PRIMARY INNOVATIONS
REGIONAL SEMINAR

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A collection of papers

Contents

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Acknowledgements

Foreword

Across East Asia, probably at this very moment, millions of children are participating in an English language class in their primary school. In most countries in the region, English language teaching at secondary level has been established for many years and the necessary conditions and infrastructure for effective teaching are already in place. However, teaching English in primary schools is a relatively new phenomenon in East Asia and the demand is huge with the starting age for learning English getting younger and younger. This brings many challenges in language policy and planning as well as teacher education and curriculum development.

The British Council developed the Primary Innovations project to support change in primary English language teaching in nine countries in East Asia: Indonesia; Japan; Korea; Malaysia; the Philippines; Singapore; Taiwan; Thailand, and Vietnam.

In March 2007, around 55 primary ELT specialists from ministries and other institutions gathered at a three-day Primary Innovations Regional Seminar in Hanoi, Vietnam.

The seminar was designed to give the invited specialists an opportunity to address issues related to the introduction of English at primary level and to share lessons learnt from case studies around the region. The diversity of the region brought a range of perspectives and issues to the seminar: from Singapore and the Philippines where there is a longer history of English language teaching; and Japan and Vietnam, for example, where English teaching at primary level is relatively new.

This volume brings together papers and presentations from the seminar on a range of issues including: language policy and planning across both primary and secondary levels; teacher training systems; the implications of introducing systemic change; curriculum reform, and case studies. A summary report of the research undertaken in eight countries on primary ELT prior to the seminar concludes the volume.

These papers provide insights into the issues and concerns in primary English language teaching in East Asia in a variety of contexts, and convey a sense of the enthusiasm and optimism across the region for primary English language teaching. The papers also underline the commitment and determination to ensure adequate provision so that children have a positive and successful language learning experience.

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The British Council and English Language in SE Asia: Setting the Context

JOHN WHITEHEAD

In this introductory session I would like to share some thoughts with you about the nature, the role and the learning and teaching of English, as we see it from the perspective of an organisation which both works widely across the world in partnership with ministries of education to help people learn and teach English more effectively and which delivers English language classes to learners in over 60 countries.

It is a truism for many people that English is a global language and, if you are not born with English as a first language, your parents will want you to learn it as early as possible. Proficiency in English in the world is perceived increasingly as an essential basic skill.

English is widely perceived as one of the most valuable global commodities – the currency for global mobility and individual success – and governments are investing large sums of money in improving the standards of teaching and learning English worldwide.

Recognition of the power of English as a means of communicating with the outside world is widely accepted by nations throughout the world. In francophone and lusophone Africa governments, business leaders, academics and students are clear on the role of English: the government of Madagascar is set to introduce English at primary school level and the government of Tunisia has recently embarked on an ambitious programme of introducing English at primary level education in response to the President's call for English to be the 'preferred foreign language' in his country by 2010.

In other parts of the world, where the use of English has been a controversial issue, governments are understanding the need to improve English language skills for political and economic engagement: Malaysia recently announced its intention to retrain 30,000 teachers to teach maths and science from primary school level through the medium of English and the government has set up a permanent teacher training institute to support this. Long-standing hostility to the use of English in the Indian state of West Bengal has now been eroded and learning English will now start again, after 20 years, for students at the age of 6.

The Ethiopian Prime Minister is quoted recently as saying "English is one of the keys to my country's development". The South Korean President recently added to previous calls from Taiwan and Japan for English to be made a co-official language in the SE Asia region. The UNDP Arab Human Development Report sees educational opportunity as the key to a brighter future for the Arab world and the use of ICT in education, through English, is a high priority for the governments of all countries in the East Mediterranean. According to the report, the very low levels of use of ICT and the Internet in the region has led to 'a major mismatch … between the output of educational systems and the labour-market needs' and stagnation in education systems is highlighted as a major factor in slow economic growth in the Arab world. The report states that 'Knowledge is a cornerstone of development, and … Arab countries face a significant knowledge gap'. English, and the access it gives to global knowledge, experience and opportunities, is the key to closing this gap. This is reflected in the recent large scale projects initiated by Ministries of Education across the Gulf to reform the curriculum and develop new syllabuses and teaching approaches for teaching English.

In summary, in large parts of the world, the use of English creates a space which, on an individual level, enables communication and debate, gives access to the latest ideas and opportunities to share them and it enhances professional credibility through participation in international meetings, forums and partnerships. English, more than any other language, facilitates mobility for many reasons, including commerce, tourism, study and immigration and this, in turn, contributes towards the prosperity of individuals and nations.

But is this true everywhere? A headline outside a Beijing Mandarin school in South Jakarta Indonesia, recently quoted in the Guardian Weekly[1] , "Intensive Mandarin, sign up now for our special summer programme", suggests that the way forward for this region is for nations and individuals to invest in learning Mandarin, not English. After all, there are far more speakers of Mandarin in the world than English. Christopher Stroud, a lecturer in postcolonial multilingualism at the National University in Singapore, quoted in this article, disagrees: *"[English] has got a critical mass and it's used in all sorts of functions around the world … It's a major global industry".* The fact that Asean, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, has adopted English as a lingua franca, suggests

1. Chinese whispers as lingua franca, Guardian Weekly Learning English p.1, 23 September 2005

that being a dominating force, English may be perceived as a neutral language in Southeast Asia and a language co-owned by every nation which speaks it in the region. This view in supported by Simon Colledge of the British Council in Indonesia, who is quoted in the same article as saying: *"[People studying English] are not interested in the culture of the English-speaking nations so much: it's rather they know that a good career and travel demand some English … The same is true of Mandarin but not to the same extent".* People all over China are also, of course, learning English in droves. *"The man in the street in China wants to learn and practise his English"*, says Professor Koh Tai Ann of Singapore's Nanyang Technological University[2], " … While in Singapore, we have 'Mandarin Cool', in China, it's 'English Hot' in the run-up to the [2008] Olympics"

So, perhaps we could say that the power of English is not only about quantity and volume (the number of its speakers as a first, second or foreign language) but about reach. To quote the famous beer advert of a few years back now, 'English reaches those parts other world languages, e.g. Chinese, cannot reach' or perhaps we should say, cannot yet reach.

Non-native speakers of English now outnumber native speakers 3 to 1, according to a recent Newsweek report called 'Not the Queen's English'[3] and, quoting from David Crystal's 'English as a Global Language'., the report says, "There has never before been a language that has been spoken by more people as a second language than a first … Linguistically speaking, it is a whole new world." But the new speakers of English are not just absorbing the language, they are shaping it. Many varieties of new English are developing with large speech communities. These new varieties of English are developing their own status and there is considerable confusion in some quarters about what English now is and, certainly, what 'correct English' is.

So, the impact of the globalisation of English has been to change the language itself and to raise big issues about status and ownership. This raises interesting and challenging issues, in turn, about the impact of global English on language planning and language policy in school and universities across the world.

Where does this leave us or perhaps rather, where does this take us to? Are we heading for a world where people speak mutually unintelligible varieties of English? It is broadly agreed that, while political sensitivities and historical factors are very important, the future is not 'English instead of' but 'English as well as'. English, by itself, will not be sufficient for the future. "People will have to have English plus one at the very least to be successful", says Andy Kirkpatrick, a research professor at the School of Language and Intercultural Education at Curtin University of Technology in Perth, Australia[4]. But this still leaves the issues around what we mean by English. "This drive to increase people's exposure to English does not mean everyone speaks the same version of the language",

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2. Not the Queen's English, Newsweek (International Edition) March 2005
3. Quoted in the Guardian Weekly op. cit.
4. Quoted in the Guardian Weekly op. cit.

says Professor Koh Tai Ann[5], also chair of Singapore's Speak Good English Movement. "In addition to standard English, there's Manglish, Taglish, Japlish and Singlish, to name a few", with reference to the sort of English spoken in China, the Philippines, Japan and Singapore respectively. "They're usually totally intelligible only to the locals".

But, before we all start worrying about how to deal with this potential future chaos, we can perhaps find the answer in the pragmatic reasons why people are so keen to learn English. There is some evidence to show that standard English is becoming more pervasive, at least through the Internet. The opportunities to absorb English (in addition to learning it formally) has increased significantly over the last 20 years and the fact that many of these opportunities are global, or at least regional, promotes standard varieties of the language which can reach across borders. Clearly, students who are going to need English for trans-national education or who are already studying outside their own country through the medium of English will need to have access to a variety of the language which travels across borders and which is intelligible across the world and this need sends clear signals to those responsible for language policy. In your context in East Asia, your desire to equip the future workforce with appropriate skills and knowledge as well as your plan to raise the status of your higher educational institutions through internationally recognised research outputs, events and links, must involve competence in English as a key factor and a variety of English which travels far and has high currency value across continents.

So, the world is learning English for economic reasons. I do, though now, want to draw our attention to some wider issues around educating our young people and the value of learning languages to promote intercultural dialogue.

> "Because English is so widely used in many parts of the world the common, but mistaken view, that English is enough, needs to be challenged at every level, based on a clear understanding and statement of the benefits of a facility in a second (or third) language. Especially within the European Community it is an enfranchisement for the individual; for companies engaged in overseas trade, it helps in opening and sustaining trading relationships, and for society it helps to create a people who are both confident in themselves and able and willing to engage with others on their own terms, and whose cultural understanding goes beyond these shores."[6]

This is Lord Dearing's view of the role of languages in the school curriculum in the initial Consultation Report of the Languages Review recently commissioned by the UK's DfES. Another recent DfES report supports this view:" ... we must recognise language skills as central to breaking down barriers within this country and between our nation and others.[7]"

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5. Quoted in the Guardian Weekly op. cit.
6. Languages Review – Consultation Report: Short Text, December 2006, DfES, p.2.
7. Baroness Catherine Ashton in Foreword to Languages for All; Languages for Life DfES

These statements make clear that the benefits of learning of foreign languages go far beyond developing linguistic competence; language learning is an essential component in preparing young people for life and in developing responsible and informed citizens who can contribute to the economic prosperity of their country. And this applies, of course, to every country across the world.

