



English in Multilingualism: Round Table Discussion notes

Mother Tongue (MT) concern

- Context must be taken into account; some believe that since contexts are so different, this kind of conversation is difficult to have
- Multilingualism is a necessity; should be used to protect any language/dialect
- Teachers and administrators need training to understand the benefits of MT
- Native English teachers at a disadvantage b/c they cannot speak all L1s
- Students should be taught to respect their MT
- Need resources to support the teaching MT; L1 resources should overlap with L2 resources
- MT does not always have to do with grammar
- Language is important to maintain culture; curriculum should be designed according to culture
- A danger of MT reliance, particularly when the teachers speaks L1
- Need to rethink MT 'marketing'; reassure society/parents that it is a good thing
- Teacher influences by their own MT being suppressed when it is not the class's MT
- Maybe MT term should be reconsidered: Language of Communication? Home Language?
- Multilingualism opens doors to tolerance, communication, personal growth, and identity

Instructional concerns

- A solid L1 is essential; translanguaging uses entire linguistic input to learn additional languages; use every tool a child has in order to become multilingual
- Avoid creating minds that focus only on one language or aspect of learning
- Classroom activities influence attitudes and can promote multilingualism
- English medium in medicine, there is a disconnect with medical terminology if another language is used in instruction
- Monolingual countries are at a tipping point: teachers aren't able to use L1s therefore jeopardizing curriculum outcomes and denying understandings b/c of complete immersion
- The more languages you learn, the more you become aware of your L1
- Status-planning: recognition of different languages' status when planning learning outcomes
- Culture should not be separated from language and vice-versa, but doesn't need to be UK/USA culture when teaching English... teachers should consider the appropriate World English
- Culture and multilingual activities must be found in publications; be careful of losing things in translation
- As teachers we should listen and value, celebrate and cultivate, practice and share
- Dialect & accent differences from home, to school, to society, to nation, to region, to world
- Give agency to the learner and let them learn; work on the whole student
- Students should be able to select the languages they want to learn
- Language death is not always English's fault; often contributed to other dialects

- Empower teachers to self-develop/self-improve
- Research point: some students feel anxiety when working with a native speaking teacher
- Accent nor pronunciation should be a part of teacher qualifications; should we drop accent/pronunciation from teaching?
- Teachers teach to the exam; how do we get away from this? (policy concern as well)
- Constant struggle: When should L2 be introduced into instruction?
- What can we do at an association level to influence language learning attitudes?
- Could you select schools that focus on particular languages to help with costs?
- Can we create a critique for testing agencies?

Political concerns

- The elitism surrounding English, a “prestige” language, can create inequality; segregates populations through the schools they attend, but can also be a unifying language
- Language policies are confusing, they need to be driven by research and spell out what can and cannot be done; globalization might be contributing to this
- Policies shouldn't be so rigid, nor should they change overnight
- Fear of pushing early learning without much evidence
- Governments may believe that teaching multiple languages is costly; creating policy in cheap; cost cannot be eliminated
- Bringing all stakeholders (policy makers, teachers, students, department heads, parents, community leaders, publishers) to the table to see what works/doesn't work, then make decisions
- To make translanguaging effective, national policies need to take into account local diversities
- Consider evidence coming from teachers and students
- Struggles between English & French: Cameroon, Tunisia, Albania
- Parental pressures to use English only, but don't understand why; English only policies are rarely 100% implemented; English only policies are frustrating; English only policies are on the decline
- Student gender in some contexts, i.e. what boys should learn vs what girls should learn
- When a new policy is approved, teachers need training immediately; however, there are funds for hiring, not training
- TESOL International Association should focus on English but be additive/open stance toward multilingualism; support translanguaging; be a positive model; prioritize concerns for the world
- What is the best age to start teaching English?
- Are policies fully responsible for what happens in the classroom?
- TESOL's NNEST policy statement has been around for decades, is it time for a revision?
- Can we find away for TESOL/UNESCO/UNICEF to work together on universal policy?

Contextual examples

- A divide... Africa & Asia focusing on multilingualism; USA & EU focusing on bilingualism with English as the target language
- Japan: double limited... teach only in Japanese and English; English teachers are not respected
- Malaysia: Maths & Science taught in English
- Greece: Exercises given in English, lessons are in Greek; 70% of students go to lang institutes
- India: Teacher English proficiencies a huge concern; fear of losing MT
- Taiwan: quick policy change from teaching in Japanese to Mandarin made most teachers effectively illiterate

- Egypt: 40% of population is illiterate b/c differing language requirements, i.e. religious vs society
- Qatar: students are competent but alienated due to a lack of Arabic skills
- Indonesia: students can read the Latin script, i.e. English, but cannot read MT; language teaching time is being reduced
- Brazil: introducing multilingualism, but difficult to find common ground; must have a policy; hiring teachers each year, but go to private schools for better job conditions
- Australia: the death of aboriginal languages is a concern
- Ukraine: there is no problem using native language in foreign classes
- Hawaii: taking efforts to revitalize the Hawaiian language (same with Welsh, Irish, Maori)
- South Africa: L1 is smuggled into English class; 11 official languages, MT is hard to define; use NGO fund to train teachers
- Cameroon: still struggles with what the best L2 should be (French or English) b/c of resource
- USA: start with 90% L1 and 10% L2 moving toward 50/50% of both languages; most successful schools use translanguaging; a variety of program types to meet parent needs; biliteracy seal for diplomas
- Europe: many language learning options b/c of EU
- Uzbekistan: English classes have a student book, a teacher book, and a parent book
- Albania: students given German tests to answer in Albanian
- Bangladesh: English is compulsory from grade 1
- Singapore: since 1987, English language instruction in all schools, all grades; still concerns about how fluent they are when they go abroad
- Sweden: a push for English only policy has opened many doors for hiring
- Iran: 7000 teachers were sent to Beirut to improve their teaching skills
- Slovakia: English is the first foreign language
- Papua New Guinea: 1000 languages, English is the language of instruction... it has to be