



Introduction

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In 2019, the Inclusion, Mobility and Multilingual Education (IMMLE) Conference: *Exploring the role of languages in education and development* brought together the 13th Language and Development Conference and the 6th Multilingual Education Conference. It was co-hosted by the British Council and UNESCO Bangkok on behalf of the Language and Development Conference Trustees and Asia-Pacific Multilingual Education Conference. A broad diversity of 476 delegates from 59 countries attended.

The conference addressed the three key themes: Language and Inclusion; Language and Mobility; Multilingual Education. These themes provide the framework for this collection. Needless to say, these are all complex topics dealing with multiple strands and arguments that cross over, mingle and get tangled up together. So, naturally, some authors deal with more than one theme in their papers. The writers echo the comprehensive aims of the IMMLE Conference. These included an exploration into how an open and inclusive multilingual approach, especially in the context of education and wider society, can maximise outcomes and wellbeing for different groups across an increasingly mobile population. For the contributors, this has involved examining a range of different perspectives on the extent to which policy, practice and research on multilingual approaches at local, national and international levels can be used to advance participation, access and learning for children and adults from marginalised and diverse, mobile communities. The conference also aimed to identify and examine priorities for advancing multilingual approaches to social and educational policy-making, learning and development.

Although the writers are from a wide range of settings and discuss these issues from their context, they have a common aim to inspire and inform future actions on these important matters. In the first section, Language and Inclusion is examined. This theme analyses the relationship between language, social cohesion, inclusion and peace-building. It includes issues of language learning, but also access to civic participation, justice, health and information for those from minority ethnic and language backgrounds and those with different genders and abilities.

Section One starts off with Psyche Kennett discussing the critical role that inclusive language policies and practice play in achieving specific United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). To do this, Psyche focuses on two programmes, one in Uruguay and the other in Sri Lanka. These provide the context for an analysis of the challenges to achieving language inclusion through SDGs and the three strategies that can be used to overcome them. Then Dr Jimmy Harmon looks at the relationship between language of instruction and sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) with the introduction of a sexuality education programme in all secondary schools





in the Republic of Mauritius. This is followed by a case study of the Gotha Bandhu programme in Thirunelly village in Kerala, India. This paper, as described by Hafeesha TB and Vishnu Prasad, looks at the impact of the programme on learning of language mentors in 'tribal-friendly' schools for children from four different minority communities. Then Ambika Regmi Banjara scrutinises challenges to social cohesion and inclusion in minority ethnic-linguistic speech communities in Nepal against a backdrop of recent conflict and civil war that have forced members of these communities to more remote areas in order to protect their own safety. Dr Tran Thi Yen continues the theme with a discussion of a number of bilingual education programmes in Vietnam funded by UNICEF. Vietnam is a multi-ethnic nation with 53 of the 54 different communities accounting for less than 15 per cent of the population. Dr Tran describes the impact of the programmes where students are taught in their mother tongues, and uses these as the basis to make recommendations for developing language policies that are inclusive of these communities. Fakhrudin Akhuzada concludes Section One with an investigation of shifting attitudes to language policies in Pakistan, a country where there are more than 70 different languages spoken, and outlines the factors that have led to positive changes in recent years.


Section Two focuses on Language and Mobility. Writers investigate the role of language for refugees and displaced populations in economic migration and urbanisation as well as in higher education and employability, including the potential economic gains from indigenous knowledge and language use, resilience and prosperity, and language revitalisation.

The section begins with Hywel Coleman presenting a broad view of migration and movement across the globe and across time, and the implications for language. He focuses on Indonesia. Louise Courtney then provides an analysis of the Southeast Asia Primary Learning Metrics (SEA-PLM), which is a new comparative learning assessment programme, designed by and for countries in Southeast Asia. The aim of SEA-PLM is to determine how children in Southeast Asia perform against regional measurements in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of primary school.

Louise's paper is followed by a series of four British Council case studies drawn together by Harry Haynes to explain what is needed in order to implement supportive language learning programmes that protect home languages using a multilingual approach. The case studies look at interventions in different communities across the Middle East and North Africa, including the HOPES (Higher and Further Education Opportunities and Perspectives for Syrians) project, which was an EU-funded initiative engaging 19 universities over a three-year period in Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Turkey and Iraq. The final paper in this theme, and in the collection, is from Ahmat Hessana who probes into the role of the three major cross-border vehicular languages (Fulfulde, Hausa and Kalam Arabic) in the Lake Chad Basin, which borders Chad, Nigeria, Cameroon, Niger and Central African Republic, as well as explaining migrants' lack of interest in re-integration processes through the use of another European language.

The final section looks at Multilingual Education (MLE). Writers consider the use of spoken, written and signed languages in educational settings. They explore different aspects of multilingual education, including policies, policy implementation, pedagogies, teacher effectiveness, curriculum and materials development, and learning assessment. MLE practice and translanguaging are described broadly across different levels of education, from early childhood to higher education.

The section begins with Professor Kathleen Heugh discussing the increasing diversity of mixed communities worldwide, and the complexity of developing much-needed ethical and inclusive education policies by governments, so that there can be a shift from a monolingual and universal view of education to one with a pluriversal and multilingual orientation. Sangsok Son and Minjung Kim continue the examination of just and equal education for students whose languages are not the same as the language of instruction with a focus on schools in northern Thailand. They make the case for the use of translanguaging practices to overcome uneven access to education. The topic is continued with Greg Tyrosvoutis and colleagues who debate the findings of a study conducted in collaboration



with the Karen Education and Cultural Department (KECD) and the education wing of the Karen National Union (KNU) in Myanmar. The aim of the study was to identify and validate approaches and best practices for multilingual teaching and learning in order that children from rural areas with a minority first language have better chances to learn in school. Rynj Gonzales concludes the theme with a paper examining language endangerment in terms of the Indigenous Peoples Education (IPED) in the Philippines, and setting out the implications for mother-tongue based and multilingual education (MTB-MLE).

Together, these articles reflect the wide and diverse approaches taken by the 219 presenters offering individual talks and panel discussions in 108 presentations and workshops delivered over the three days of the conference. But, as you read them, try to keep in mind that what binds them together is an ambition for good practice on multilingual education and the role of language in supporting mobile populations and in wider education and development. We hope that what you read may inspire and inform future actions on all these matters.