This view is echoed by the European Commission. Under the watchword, 'The more languages you know, the more of a person you are', the Commission reaffirms its commitment to multilingualism. In the words of Jân Figel, Commissioner for Education, Training Culture and Multilingualism,

> "Languages are what make us human, and Europe's linguistic diversity is at the core of its identity … Over the past few years, Europe has seen major changes resulting from successive enlargements of the Union, greater mobility in the Single Market, and increased travel to and trade with the rest of the world. This has resulted in interaction between Europeans and the different cultures, languages, ethnic groups and religions on the continent and elsewhere. Dialogue between cultures would therefore appear to be an essential tool in forging closer links both between European peoples themselves and between their respective cultures."[8]

And the learning of languages which develop a broader understanding of other cultures and an enhanced ability to interact with people from other cultures, is at the centre of this. The Director of CILT, The UK's National Centre for Languages, Isabelle Moore, believes that a little language can make a lot of difference; and languages improve the quality of your life.

> "The need for languages in the workplace is changing rapidly as our economy becomes more international, and it is important that we highlight these changes for young people as they make their career choices. The communication needs in the workplace today, and the competition our young people will face in the jobs market are not the same as even 10 years ago and languages can be an important part of work readiness."[9]

And just as English in the UK is not enough, nations worldwide have the same view about the benefits of language learning, and specifically learning English,

> "We have witnessed in this past century that English has become a global language without much understanding of the process. Nor can we say that we really know the extent of its influence and status as a global language. But we can be sure of one thing: English can be used as a key to better understanding".

These are the words of the Thai Crown Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn who recently

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8. European Commission web press release, 5 October 2005, with full information at: http://www.europa.eu.int/comm./culture/portal/index_en.htm.
9. CILT, The National Centre for Languages, press release 23 January 2007

launched Thailand's first royal blog with the aim of persuading her fellow citizens to embrace English.[10]

Professor Mike Byram has been leading research at the University of Durham into the potential for language teaching to develop cross- or inter-disciplinary skills[11]. Language teaching is not the only place in the curriculum which helps students develop a better understanding of other cultures ('intercultural competence') but it is a major contributor to this. Alongside history (the learning about other cultures in the past), human geography (the study of social groups defined by values, beliefs and behaviours) and education about religion (as opposed to religious instruction), language learning promotes attitudes which encourage curiosity about other cultures. Other recent reports support this view.

> "The experience of learning a foreign language develops many of the same skills and attributes identified as crucial for enterprise: mental agility, the ability to concentrate on detail combined with a broad perspective, a tolerance of ambiguity and an eagerness to communicate … It stimulates creativity and provides access to contacts and information not available in English thus giving competitive edge."[12]

It is now accepted, therefore, that learning other languages is an enriching experience which goes beyond linguistic skills. Through learning a language you gain cultural awareness and an understanding which helps break down barriers of ignorance and suspicion. Learning a nation's language give us insights into the people, their culture and traditions and this helps us understand our own language and culture.

David Graddol, in his recent report, *English Next[13]*, argues that English is now redefining national and individual identities worldwide. English is shifting political fault lines, creating new global patterns of wealth and social exclusion and it is also suggesting new notions of human rights and responsibilities of citizenship. He says there is a new educational orthodoxy emerging which reflects the new economic realities: the next generation will be multilingual, acquiring fluency in English and studying at least one additional foreign language. English is already being taken out of, or at least being treated differently from other languages in, the foreign languages curriculum in both developed and emergent economies and is being repositioned as a basic skill, alongside basic literacy, numeracy and computer skills.

So, English as a basic skill. This means teaching English earlier in school programmes. The 'is early language learning better?' question is, though, still live and I know you will

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10. Reported in the China Daily, 2 October 2006, following speech by HRH at the British Council Thailand's conference Future Perfect
11. Paraphrased from unpublished notes by Professor Mike Byram at a British Council event in Berlin, January 2007
12. Talking World Class – the impact of language skills on the UK economy, CILT The National Centre for Languages p.8
13. Graddol David (2006) English Next, British Council London

be discussing this a lot during this conference and Dr Jean Brewster, Dr Janet Enever and Dr David Hayes will have lots to say on this subject. A few years ago the British Council commissioned Sheilagh.

Rixon at the University of Warwick to do a worldwide survey or primary ELT. The results are available on our website[14].

In addition, there is already, in many parts of the world, growing interest, and expertise, in teaching mainstream subjects on the curriculum through English. About three weeks ago I was in Spain where I visited state schools in Madrid which have, for some time now, been running bilingual education programmes where students, from the age of five onwards, learn some subjects through English and others through Spanish. Two days ago I was in Kuala Lumpur learning about the programme being promoted by the Malaysian Ministry of Education to train 30,000 teachers to teach maths and science through English and the British Council has recently signed an agreement with the Thai Ministry of Education to develop a new CLIL programme.

This approach, known widely as Content and Language Integrated Learning, or CLIL, is not without controversy, however. In an article called 'Adding language without taking away'[15], David Marsh of the University of Jyväskylä in Finland and a leading expert in CLIL in Europe argues that CLIL can produce negative results if not managed appropriately. The article summarises this as, "Caustically referred to as the language of instruction, if not occasionally destruction, adoption of English as the medium of learning is responsible for widespread … wastage in various continents. From Africa to Asia, from Bolivia to Brunei, the use of a foreign language as the medium of instruction is directly linked to educational exclusion." But CLIL can be successful if we apply what is known about cognitive development and learning theory. The article continues, "The essence of CLIL is in integration. The methods used in the classroom depend on a set of core variables. These are interwoven into the curriculum, and realised through classroom practice. They revolve around the type of subject learnt, the cognitive demands involved, and the pupils' linguistic load … In successful examples of CLIL all teachers consider themselves to be responsible for language development to a greater or lesser extent, even if the language focus is very, very small indeed". A good understanding by the language teacher of the first major language of the environment is, according to Marsh, essential and so the non-native speaker of English is already emerging as a particularly successful teacher of CLIL. Learners who have learnt through CLIL and are, as a result, increasingly at ease with mobility and have a preference for learning by doing, will, in due course, be moving into the role of teachers and they will, therefore, have a clear capacity to teach CLIL successfully.

These criteria for successful teaching of a subject through English are echoed and expanded on by Sheelagh Dellar, a teacher and trainer at Pilgrims in the UK, a writer and

14. Worldwide Survey of Primary ELT, The British Council, at www.britishcouncil.org/english/eyl/index.htm
15. Adding language without taking away, Guardian Weekly Learning English, p.1, 8 April 2005

a specialist in CLIL.

She has identified some strategies which are important and need to be taken into account when teaching through a foreign language[16]. She lists the following strategies

- students need the necessary language support to take in and participate in lessons

- teachers and learners need to memorize high frequency chunks and collocations related to their subject

- teachers need to learn about multiple intelligences

- the use of the mother tongue in class is legitimate and its appropriate use should be encouraged

- active involvement of the learners is essential

- as are repetition and recapping

- visual support (pictures, charts, diagrams, tables etc) ease understanding

- learners need to be trained in learner training techniques and to read more efficiently, plan their writing and use the Internet to prepare for coursework and tests

- the teacher needs to build in processing and thinking time and adjust the speed of the lessons accordingly, and

- checking understanding frequently is very important.

This list is, I think, an excellent starting point for designing a teacher education programme.

So, enabling people to communicate well through English is a priority for national governments around the world which see the benefits of language learning in educating responsible citizens who are able to operate across borders and also the particular power and benefits of English as the global language. The primary need in almost all contexts is a step change in improving the skills and standards of teachers in state education systems. The British Council, working with UK providers, has considerable expertise and an excellent track record in putting together programmes to deliver support in the areas of pre- and in-service teacher education.

We have strong links with ministries of education in the countries we work in and effective networks of teachers have been built up in most regions. We are currently working in partnership with ministries worldwide to develop local capacity and resources which meet the needs of the local context. Our approach focuses on providing access to English in support of education reform, building partnerships between key influencers and the UK and working the UK resource to develop local

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16. Dellar, Sheelagh Teaching other subjects in English (CLIL), in 'In English', British Council Portugal, Spring 2005

capacity and share best practice. Through a global reform of English language teaching programme, we assist uniformed services with their provision of post-conflict support and disaster relief in operations worldwide. This includes encouraging respect for human rights and the acceptance of civilian management of armed and security forces in post-conflict situations. The use of English as the training medium also enhances awareness of the UK's democratic values and processes – the high profile of these projects and the use of the English language are accepted as non-controversial and as a positive form of UK input, even in some of the more sensitive environments in which we work.

So, how does all this measure up against the current situation in this region and, along with that, what we in the British Council are trying to achieve in this region in partnership with ministries of education and groups of language educator professionals?

It has been very interesting to see the Primary Innovations research which you have conducted in 8 countries across this region and which will inform both this conference and the next steps with this project. This is an impressive research exercise with, you will recall, consultation of 376 stakeholders and all interviews reported on by a standard interview record form, to ensure consistency of the methodology.

So, what can we learn from this research? Well. Here are a few thoughts from an outsider and signposts to some strands which I am sure you will be discussing in detail at this event. Your research clearly shows the huge demand for English across the region and, along with that, the rapidly developing interest in teaching English earlier in the school curriculum. However, the complexity of the region, in terms of the historical role English has played from country to country and the outcome of this in terms of where each country is on the continuum of change to teaching English at primary level, is also very clear. It is no surprise that, in Singapore and the Philippines, where English is an official language and is used widely in society as well as a medium of education, the perception of English, its status and the impact of these factors in language policy and planning are different from the situation in other countries where English is a foreign language and where the teaching of English at primary level is still a relatively new phenomenon. It is also no surprise to see an increased investment by the governments of Singapore and the Philippines in the maintenance of the role and status of official languages other than English and, indeed, the concern expressed by some of the respondents in the research about the impact of English on the local cultures; for example, respondents in Singapore

"… felt that the emphasis of English as a common language could lead to a dilution of the cultural heritage intrinsic to each racial group …" [17]

The reality, according to the research data, reflects the global picture of English closely: whether an official language or not, whether a compulsory subject on the school

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17. Jane Boylan, Country Summary Report Singapore, 2007, quoted in Primary Innovations All Country Summary Report, Laura Grassick, British Council Vietnam, unpublished research document, January 2007 p.5

curriculum or not, English is widely taught in primary schools across the region, at least in the major cities in all countries. Furthermore, there is parental pressure to raise the status of English to a compulsory subject at schools in Vietnam, Japan and Indonesia.

