
- How are languages of different status (that is, local and other non-dominant languages and national and international languages) included in language and language-in-education policies?
- Who are the key actors and institutions affecting language and language-in-education policies?
- How do the issues of rights, equity, and diversity inform the standards and legislative mandates of language and language-in-education policies?
- What are the key issues and challenges in developing and implementing language-in-education policies that support multilingual education and the use of non-dominant languages?

Track 2: MLE Teachers and Teacher Training for MLE

Objective: *To explore the types of teacher education and certification pathways that could be put in place at local and national level to build the capacity and competency of MLE teachers to enhance the quality of MTB-MLE program.*

Some questions to be addressed:

- What are the present good practices for MTB-MLE teacher education?
- What are some good practices in educating MLE teachers for working in multigrade settings?
- How can MTB-MLE teacher education be developed and incorporated as a teaching qualification in preservice and inservice teacher education institutions?
- What are some innovative pathways to provide certification to teachers who have not obtained their teaching qualifications by traditional processes?
- Who are the key actors and institutions affecting the selection, training, and practical work of MLE teachers?
- How can human resource systems of Ministries of Education be adjusted to place (and keep) minority language speaking teachers in MTB-MLE programs?
- What can be done to work with the local community to choose, train, and hold teachers accountable for the quality of their work?

Track 3: MLE Practice/Praxis in Early Childhood and Primary Education

Objective: *To discuss effective MTB-MLE praxis in early childhood and primary education that addresses increasingly globalized social contexts, leading to effective integration into mainstream education, and access to quality education.*

Some questions to be addressed:

- What are the essential reasons for beginning learning in the mother tongue at the early childhood/preschool level?
- What early childhood education policies in regard to language use must be developed in order to promote better learning outcomes in primary school?
- What challenges are faced in using MTB-MLE in early childhood education, and what strategies have been designed to meet these challenges?
- What steps must be taken to ensure a smooth transition from preschool to primary school in regard to language use?
- How is MTB-MLE relevant in a linguistically diverse classroom and what are some good MTB-MLE practices to make education inclusive for all in such a setting?

- What are some innovative practices to make L1 material production affordable and feasible?
- What good teaching strategies and materials are available to supplement the learning of national and international languages?
- Who are the key actors and institutions affecting MLE practice at the early childhood and primary school levels?
- What can be done to ensure more effective bridging from the MTB-MLE system to the standard national education system?
- How can the MTB-MLE approach be made more sustainable?

Track 4: Language and Cross-Cutting Issues of Sustainable Development Goals (SDG)

Objective: *To discuss the strategic contribution that languages can play in the attainment of the SDGs and explore how languages can facilitate the process of a new model of development that is inclusive, participatory, bottom-up, and multi-sectoral so allowing greater participation of ethnolinguistic minorities in the development process.*

Some questions to be addressed:

- What are the challenges and barriers for ethnolinguistic minority communities to effectively participate in the development process?
- What role can language play in poverty reduction (SDG 1), quality education (SDG 4), gender equality (SDG 5), reduced inequalities (SDG 10), climate action (SDG 13), and partnerships for the goals (SDG 17)?
- What role can language play to implement the full Education 2030 agenda (SDG 4) and the Framework for Action? What is required to enable this?
- What are the best country/community, regional, and international practices highlighting the role of languages in achieving the above-mentioned goals?
- What can be done to integrate local languages and cultures in national-local public policies and development programs?
- What roles can ethnolinguistic minorities (including indigenous, communities, and other stakeholders) play in promoting culture-based sustainable development?
- What are the parallels between lifelong and adult learning with MLE at early childhood and primary levels in multilingual contexts? How can different levels of education support quality learning at other levels?
- What inter-agency capacity building do governments need in order to integrate MLE into the SDG implementation?

- Abstracts of proposed papers will be accepted until **30 March 2016**. We welcome the submission of papers and perspectives that highlight relevant local, national, international, or comparative research and practice in the four thematic areas.
- Abstracts should be no longer than **250 words in English** and should clearly identify the paper's topic and its relevance to the conference. If possible and relevant, please include in the abstract title the name of the country that the proposal is discussing.
- **Choose a track category:** Proposals should indicate which track is best suited for the paper. The conference steering committee reserves the right to include a paper for consideration in a track other than the one you may identify, if deemed appropriate.

Submission details
- The **first page** of the submission should not bear any marks that would identify the author or authors. The first page should contain only two items:
  - **The title of the abstract**. If possible and relevant, please include in the abstract title the name of the country that the proposal is discussing.
  - **The abstract**. The abstract should be no longer than 250 words in English and should clearly identify the paper's topic and its relevance to the conference.
- The **second page** should contain:
  - Title of the abstract
  - Name of the author/authors
  - Author title/s (Mr/Mrs/Ms/Dr, etc.)
  - Author/s gender
  - Author/s affiliation/s
  - Author/s position/s
  - Email address/es, and
  - Preferred conference track (1, 2, 3, or 4).
- Use a standard **font** (such as **12 point Times New Roman**) to format the text.
- **Submit** your abstract as a **Microsoft Word file** (submission template available on the website) to the following address: abstract.2016conference@gmail.com
- Abstracts will be reviewed by three independent reviewers per track.

Website: www.lc.mahidol.ac.th/mleconf/2016 (watch the website for updates in the program)

Email:
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