The benefits of learning English in the research also match what I said in the first part of this presentation; they are, however, largely articulated as instrumental reasons. I quote from the research document:

"The perceived benefits of introducing English at the primary level seem to be the same across all 8 countries. The most common benefits are listed below:

- it prepares learners for secondary levels and higher education

- English is an international language and proficiency in it will increase opportunities to compete professionally in the global market

- Young children learn easily and so they will have a head start in English

- It develops self confidence and communication skills."[18]

There is, therefore, some passing acknowledgement of the role English language teaching has on the wider education needs of young people but the emphasis on the economic benefits are hardly surprising given the economic importance of this region and the economic power and competitiveness of your neighbour, China.

Also strikingly similar to issues in many parts of the world, including the UK as far as the teaching of other languages in concerned, the issue of the level of English language competence of primary teachers is prominent in this research. And, within that, where teachers are competent (e.g, in Singapore) there are worries about the pronunciation model teachers can offer. This, in turn, is closely related to issues around teacher supply and their pre- and in-service training needs, as opposed to the current available offer.

A further issue which primary school language teachers in your region share with others right across the world is the need to help them develop more learner-centred approaches and more communicative activities to motivate and involve students better. The research highlights the need for a more consistent and consolidated offer in terms of practical support which starts with training but which also continues as the teacher develops her or his skills and gains experience.

And, finally, another critical issue which comes through in your research and which is, again, true across the world, is the need for more research. The South Korean experience quoted in the research is interesting: in South Korea, the research indicates that early learners of English (in grade 6) have improved their listening skills but not their writing skills. South Korea is embarking on a full evaluation of 10 years experience of primary English language teaching and this has to be warmly welcomed. We all need

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18. Op cit p.5

to be clear on what the expected outcomes are and we need to ensure we measure the outcomes and understand better the factors which contribute to the successes, as well as the failures.

And we also need to be clear that we as teachers and language educators cannot carry the full responsibility for successful outcomes from investing in primary English language teaching. There is a lot of evidence in the research to show that success depends on a wide variety of factors, many of which are outside the language educator's control. Parental and wider social pressure has, according to the research, in 8 countries, driven the introduction of early learning of English without putting, first, a policy in place and without the necessary conditions in place to enable the policy to be implemented effectively. This has led to negative outcomes both in Thailand and Japan and this is something we must try and avoid since it can only lead to demotivation by both teachers and learners.

So, we have a long way to go. And the job we have, to help our young people learn English effectively and as early as possible, is an important job and one which will impact on other areas of the curriculum. To quote David Graddol,

> "As English becomes a basic skill, so success in other areas of the curriculum becomes dependent on success in English. In effect, failure to master English as a basic skill means failure in other disciplines … [English language teaching] has now become a 'mission critical' undertaking … it requires energy, resources and patience to ensure that ELT does not become an even more effective gatekeeping mechanism for elite groups in society."[19]

How then is the British Council going to help you in this important task? To start with, we have a global vision that, by 2010 every teacher and learner of English in the world will have access to the skills, ideas and materials they need from the UK. I am sure you will agree that this is pretty ambitious but, we believe, it is an aim we can work towards with the British Council working in partnership with policy makers, educators and providers across the world. If we are going to respond to the huge global demand for English we have seen, then we need to develop strategies quickly and products and services which will enable us to implement these strategies. English for the World is our new global product for English. It includes a range of products for both learners and teachers of English, all designed to help us reach a larger audience.

We are developing a huge portal for teachers and learners to provide the support they need. *Global Home for Teachers and Global Support for Learners* will bring all our existing teacher and learner websites together into one portal. This will help us make better use of the web as a channel to deliver products and services. The portal will be customisable for local and regional needs and will include a range of high-profile web

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19. Graddol, D (2006) English Next, British Council London p.120

sites in major languages with a mix of global, regional and local content. There will be two high-level web services, one for teachers and one for learners.

We are also planning an outline syllabus for a global English course for teachers of English given that, in many parts of the world, like here, teachers' levels of English language competence vary and are often inadequate to give them to confidence to teach effectively.

Global Home for Teachers is the platform for the Global Path for Teachers. This is a portfolio of products that will give English language teachers the training and professional development they need at every stage of their career. The products will provide support to all teachers, ranging from those who have just started their career to experienced teachers and advanced teacher trainers. Support materials will include classroom resources, self-access teacher development resources and community and knowledge-sharing tools. We are also developing courses for teachers which will be a global standard and we will have a simple training course for trainers ready by the end of March 2007.

Global Support for Learners will consolidate and extend our offer to young learners and adults, parents, exam candidates and corporate clients. It will include M(obile)-learning. We are currently producing a series of nine video podcast programmes to develop speaking skills. The programmes will use footage from primary and secondary state schools in Thailand, where English is taught at a range of levels. This will then be analysed by a UK ELT expert with learning points highlighted throughout the series. Each programme will be about six minutes long and we will launch the first in March 2007.

We are also developing some new products for learners which aim to reach new audiences of teens and young adults (from 14-35) around the world through 'edutainment'. In partnership with the UK Premier League, we are piloting *Premier Skills*: a face-to-face training course (football coaching and English) with online resources for a global audience. It is currently based on a series of interviews with international Premier League footballers talking about how they learned English and what their experiences of living in the UK are. The courses will be piloted in Egypt in March and June 2007, with the video interviews available by April 2007.

One of our most exciting, but also risky, ventures is our plan to populate an island in the virtual world of *Second Life*. Our island will be an educational institute in the Teen Zone, providing self-access learning material in different English learning zones according to the user's linguistic level. The visitors to our island will be able to practise their English and meet other learners of English. Features include a treasure hunt, a life-size chess game and virtual representation of the UK with icons such as the London Eye, the Loch Ness monster and the white cliffs of Dover. We are also developing interactive stories on

mobile phones. The mobile phone stories will be supported by a website, where they will appear in cartoon format. The first story will be piloted soon in Thailand and, finally, we are currently researching what already exists in terms of mass-distribution educational TV, identifying potential gaps and deciding what material we could commission to fill those gaps.

All this will, we hope, benefit teachers in this region. You can see already that some of these initiatives are being developed and piloted in this region. It is, indeed, your experience and your expertise across this region, with your track record of innovation and delivery of many excellent English language teaching projects, that we want to help you build on to the benefit of your learners and your teachers. This conference will, I am sure, make a unique contribution and agree the next action plans in the Primary Innovations regional project.

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English Language Teaching and Systemic Change at the Primary Level: Issues in Innovation

DAVID HAYES

1. Introduction: key issues

The global push to teach English at ever younger ages in formal instructional settings is a fairly recent phenomenon. A survey by the British Council in 1999 "showed that the majority of countries in which English was taught in primary schools had introduced the innovation in the 1990s. Often this was only on an experimental basis or in one of the higher grades. Since then the practice has become more widespread" (Graddol, 2006: 88). Throughout the world teaching English at the primary level is fast becoming the norm and English is more and more a component of basic education rather than a component of foreign language teaching in the secondary school. Such a shift in policy has a profound impact on most educational systems as a new subject has to be accommodated in the primary curriculum with concomitant implications for the human and material resources needed to support the introduction of the new subject. In addition, changes are not just necessary in the new grade levels in which English is introduced – whether this is in Grade 1 or later in the primary cycle – but throughout the entire system as earlier introduction of a subject inevitably requires adjustment to the curriculum and materials in all subsequent grades. The resulting implications of a decision to teach English earlier in the school cycle are profound.

Once a decision has been made, then, to teach a language to a particular age group which has not received instruction in the language previously all manner of other factors come into play which are common to systemic educational reform for any subject area

in the curriculum. These are, primarily:

- ensuring that there are adequate numbers of teachers to teach the subject to the particular grades

- ensuring that these teachers are well trained for the task

- ensuring that instructional time is available in the curriculum for the teaching of the subject

- ensuring that curriculum materials and teaching-learning approaches are appropriate to the age group

- ensuring that adequate time has been allowed for the preparation of new curriculum materials

- ensuring that appropriate and timely in-service training is given to teachers in the use of the materials and teaching-learning approaches

- ensuring that adequate in-school advisory support is available to teachers as they implement the curriculum

- ensuring that appropriate evaluation procedures are in place

- ensuring that adequate material and financial resources are available to implement all of the above

- and, of course, ensuring that necessary adjustments are made to the curriculum and materials for all subsequent grades, and that teachers are given training to introduce them to these changes in the higher grades.

Given the scale and complexity of these changes, a decision to introduce English into the curriculum early in the primary cycle needs to be based on sound theoretical principles – the benefits of such a change for children's learning in the early grades, and for subsequent learning in higher grades, need to be demonstrably clear. I shall now consider the reasons for and evidence available in support of introducing English (or, indeed, any foreign language) to children early in the primary cycle.

2. The roles of English

2.1 The economic dimension

In order to understand the rationale for teaching English as a subsequent language to young children in primary school, one must also understand the place that English has in an educational system and in the wider society which is served by the education system

of particular countries. In many countries in the Asian region which have never been subject to English-speaking colonialism, whether British or American, there is an oft-stated belief that English is necessary for purposes of national development and, as such, the language must be taught in schools. As Graddol (2006: 89) puts it: "EYL [English for Young Learners] is often not just an educational project, but also a political and economic one." This was reinforced in a comment made to me by a senior official in the Korea Institute for Curriculum and Evaluation when asked why Korea needed to teach English in primary schools: "Teaching English will improve national competitiveness."

There is, however, surprisingly little evidence linking proficiency in English with higher levels of economic development; nor is it clear even that English is a necessity for the majority of secondary school or even university students entering the labour force upon graduation. What does seem to be common practice is that a degree of proficiency in English is seen as a desirable skill and that this is used to differentiate between candidates applying for appointments. Whether practices of this kind further overall economic development or simply maintain the vested interests of ílites is another matter. As Lo Bianco (2002) puts it:

> … the need for local mastery of English (and other languages of wider communication) to facilitate global [economic] participation raises a myriad of resultant questions: cultural politics; issues about levels and extent of literacy in local languages; the social upheaval that can result when mastery of prestige languages [such as English] is acquired only by elites further entrenching existing inequalities; the appropriation by locals of power over the tools and techniques of languages of wider communication. […]

And even the primacy of English in global international commerce must be questioned. David (2003) cited in Graddol (2006) notes:

> While English is a major language, it only accounts for around 30% of the world Gross Domestic Product (GPD), and is likely to account for less in the future. Neglecting other languages means ignoring quite significant potential markets.

If participation in the global economy is truly a driver for educational language policies, then the logical corollary is that languages other than English also need to be taught in schools. Chief amongst these languages currently important for economic purposes is Mandarin Chinese.

2.2 The educational dimension

Many of the arguments for the introduction of English into primary schools are based on a perception that, in language learning, 'the earlier the better' is a sound educational

principle. This principle is derived from research into first language (L1) acquisition and the simultaneous acquisition of two languages by bilingual children. In these cases young children acquire language seemingly effortlessly, irrespective of the particular language and irrespective of the quality of input they receive. Further, it is a given that all children who are developmentally normal will acquire fluency in their first language(s) and that there are fixed developmental paths in their acquisition of a particular language through which all learners will pass, though the rate of acquisition may vary (Mitchell and Myles, 2004).

When we examine findings of naturalistic studies into second language acquisition by children in the second language environment, we see that these indicate that those who begin learning a L2 in childhood initially lag behind adult learners but eventually outstrip them. If we extrapolate from this to formal instructional settings it would be plausible to argue that early formal instruction would, over a considerable period of time, be advantageous in learning. But this is not the whole story. As with any kind of learning, we need to relate achievement to the goals of learning. So, we should bear in mind that achieving a native-like mastery of the L2 is not a goal for all L2 learners in all contexts. Indeed, it is often unrealistic as a goal, particularly in formal educational settings. Further, the context of learning is important. In instructional settings, particularly in compulsory education, other important factors come into play, such as: the materials used; the levels of training of teachers; the commitment of the teachers; and even public attitudes towards the target language. I shall return to some of these factors later.

It must, then, be recognized that there are fundamental differences in the conditions of learning between L1/L2 acquisition by young children in naturalistic settings and L2 acquisition in instructional settings. L1 acquisition research shows that children learn a language when they are in a language learning environment:

- which provides adequate language input;

- of which they can make sense, and

- which has a structure where the child belongs and within which s/he has access to ways of working out the language. (Mitchell and Myles, 2004: 163)

It is an open question whether these conditions can be replicated for the learning of English as a foreign language in most primary schools. There is considerable evidence that in instructional settings 'the younger the better' is not necessarily true as far as children's acquisition of a second/foreign language is concerned. Lightbown (2000: 449) comments that "for many years, classroom-based research has suggested that, in instructional settings, the age at which instruction begins is less important than the intensity of the instruction and the continuation of exposure over a sufficient period of time." Research into the teaching of English in French-speaking Canada found that

starting early was not the best option in terms of children's learning, Rather, "students who have intensive exposure to the second language near the end of elementary school have an advantage over those whose instruction was thinly spread out over a longer period of time" (Lightbown, 2000). It is more than clear, then, that students in a foreign language setting will not become expert users of English in one hour a day – which would be a luxury in terms of instructional time in most school settings – let alone the two classes or 90 minutes a week which is the time available for English in some countries in the early primary years (see e.g. Jung and Norton, 2002). A logical consequence of this is that the attainment of fluency in English (or any other language) or even "basic communicative competence" as in Korea (Jung and Norton, 2002: 247) is not a realistic objective for classroom instruction in state educational systems where English is but one subject among many in a crowded curriculum.

In some settings there may also be negative effects associated with starting to learn an L2 at a very young age. The phenomenon of subtractive bilingualism is well documented. This occurs in situations where children use an L2 for formal instruction. If the goals of learning do not actively promote retention of children's L1 then there is a danger that they may shift to the L2, which replaces their L1. Another possible result if the L1 is not valued and promoted is that proficiency in the L1 may be affected. Finally, the L2 may also be learnt imperfectly: a phenomenon known as semilingualism. This is to say nothing, of course, of the general educational disadvantages that may accrue from instruction in a language in which a learner may not be proficient.

Starting earlier will not, then, necessarily lead to improvements in levels of proficiency unless there is also a significant increase in the amount of instructional time made available for the subject. As Lightbown (ibid: 449) says: "The intensity of the exposure and the opportunity to continue using the language over a long period of time is as important as the starting age in the effectiveness of classroom instruction." It would seem, then, that rather than starting earlier in the elementary cycle it is more effective to begin instruction nearer the end of the cycle, but to concentrate the input children receive at that stage.

In a wide-ranging review of the 'age factor' in second language learning, Singleton and Ryan (2004) concluded that, from the available evidence, there was no strong empirical support for early L2 instruction from research on the age factor in L2 acquisition, nor was there any hard evidence about the long term advantages of early L2 instruction but much hypothesising and speculation. Further, they noted age-related factors are but one element of a general model of second language learning. Available evidence suggests that it is more effective to delay introduction of a foreign language until nearer the end of the elementary cycle but, when instruction does commence, to provide children with intensive exposure to the language, i.e. more instructional time than is the norm for a single subject in the curriculum.

2.3 Conclusion

Though there may be no sound economic or language related reasons for teaching English in primary schools, there may be other reasons to do so, viz.:

- Consideration of the broader educational dimension, i.e. English as a foreign/second language teaching may contribute to the general intellectual and social development of school children, not least through the fostering of intercultural understanding

- Pressure from other sectors of society, especially parents. Often demand for English comes directly from parents who see it as a way for their children to gain an advantage in an increasingly competitive economic world

- Connected with the previous point is the idea that proficiency in English is seen as part of a student's social capital

- The principle of educational equity demands that we provide the opportunity for all children to have potential access to this form of social capital, not just the children of the wealthy who will always be in a position to purchase it.

3. Systemic change

Decisions about whether or when to commence instruction in a foreign language may or may not be made on the grounds of reliable research evidence. However, once a decision is made to introduce English into the primary grades (or to start at an earlier grade in the primary cycle) the process of implementing the curriculum reform must be begun. Change in one area of the system generally entails change in all other areas as earlier starting ages for a subject inevitably mean that the knowledge base at subsequent levels is different. So, for example, teaching English at primary 3 when it used to be taught at primary 5 means that the curriculum, syllabus and textbooks for primary 5 and all grades beyond to the end of formal schooling must be revised. Large-scale change of this type needs to be carefully planned and managed, particularly as research shows that there are frequently problems in the transition from small-scale pilot projects, which typically trial an innovation, to large-scale system-wide implementation of the innovation. I shall begin consideration of pertinent issues with curriculum goals.

3.1 The primary English curriculum: goals

Curriculum development is a complex and time-consuming process and a curriculum for primary school children need to be related to their age, their cognitive, physical, social and emotional development. It is not just a question of deciding which elements of language to teach, which structures or vocabulary items for which functions (and the new orthodoxy of the 'communicative approach' is far from a panacea). Realistic goals

need to be set which take account of other areas of the curriculum, the local socio-educational realities and the specifics of language use in the context. As I have noted, the attainment of native-speaker like fluency is not a realistic objective in most school settings. Instead, broader educational goals for English teaching in schools should be considered otherwise we run the risk, as Byram (1989: 11) so aptly puts it when talking of foreign language teaching in the United Kingdom of "pre-programming our work for failure". He explains:

> If we justify language teaching – and motivate pupils – solely, or even just mainly, by putative communication needs and those needs turn out to be non-existent, then the justification disappears – and most of the motivation with it. When we attempt to persuade pupils by this appeal to relevance and appropriateness, and they argue that they do not and will not have such communicative needs – or, what has the same effect, cannot imagine themselves as having such needs – then we are pre-programming our work for failure. (Byram, 1989: 11)

A preferred starting point would be to examine the general educational purposes for the teaching of any foreign language in the school curriculum, as Byram (1989:22) goes on to make clear:

> There is and has always been in foreign language teaching a contribution to the personal education of learners in terms both of individuals learning about themselves and of social beings learning about others. This element is profoundly linguistic because as individuals and as social beings learners are linguistic animals. It is equally fundamentally 'cultural', because language is inseparable from 'culture'. Thus as learners learn about language they learn about culture and as they learn to use a new language they learn to communicate with other individuals from a new culture.

This is a view shared by Clark (1987) in his study of foreign language teaching in Scotland and Australia though he also notes: "The problem with these broader educational aims is that while they may appeal to educationists, they are as yet less easily perceived by a society … which increasingly looks to immediate practical surrender value for its educational investment." (Clark, 1987: 115-116) In other words, the concern of many students and their parents, particularly in the later stages of education, is with the immediate connection of learning to employment opportunities. This is a worldwide issue. Witte (2000: 242) has written of the Thai situation that:

> One could … characterize the goal conflict in the Thai education system as just another facet of the "overall dominating contradiction between, on the one hand, education as an instrument which is utilitarian and pragmatic … and the humanistic … approach, with its broader and holistic ambitions"(Gustavssson,

> 1997, p.240), a contradiction which is as old as education, but has been revived with a new urgency in the face of globalization.

Whatever the decision made about learning goals/objectives, it is a sine qua non that adequate time needs to be made available for the learning of English with respect to those goals. Generally, the introduction of English at an earlier grade will mean that either time has to be taken from other subjects or extra time has to be made available for the school day. The implementation of either option will inevitably create tensions which need management. Nevertheless, whatever the decision, a teaching syllabus will next need to be developed for the particular grade level on which textbooks and other materials will be based; and, subsequently, all succeeding grades will need to revise syllabi and materials in order that they build on and reinforce work done in earlier grades. This entails either the rewriting of existing textbooks or the development of completely new ones.

3.2 Textbook development

There is some concern in the educational community about whether or not use of textbooks leads to teaching which is somewhat programmatic, lacking in variety and stimulus and not responsive to the needs of individual students. Opponents of this view would argue that textbooks are essential tools for teachers, relieving them of the time-consuming task of materials preparation and ensuring adequate coverage of a required syllabus, and being seen as a resource rather than a constraint. These arguments are well rehearsed by Hutchinson and Hutchinson (1996) who point out that textbooks can be used as 'agents of change'. They come down very firmly on the side of textbooks as an effective support for large-scale curriculum implementation and in situations where resources are often limited to the textbook alone it is very hard to disagree with them. An obvious implication is, though, that the textbooks in use do need to be appropriate to the curriculum as well as to the students: it is a sine qua non that the new textbooks properly reflect the intentions of the curriculum designers in terms of models of teaching and learning.

The writing and trialing of materials based on the syllabus, and their revision based on feedback in use, will take at least two years for each grade level if it is to be done properly: and this time-scale is optimistic. Prowse (1998:135) tells us that "the production process of a modern [commercial] coursebook … can take from three to five years from initial ideas to copies in the classroom." There is often pressure from within and outside of the educational system to produce books more quickly than in Prowse's recommended timescale but this always runs the risk of compromising quality and educational value (Hayes, 2002). We must remember too that when we talk of textbooks often we are not just writing 'Textbooks' but also 'Teacher's Books' and 'Workbooks' at the same time. We need to think of a textbook as a series of books. Materials for just one

year can, in total, comprise 200-300 hundred pages and, particularly at the beginning grades of primary school, use hundreds of illustrations. Of course, books can be written for different grades at the same time rather than in strict grade-level sequence, though the entire curriculum and associated syllabi need to be co-ordinated before any book development begins. Students who have started on major examination courses must complete the relevant grades with the 'old' syllabus and materials. So books for the beginning of major transition points in the school system can be written at the same time: as an example, for Grade 1 (beginning of primary schooling); Grade 4 (beginning of junior or middle school); Grade 6 (beginning of high school).

Week	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10 11	47	48	49	50	51	52	53	54	55	56	57	58	59	60	61	62	63	64	65
Author Selection																													
Planning																													
Writing																													
Editing																													
Copy Editing																													
Typesetting																													
Designing																													
Illustrating																													
Testing																													
Editing/Rewriting																													
Copy Editing																													
Revised Typesetting																													
Page Proofing + Correcting																													
Final Proofing + Correcting																													
CRC																													

Week	66	67	68	69	70	71	72 73	74	75	76	77	78	79	80	81	82	83	84	85	86	87	88	89	90	91	92	93	94	95
Author Selection																													
Planning																													
Writing																													
Editing																													
Copy Editing																													
Typesetting																													
Designing																													
Illustrating																													
Testing																													
Editing/Rewriting																													
Copy Editing																													
Revised Typesetting																													
Page Proofing + Correcting																													
Final Proofing + Correcting																													
CRC																													

Model Schedule for Book Production

To illustrate the complexity of the process, a sample publishing schedule[1] is shown in Table 1 – but this illustrates the process for a grade unit. A complete schedule would need to show the development process for each book in a series: Student's Book, Teacher's Book and Workbook. Other material such as CD-ROMS and audio cassettes would inevitably further complicate the process.

3.3 Teachers and in-service development

3.3.1 Change in teachers

Even as books are being developed ready for use in the classroom, educational policy makers need to think about how they are to be used. Fullan reminded us some time ago that in the final analysis any educational innovation depends on what teachers do in the classroom: "Educational change depends on what teachers do and think – it's as simple and complex as that." (Fullan, 1991: 117) It can be hazardous to underestimate the scale of the task that we require of teachers when wholesale curriculum reform is mandated. O'Sullivan (2001:111) noted that "The process of implementing change can be very deep, striking at the core of learned skills, philosophy, beliefs and conceptions of education, and creating doubts about self purpose, sense of competence, and self-concept." It is little wonder that many teachers, rather than welcoming change, see it as a threat. Any in-service programme that fails to deal with what O'Sullivan calls the 'subjective realities' affecting implementation and instead attempts to enforce a 'centrally determined blueprint' will be sowing the seeds of its own failure. Yet a common problem in educational innovation is that teachers, their abilities and their needs, are ignored when innovations are being planned. As Havelock and Huberman comment:

> It is important to understand that innovations are not adopted by people on the basis of intrinsic value of the innovation, but rather on the basis of the adopters' perception of the changes they personally will be required to make. Those designing, administering and advising on projects do not generally have to make very many changes themselves. Their task remains the same. It is others who will have to modify their behaviours and very often to modify them rapidly in fairly significant ways, and with little previous or even gradual preparation. These are typically the kind of rapid and massive changes which planners or administrators or advisers would never plan, administer or advise for themselves. (Havelock and Huberman, 1977; cited in Bishop, 1986:5)

And Graddol (2006: 89) comments on the particular issues in innovation for teaching English in primary schools.

> There are many hazards attached to EYL, not least of which is that it requires teachers who are proficient in English, have wider training in child development, and who are able to motivate young children. Such teachers are in short supply in

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1. Note that weeks 12-46 are not represented on the chart but these would also be 'writing' weeks.

most countries, but failure at this stage may be difficult to remedy later.

It is thus more than clear that policy makers who simply mandate curriculum change, supply textbooks and then expect new teaching-learning methods to be implemented by teachers in the classroom without further support are likely to be disappointed.

For change to occur in the classroom, what is required is change at 3 levels:

- at the level of curriculum and materials

- at the level of behaviour, and

- at the level of beliefs and principles underlying new approaches.

As O'Sullivan (2001) said, it is this last level which is most difficult as it requires change to a teacher's fundamental concepts about how children learn and how they should be taught which are developed over many years and are deep-seated. But if there are no changes in beliefs, two things may happen: either there will be no changes in behaviour ('new' materials designed for a 'new' teaching approach may be taught in 'old' ways'; or there may be surface adoption of the rhetoric of change but not the deep assimilation required to implement changes with understanding. This kind of outcome has been noted in countries as diverse as Malaysia and the UK. How, then, do we foster changes in teachers' deep-seated beliefs so that their classroom behaviour will also change?

We should note here that

3.3.2 In-service teacher development (INSET)

A key component of implementing any curriculum reform programme is in-service teacher training/development. Much international experience shows that investment in in-service teacher development (a term often preferred to 'training' for its more constructive, less directive implications) can have an impact in raising the quality of schooling (Pennycuick, 1993). There is not, however, a simple one-to-one correspondence between any in-service training/development course and improved practice in the classroom. There are sufficient examples of in-service courses having limited or no impact on the teachers involved, particularly in the long-term (see e.g. Ibrahim, 1991; Lamb, 1996; Moon and Bouȋln, 1997) to give considerable pause for thought.

In order to avoid replication of a situation in which changes in rhetoric are not matched by changes in practice (Alexander, 1986), in-service training must be seen in terms of genuine development for teachers rather than simply as a logistical exercise in which it can be claimed that 'x number of teachers have completed y hours of in-service courses' and can therefore be considered to have been adequately (re-)trained to teach the new curriculum. International practice in in-service teacher development tends to

show that the most productive courses are those that adopt a reflexive approach vis-ă-vis the target curriculum innovation (see e.g. Hayes, 1995; 1997; 2000). Simply put, this means that if an activity-based and student-centred curriculum such as is appropriate to the teaching of a foreign language in primary Grades 1 and 2, is to be introduced in schools, the training methods used on courses for both trainers and teachers should model this activity-based and learner-centred approach. If this does not happen, there is a clear possibility that teachers will see a divorce between their own training and the innovative practice they are being asked to implement in the classroom, leading them to question the innovative practice itself. Teachers can hardly be expected to change their classroom behaviours if their trainers have not offered models of good practice.

As well as being reflexive, it is equally important that in-service teacher training/development should be cyclical in nature. As indicated above, experience shows that one-off courses have minimal impact. Lamb (1996:142), after investigating the impact of a one-off short INSET course one year after the event, discovered that "The brute fact of the matter is that all the participants had forgotten most of the information and ideas that they had previously been exposed to". International experience favours a cyclical programme of in-service courses for maximum effectiveness in the classroom. O'Sullivan's (2001) study of courses for unqualified and underqualified teachers in Namibia revealed that teachers benefited from linked programmes of courses, with appraisal of teacher behaviour in the classroom during follow-up visits after one course feeding in to a subsequent course. Such an approach, with the opportunity to respond to teachers' needs at various points in a programme of courses, also ensures that the realities teachers have to deal with on a day-to-day basis as they implement change in their classrooms are effectively dealt with during in-service training.

3.3.3 From pilot to large-scale implementation

Most curriculum innovation worldwide begins with a pilot period in which a great deal of time, energy and resources (both human and material) is devoted to implementing a new curriculum in a limited number of schools. During the pilot period there may be changes made to the innovation before it is implemented nationwide in subsequent years. Frequently there is a significant difference in the attention paid to pilot schools by those responsible for the innovation and the attention paid to all schools in nationwide implementation. This is both predictable and not surprising given the generally huge difference in numbers involved. Referring to the then new Malaysian curriculum a study by Adams with Chen (1981) commented that: "... one of the reasons for the present success of the 'Improved Curriculum' project is the degree, intensity and kind of care and attention given the teachers by the Curriculum Development Centre project staff. Clearly, it will be extremely difficult to sustain a similar guidance system with the pilot school teachers and virtually impossible with the larger teaching force beyond, should nationwide implementation follow" (Adams with Chen, 1981:161-2). Here we can see that

there were concerns even about the transfer from the development phase (6 schools) to the pilot phase (20 schools) let alone nationwide implementation with several thousand schools. Differential treatment in terms of attention and resources for different teachers in the various phases of implementation will have inevitable consequences in terms of acceptance and take-up of the new curriculum by teachers in the respective groups. Moving from pilot to large-scale implementation without dilution of the innovation is a challenge that all curriculum developers have to face. It is a challenge that can be met with adequate planning and preparation though it will also be costly in terms of human and material resources. The experience summarised by Veenman et al. (1994) is instructive in this respect.

In a wide-ranging study of INSET programmes Veenman et al. (1994) found that features internal to in-service programmes themselves and wider implementation characteristics of the school and workplace were significantly related to impact of INSET at three levels: classroom level, school level, and knowledge use. They comment (1994: 314) that "knowledge utilisation and implementation will be more extensive under the following conditions:

- the school organisation and climate are supportive and well organised

- the content of the in-service training activities is geared to the professional spheres of influence of the participants

- clear advance explanation of the goals of the in-service programs

- subject matter relevant to job

- practical skills presented

- extra time invested in in-service activities

- active involvement of the participants in learning activities."

This study also stressed the importance of the support and feedback from a consultant (school counsellor) and the principal's active involvement, support and steering.

In-service course, no matter how well-designed, cannot in themselves ensure change will take place as desired by curriculum developers. "Simply ordering a teacher to take a course is unlikely to change classroom practice if its recipient does not believe that this is a useful way of becoming a better teacher." (OECD, 1998: 12). The study by Veenman et al. has also highlighted the importance of a supportive whole-school environment, the need for in-school support in implementing innovations and leadership from the school principal/headteacher. This theme will be explored in the next section.

A final observation here concerns the need to assess the impact of all in-service training

activities. As noted, this needs to be more than the simple collection of statistics on numbers of teachers attending numbers of courses for numbers of hours. Though this kind of data has its value it tells us nothing about what is happening in the classroom as a result of the training. Impact assessment must begin with the collection of baseline data against which the impact of the training interventions may be measured. There will then need to be periodic visits to teachers in schools to observe teaching behaviour and patterns of teaching-learning in the classroom. For efficiency these visits could be combined with visits of a developmental nature as part of recommended follow-up to courses. An example of the design of an impact assessment programme can be found in Coleman (2003).

3.4 Leadership in schools

Curriculum change, like any other form of change, should be seen as a process, and one which needs to be managed (O'Sullivan, 2001). Initially, relevant power from any Ministry of Education and relevant authorities at provincial and district level will secure overt acceptance of curriculum change and (as we have discovered) surface adoption as a minimum. However, much more is needed if the curriculum innovation is to persist and to alter classroom behaviours in ways that curriculum designers intended. Teachers, of course, do not work in isolation (even if many do keep their classroom doors firmly closed) and, increasingly, research shows the value of a focus on school-level change if educational policies are to be implemented: "Research on school effectiveness has shown the importance of strong leadership and coherence of purpose at the school level" (OECD, 1998: 12). This means that educational administrators/headteachers are a crucial element in the equation. Though headteachers are inevitably the holders of power in schools, it has been found that large 'relational distances' between headteachers and their classroom teaching staff impact negatively on the school culture and do not promote the collegiality in which innovative practices may be encouraged and flourish. O'Sullivan (2001:113) found in her study with respect to headteachers that "The least improved teachers worked in schools with ineffective principals who did not support the programme as effectively as principals elsewhere". The nature of leadership by school headteachers/principals is widely acknowledged to be a key indicator of a school's success (Pennycuick, 1993) and so it would seem to be important to focus INSET on this group as well as on teachers if curriculum innovation is to be successful. However, school headteachers are often quicker to identify the training needs of teachers in their schools rather than to reflect on their own training needs (Hayes, 2004). This all too common lack of a reflective capacity is a drawback when one considers the demands of a new curriculum in terms of teacher and student behaviours.

Research has shown that teachers perceive headteachers as being more concerned with fulfilling administrative requirements than they are with the quality of classroom instruction in their schools – and that teachers feel this is something to be lamented

(Hayes, 2006). They do not necessarily want to have headteachers powers curtailed but they do want their own work to be valued openly. Throughout the world, it seems, teachers want to have their efforts recognised. A study of teachers in the UK, for example, found that they were strongly motivated by recognition of their efforts and demotivated by lack of recognition (Evans, 1998). This should come as no surprise. Research in psychology more generally suggests that key factors in human motivation include a desire to win the approval of respected others – such as school headteachers (Fox, 2005). Headteachers, then, have a key role to play in fostering a school climate in which innovation can flourish. Further, effective leadership from headteachers in itself may generate teacher leadership (Muijs and Harris, 2006) as teachers feel more confident in taking initiatives in their classrooms and in the wider setting of the school. Given the apparent lack of interest from some headteachers in classroom matters, a starting point for any INSET courses for them (and perhaps for other educational administrators too) should be to provide experiential activities focusing on the implications of a new curriculum and textbooks for classroom practice. Headteachers need to be fully aware of what is required of their teachers in the classroom.

3.5 Initial teacher-training

This paper lacks space to discuss the complex area of initial teacher-training, but it must be noted that change in one area of the curriculum requires not just changes in other areas at the school level to compensate for these changes but also a complete revision of all initial teacher preparation programmes in order that teachers coming into schools in future years are given relevant preparatory courses. In addition, significant changes are required in the knowledge and skills base of those charged with preparing teachers for schools, the lecturers in colleges and university faculties of education. Given that there exist numerous criticisms of the relevance and efficacy of pre-service training in many contexts, in particular the lack of recent experience of classroom life amongst pre-service teacher educators, (Flores and Day, 2006; Hayes, 2006) the scale of both these tasks should not be underestimated.

Conclusion

All educational innovation is complex and time consuming. Change cannot be achieved overnight and long-term support is required for an innovation to take root in the educational system. Thus, any decision to teach English to very young learners should be based on a keen appreciation of the challenges such a decision entails as well as on a research-based view of advantages and disadvantages of teaching a foreign language to children at this age. In a context where English is a foreign language, where the language plays very little part (if any at all) in the daily lives of most a country's citizens,

there appear to be no strong arguments from the research into second/subsequent language learning for introducing English in the early years of primary school. Indeed, for most effective learning the available evidence would seem to indicate that it is preferable to wait until the later stages of primary schooling before introducing a foreign language and then to ensure that children have concentrated input rather than the 'hour a day' which is common in formal educational systems. Certainly, one hour a day of instruction in the primary cycle – still less one hour a week – is highly unlikely to lead to proficiency in any language. However, if a decision is made to introduce English into the early primary grades, then the various factors which have been discussed as key issues in curriculum implementation must be very carefully considered: these range from in-service teacher training/development for teachers already in service to writing of appropriate textbooks to in-service training for school principals/directors and revisions to initial/pre-service training curricula. Dealing with all of these key issues will require considerable investment in terms of time as well as human and material resources.

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03

Primary Languages-in-Education Policies: Planning for Engagement and Sustainability

JANET ENEVER

Through the late twentieth and early twenty-first century economic activity has operated in an increasingly global space. This unprecedented degree of interconnectedness has led to a rising value being placed on the acquisition of foreign language skills, which are now viewed by many as essential cultural capital for future economic success. In this context, politicians worldwide seek to ensure that their national education systems can provide a flexible mobile labour force, equipped with the linguistic skills to fully participate in this global enterprise. Increasingly, the political response is a decision to begin foreign/second language teaching from the very earliest phases of compulsory schooling.

In this paper I will interrogate such decisions, drawing on both linguistic and broader educational evidence to highlight the factors to be considered if we are to provide a context for learning that will enable young children to engage fully in taking those first, tentative steps towards feeling comfortable and confident in the language, whilst also ensuring the school system is able to fully implement a robust, sustainable model for delivery capable of full integration within a state school framework.

Politics and linguistics

In many parts of the world today there exists a great deal of rhetoric proclaiming the advantage of an early start to language learning. For example, in just the last four years or so in Europe, the Italian president claimed that an early start would allow Italy to enter fully into the global marketplace; the British prime minister announced that languages

are easier to learn if you start early; whilst the Polish prime minister made the unexpected statement that English would be taught from grade 1 throughout the country within the next two years whilst speaking at the inaugural speech of the new government. In contrast, much of the evidence from linguists is rather less certain. Singleton & Ryan (2004: 227) in a major review of research in the field of second language acquisition confirm that evidence from school settings for language learning is insufficient and contradictory. They point out that opinions regarding the advantages of early language learning have been much-influenced by studies from naturalistic settings where individual children have acquired an additional language as a result of daily exposure in the home context, or from immersion settings where children have come to live in a region where a second/foreign language is all around them – both in the school and the wider societal context. Studies emanating from the bi-lingual contexts of Canada have been very influential here (Genesee 1978/9). Over-generalising the potential for early language learning in schooled contexts on the basis of evidence from other settings is clearly unwise. The consequence is likely to be unrealistic expectations with the potential for blaming teachers when rapid progress fails to take place.

Policy drivers

Accounting for this trend from another perspective, it appears that globally much of the impetus to introduce the teaching of a second or foreign language at a younger age seems to be set in motion by one of three drivers (none of them related to language, per se):

- A desired shift in political alliances

- A trend towards economic globalisation

- A perceived increase in global interconnectedness

Taking Europe as a regional illustration of the above analysis, I will comment on how these drivers have operated there. Firstly, Europe (and particularly the European Union) has increasingly sought to build alliances which might develop greater understanding and thus aid both trade and cultural stability. A major platform on which this construct rests is the notion of plurilingualism as a goal for every European citizen. It is argued that this will prove an essential tool with which to conduct business both across Europe and globally. Most recently, the EU rhetoric has, somewhat belatedly, also acknowledged the importance of non-European languages (particularly Chinese (Putonghua) and Arabic), hence its briefings no longer refer to the importance of learning 'the language of our neighbours' alone.

The argument concerning early language learning (and particularly English) proposes that the Euro-region now operates as one of three supra-national economic regions (the other two being North America and Asia), each of which relies on the others in maintaining a

competitive balance to survive (Dale 2005). In this context, Europe identifies English as the only possible language for such supra-national transactions and hence is likely to promote it as strongly as the North American economic region already does. Linked to this point is the notion of increased global inter-connectedness, which itself is predicated on the essential facilitator of digital technologies. Whilst the phenomenal growth in the accessibility of such technologies in the metropolitan centres of the Euro-region is all too evident, nonetheless, it should not be forgotten that access to computers (and hence to the internet) is currently only enjoyed by some 12% of the world's population (Robertson 2006). With this awareness, surely the rhetoric of inter-connectedness and hence the importance of English in Europe should perhaps be linked with discussions of elites and of exclusion.

The role of further research

In contextualising my discussion of early English language learning, within this intensely political framework, my aim is exercise a note of caution in the ready acceptance of current policy trends and to encourage an acknowledgement of the realities of what can be achieved in schooled contexts, particularly those where teachers have only quite limited training or where pupils have only a limited amount of curriculum time available for English language learning. As indicated previously, there is an urgent need for further research in this field; research that moves beyond the purely linguistic, to build our understanding of motivation, of how it might vary over time and of how we might influence it with early language learners (Edelenbos et al 2007). Also particularly needed is greater understanding of the central role of the teacher and of what constitutes a 'good' teacher of early language learners. At present there exist many expressed opinions on such issues, but insufficient empirical evidence to inform our future planning.

Policy solutions from Europe to China

Despite this substantial gap in our current knowledge, professionals in the field of early language learning have an immediate responsibility to guide and assist in the planning and implementation of early language-in-education policies increasingly frequently in many parts of the world today. In this section I will draw on examples from both Europe and China to illustrate many of the contemporary debates and discuss some of the solutions so far identified.

An initial summative view of European early language policy appears to present a quite uniform pattern. Figure 1 below (as at March 2007) indicates a strong preference for a start age of approximately 6 years, with a secondary preference for 8-9 years. This trend towards an earlier start has escalated in recent years, with 19 countries having further lowered their start age since 2000, of which some 14 now introduce a second/foreign language in the first year of schooling.

Figure 1: Current mandatory start age policies for foreign language learning in Europe: a summary

	MANDATORY START AGE						
	5 yrs	6 yrs	7 yrs	8 yrs	9 yrs	10 yrs	11 yrs
Number of countries	2	12	2	6	4	2	1

Note: the above data includes the current 27 EU member states, plus the 2 candidate countries. Figures relating to children aged 6 include both Portugal and the Czech Republic which have recently announced their intention to lower the start age in 2008.

Sources: data from personal communication with in-country experts.

Interrogating the detail of this data, however, reveals some curiously varied decisions, often reflecting some very different pre-histories and localised political perspectives. The following sample gives an indicative flavour of the variety of viewpoints reflected in the above data:

i. Which start age? The neighbouring countries of Hungary and Austria have reached quite different decisions on this. In 2003 Austria introduced a compulsory start age of six years, whilst Hungary has maintained a compulsory start age of ten years since 1998. In accounting for this later start age Hungarian ministry officials and senior academics considered it a necessity owing to the scarcity of suitable teachers in the rural districts of the country. Nonetheless, no national training scheme has been launched since that time to overcome this skills gap, suggesting that there exists no political will to address this issue at present. The result is one of varied provision and the inevitable exclusion of the economically less affluent.

ii. Which language(s)? For those countries with a history of teaching the language of their neighbours there has been much debate as to whether this should continue or whether English should be the first language, with other languages introduced later. Austria solved this dilemma by devolving the decision of language choice to a local level, stating that it could be any from a choice of 5 languages. In the event, 97% of primary schools chose English first. Empowerment and ownership resulted from this opportunity to make a clear choice. In contrast, in Italy this decision was made at Ministry level. Here, it was decided that all schools would be required to introduce English first. The consequence was that, in those regions of the country where other languages had previously been the preferred choice, teachers and parents were

dismayed with the decision. Ministry officials defended it on the grounds that English had greater global currency and that the choice of one national policy would be economically more cost-effective.

iii. Specialist or generalist teacher? Decisions on this question tend to relate to the traditions of primary education in each country. In some countries, children experience a different teacher for each subject from the very start of schooling, whilst in others the tendency is for there to be a generalist class teacher for most or all curriculum subjects. For example, in most Scandinavian countries, where a generalist teacher system exists, these primary teachers tend to also teach English. In Poland, the Czech Republic and Hungary, with a strong tradition of specialist language teachers, this system has tended to continue as a practice even with the very youngest learners. This debate relates also to the question of training priorities.

iv. Pre-service teacher education/continuing professional development: in the early stages of policy implementation the tendency has been firstly to focus on providing professional development for the existing labour force. For example, a number of regions of Germany are currently engaged in providing extensive courses of both language improvement and primary language methodology. Such courses are generally made available to existing primary teachers who already have an understanding of the needs and abilities of primary school pupils. More recently, a few teacher education colleges/universities in Germany have developed specialist pre-service courses for primary language teachers. However, this is not yet a common feature of the German system. In England a similar pattern has evolved. In-service provision is now quite substantial. Despite a well-established pattern of primary pre-service education, courses with a FL specialism have been slower to emerge. If sustainability is to be established at national levels the realities of staff turnover require that both structures should become a fixture in the very near future.

v. Frequency, duration and class size: Here again, patterns across Europe are very varied. Decisions may well be made on the basis of budgets rather than on the desirable ideal. The most common pattern appears to be anything from one to three lessons per week, generally lasting for 30-45 minutes. Evidence from a pilot study in Croatia is valuable to reflect on in relation to this question. In a study conducted during the 1990s in the capital of Zagreb (Mihaljevic Djigunovic & Vilke 2001), daily classes of 45 minutes were conducted by experienced teachers with classes of 15 pupils over a period of some years. It was found that this intensive pattern enabled all children to make rapid progress to the point where, after four years of lessons (aged 10 years) they were quite able to have a varied (if not fully accurate) conversation on a range of topics with a native speaker of English. Some years after the closure of this pilot study English has now been introduced throughout Croatia from year 1 (6 years). Patterns of frequency, duration and class size have been reduced to 3 lessons per week of 45 minutes, with classes of 25+ children. The resultant language progress is substantially reduced as a result.

Interestingly, as a tradition, class size for the provision of foreign language teaching varies across Europe. In much of the former central/eastern Europe the style has been (and often continues to be) a division of the class into two groups, resulting in approximately 15 pupils as the norm for a language lesson. In contrast, most of western Europe tends not to provide such ideal contexts, generally resulting in language classes comprising 20-30 pupils.

One further dimension of provision in this area relates to those classrooms where the foreign language (FL) is taught by the class teacher. Here, the possibility exists for frequent, small inputs of language to be integrated throughout the school day. For example, in some primary schools in England the register is now taken in the FL, the daily lunch menu is displayed on the notice board in the FL and the teacher gives many of the routine classroom instructions in the FL. This increased exposure may well help learners in the process of becoming familiar and comfortable with the language, thus easing them through that first phase of the new experience.

The above focus on European evidence illustrates some of the dilemmas currently and continuously under debate. Mainly, solutions reflect some kind of compromise and are less than satisfactory for all sectors of the population. However, the challenge of introducing early start policies in Europe are minor when compared with a country operating on the scale that China currently attempts in its efforts to create English provision in primary schools across the country. Planning for the scale of provision required has wisely been divided into steps. Currently, pilot projects are under way in most of the urban regions of the country for the introduction of English from the start of compulsory schooling (6 years). In-service training has been on a huge scale and still has a long way to go before coverage of the urban areas is achieved. The focus of this training is to develop a model of classroom interactions appropriate to the cultural context of the Chinese classroom. At present, the classroom element most strongly in evidence as operating against the achievement of this goal appears to be class size. As in the example of Croatia, larger classes result in reduced interactions. At present, the typical primary class size in China is in the region of 40-50 pupils. Such learning contexts are extremely likely to lead to an over-emphasis on choral work and a lack of opportunity for teacher/pupil and pupil/pupil interactions, both critical contexts for the early language learner focusing on developing accurate pronunciation and confidence in articulating their own meanings in the FL. It is difficult to see how this limitation can be overcome in the immediate future.

As indicated above, in this pilot phase of early language provision, China is concentrating attention on the urban regions of the country. However, there is increasing concern about the risks of the rural areas getting left behind as a result. This increasing urban/rural divide is a feature not only to be found in China (though the divide may well be much greater here, given the very recent and very rapid urban drift

that has occurred). For a number of countries in Europe also, it has proved difficult to find FL teachers able and willing to teach in rural areas. With the current introduction of an early start programme in Poland this challenge is now uppermost in the planning of local area provision, though no satisfactory solution has yet emerged. One possible solution may rest with the centralised approach of France to teacher employment. There, the national system appoints teachers as civil servants. This system results in teachers being appointed to a school, rather than being given the opportunity to select their school. Through this mechanism it becomes possible for newly qualified teachers to be appointed to rural areas, to a greater extent than is the practice elsewhere. Inevitably, there is some resistance to this system, but at least some provision is assured.

This section has raised many concerns and tentatively identified some possible solutions. Mostly however, these can only be regarded as interim solutions. Much further research is needed if we are to identify realistic, sustainable models of implementation capable of supporting early language learners in both their linguistic and broader educational development. Nonetheless, given the imperative to appropriately respond to both the expectations of parents (who, quite naturally, want the best for their children) and the requirements of politicians (who may well be seeking short-term solutions for re-election), there is much to be said for the proposals of Michael Fullan in addressing the challenges of introducing innovation. Fullan proposes that, in some contexts, it may well be appropriate to adopt the mandate of: "Fire first, aim later" (Fullan 1999).

Recent research and some preliminary conclusions

In the context of the introduction of early FL learning in England, Fullan's mandate offers a quite accurate analysis of what has happened. In this final section I will briefly summarise the nature of both the firing and the aiming process during the recent implementation and draw on initial research evidence as an illustration of the real challenges that exist in the introduction and embedding of a major educational reform within a system where no such provision existed previously. I draw specifically on this research as an indicator of the substantial gap that still exists in our understandings of this field and as a trigger to encourage further research that may help to inform our understandings more fully of what can be achieved, and how best it might be achieved.

The first phase of early FL introduction commenced with two-year exploratory pilot studies in 19 regions of England. During this period schools were encouraged to experiment with their own ideas on what to teach, how to teach it, when to teach it and who should teach it. This period provoked much debate, much uncertainty and much insecurity, but finally resulted in the identification of some very practical ways forward.

During the subsequent five-year period (2005-2010) all schools are expected to move towards implementation commencing at seven years (year 3). A substantial programme of support and in-service training is now available in most regions of the country, with national, regional and local networks of trainers, school-based consultants and increasingly strong links with local secondary schools/specialist secondary language colleges. In addition, nationally-funded opportunities for language improvement courses, overseas intensive language classes and links with schools elsewhere in Europe are available. Whilst the programme is impressively comprehensive, inevitably there remain some gaps which may have resulted in limited accessibility for some teachers. Further work is still needed to address these issues.

It is within this context that recent data has been collected in one region of southern England, as a part of a wider comparative, longitudinal European study which aims to identify what can realistically be achieved in the schooled contexts of six countries (Early Language Learning in Europe study). Drawing on a data set of 150 children from six schools, across a broad socio-economic and geographical sample, I will report on some of the most relevant findings during the first half-year of the study.

Firstly, it can be said that interviews with school principals and teachers indicated a great deal of enthusiasm about the initiative. All interviewees proposed that an early start would achieve a higher competency level in the long-term. They also anticipated that the positive attitudes already evident would be sufficiently well-embedded by the time children reached the age of transfer to secondary school that such enthusiasm would be more likely to be continued.

Despite these positive opinions from both teachers and school principals, the early data from children's questionnaires and classroom observations suggested some concerns. These included the following:

1 Children were not unanimously positive in their perceptions of FL learning. In particular, boys tended to comment less positively than girls on these early experiences.

2 Some teachers had not yet managed to take up any available in-service training.

3 Some teachers had extremely low levels of language competency.

4 Mainly, FL lessons were being delivered by specialist FL teachers. These teachers were sometimes secondary-trained and had limited experience/expertise in teaching such young children. In addition, their semi 'visitor status' in the classroom sometimes resulted in a position of less authority than the class teacher was able to command.

These very early findings should be regarded as extremely tentative at this point. They are presented here simply as an illustration of how demanding the process of implementation can be during the early phases. It is expected that the longitudinal and

comparative nature of this study will enable a substantially more nuanced picture of both the achievements and the challenges to emerge, over time. The ultimate test will rest on the extent to which these early learners become confident users of their FLs in their future lives. The research team hope to contribute some initially valid findings in the rather shorter period of five years however.

In conclusion, it is evident that there is much still to be learnt about planning for engagement and sustainability, but it may well be that one outcome of increased global interconnectedness will be an increase in opportunities to learn from each other. I trust that this paper may contribute something to this process.

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04

Challenges for Primary Education in the Strategy for Teaching and Learning Foreign Languages in Vietnam

NGUYEN LOC

I. The current situation of teaching and learning foreign languages in Vietnam

At present, there are four foreign languages being taught in the Vietnam national education system, namely English, Russian, French and Chinese. These languages are taught to students from grade six to grade twelve in secondary schools and continue to be taught in vocational schools, technical schools and in higher education institutions. In the school-year 2004-2005, one among these four languages was taught to 92% of the students in lower secondary schools, 99% of those in upper secondary schools, 81% of the students in vocational and technical schools and 100% of the higher education students. In general, foreign languages are taught in a seven-year curriculum, which comprises 700 periods in lower and upper secondary education. Besides, in order to meet specific requirements, students can learn foreign languages in such programs as optional, intensive, bilingual and specialized ones. In vocational schools and technical schools, foreign languages are taught in 60-150 periods, depending on the training time of each institution. In higher education, the numbers of credits devoted to the teaching of foreign languages in colleges and universities which do not specialize in foreign languages are 10 and 25 respectively. In colleges of foreign languages or colleges for training teachers of foreign languages, that number rises to 60-64 credits; and in universities of the same purpose, it accounts for 70-90 credits.

Table 1: Distribution of foreign language classes based on educational levels and grades in Vietnam

	Periods per week	Number of weeks	Total
Lower secondary (Grade 6, 7, 8, 9)	3 (Grade 9: 2 per./ week)	35	385 per.
Upper Secondary (Grade 10, 11, 12)	3	35	315 per.
Vocational schools	-	-	60-150 per.
Technical schools	-	-	60-150 per.
Higher education	-	-	10-25 credits

Source: NIESAC' survey in 2004

Of the four languages that are currently being taught, English is the most popular. Then come French, Russian and Chinese. This can be seen in the following table:

Table 2: Distribution of students based on the foreign languages they are studying and the educational levels

Educational Levels	Percentage of Students Learning A Particular Foreign Language				
	English	French	Russian	Chinese	Others
Lower Secondary	99.20%	0.60%	0.20%	0.10%	0.00%
Upper Secondary	96.22%	2.36%	1.39%	0.03%	0.00%
Vocational Schools	97.90%	1,50%	0.20%	1.20%	0.00%
Technical Schools	99.40%	0.60%	0.00%	0.80%	0.00%
Higher Education	93.30%	2.87%	2.17%	1.49%	0.17%

Source: NIESAC' survey in 2004

The language program presented in the first table is the official program used in

teaching foreign languages. There are other foreign language programs as follows:

- Optional English Program (in primary education): At day-schools, English is taught to students from grade 3, with the time allocation of two periods per week. At present, approximately 32.2% of the primary schools in Vietnam are implementing this program.

- English Intensive Program: In big cities such as Ho Chi Minh city, a pilot English intensive program is being implemented for students from primary schools to upper secondary schools (grade 1 to grade 12). Under this program, students study English for eight periods per week.

- French and French Intensive Program: This is a special curriculum, in which students study a number of other subjects in French. Currently, it is available for students from grade 1 to grade 12 in 19 cities and provinces, including 104 schools and 650 classes.

- Teaching French as a Second or Foreign Language Program: This program has already been implemented in 20 cities and provinces, involving over 30,000 students.

In the present trend of globalization and international integration, as well as the need for economic development and promotion of international friendship, more and more shortcomings in the Vietnamese educational system have become visible. Among them, the most serious ones are:

- The overall foreign language proficiency of Vietnamese students is of low level, leading to their inability to use foreign languages for communication

- Graduates cannot use foreign languages effectively. Most students in higher education are unable to use materials in foreign languages for reference or for their research. Moreover, they are not qualified enough to attend training programs in which a foreign language is used. This is a significant shortcoming of the Vietnamese workforce.

- Compared to the time allotment as well as the investment of the State, the present teaching and learning foreign language programs do not yield much effect.

II. Towards innovating the teaching and learning of foreign languages

- Firstly, innovating teaching and learning foreign languages requires the implementation of a number of overall strategies. This aims at guaranteeing the achievement of the long-term objective, which is to improve the foreign language

proficiency of the younger generation. In addition, break-through strategies are needed to meet the requirements of intergration, modernization and industrialization of the whole nation.

- More measurements should be implemented to have a better control over the target, requirements and the quality of teaching foreign languages, specified by each educational level and standard. Moreover, there should be various forms of teaching and learning foreign languages so as to meet the needs of each province and school. Local educational institutions should be given the right to choose which foreign languages to teach, as well as which language programs to apply.

- Socialization must be speeded up by diversifying teacher sources as well as teaching methods and learning styles in the national education system.

- In order to achieve the long-term consistency in organizing teaching and learning foreign language activities, we need to accept the current differences between the language programs being implemented, the levels of learners, as well as the number of foreign languages and the choice of a specific language to teach in different regions, areas and educational institutions. It is essential to give incentives to regions that possess potential conditions to innovate the teaching and learning of foreign languages at a quicker tempo and of higher standard than the ones proposed in the Project.

III. Main strategies in innovating foreign language teaching and learning in Vietnam toward the year 2020

Vision

Innovation in teaching and learning foreign languages in Vietnam national education system must be comprehensive. By 2010, the foreign language proficiency of some prioritized human resources must have been upgraded considerably. By 2015, a new, consistent teaching and learning foreign language program will have been implemented to all educational levels in Vietnam. This aims at bring about a high increase in the number of Vietnamese youths and teenagers that can use foreign languages independently and confidently. This will anable them to gain success in communication, study and work in a multi-lingual, multi-cultural environments and meet the needs of the country's industrialization and modernization process.

The Overall General Ability Table

The teaching and learning of foreign languages in Vietnam is currently based on the Overall General Ability Table. This table serves as a foundation for the continuity and

guarantee the inter-relation between different educational levels, concerning the issue of foreign languages. It also determines the time allocation for each levels and the language content to be included in the testing and assessment of students' ability. The table specifies different levels of foreign language ability and provides sufficient requirements regarding different types of student ability in listening, speaking, reading and writing. In this project, the author would like to propose the Overall General Ability Table[1] of the Association of Language Testers of Europe – ALTE. This table consists of six levels. Among them, the lowest one is level 1, the highest one is level 6. In each level, there is specific requirements for each skill area, which are listening, speaking, reading and writing.

Increase in the amount of time allocation for teaching and learning foreign languages

It is of great importance to increase the number of periods for teaching a foreign language from 700 to 1,115, with particular allocation to each of the levels:

- Primary Level: grades 3, 4, 5 - 4 periods/week, total: 420 periods

- Lower Secondary Level: : grades 6, 7, 8, 9 - 3 periods/week, total: 420 periods

- Upper Secondary Level: grades 10, 11, 12 – 3 periods/week, total: 315 periods

Expectation of foreign language proficiency

- Finishing Primary Level Students are expected to reach Level 1 (A1)

- Finishing Lower Secondary Level Students are expected to reach Level 2 (A2)

- Finishing Upper Secondary Level Students are expected to reach Level 3 (B1)

Preparation for foreign language teachers

- For Primary Level: Supply 1,500 teachers for 2008-2009, then maintain the annual average supply of 2,300 until 2015-2016

- For Lower Secondary Level: Supply 1,200 teachers for 2011-2012, then maintain the annual average supply of 1,900 until 2015-2016

- For Upper Secondary Level: Supply 1,400 teachers for 2015-2016

Requirements of teacher qualification

- Foreign language proficiency of teachers of Primary schools should reach Level 3

- Foreign language proficiency of teachers of Lower Secondary schools should reach Level 4

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1. The Overall General Ability Table is developed by ALTE within the Framework & Can-Do project and is applied for 13 most popular languages in Europe, namely Catalan, French, Portuguese, Danish, German, Spanish, Dutch, Greek, Swedish, English, Italian, Finnish and Norwegian. (See Appendix X in the Appendices). This Table is for reference and further research is required to apply it in reality.

- Foreign language proficiency of teachers of Upper Secondary Schools should reach Level 5

Upgrading facilities for teaching and learning foreign languages

- The government should invest more to buy and equip sufficient facilities for the teaching and learning of foreign languages, in correspondence to the Project's major steps. By 2015, 100% of the educational institutions must have at least one Foreign Language Learning Room, 100% of the secondary schools, vocational schools, technical schools, colleges and universities must have been equipped with at least one multi-media room.

Innovating teaching objectives, contents, methodology and management

- Build up a detailed Table of Foreign Language Proficiency, which consists of six levels, according to the international foreign language levels that are widely used.

- Devise educational curricula and compile textbooks for 10-year foreign language program.

- Give incentives to schools and educational institutions which have conditions as well as a strong need for foreign language teaching. They should be given priority in implementing intensive foreign language programs in each educational level.

- Devise foreign language programs and compile correlative textbooks for vocational schools, technical schools, colleges and universities.

- Devise programs in which some subjects such as maths, physics, chemistry, biology and informatics are taught in English. These programs can be implemented in secondary schools and educational institutions which have sufficient conditions and needs. Foreign languages should also be used in some subjects and learning branches relating to such fields of technology, natural science in some colleges and universities.

Promoting international cooperation in teaching and learning foreign languages

- Promoting and intensifying international cooperation in teaching and learning foreign languages at school levels.

- Include exchanging programs in national policies concerning the teaching and learning foreign languages. In such programs, Vietnamese teachers and students are sent to other countries in order to have best conditions to study foreign languages. In addition, there should be appropriate policies and regulations to attract overseas Vietnamese and international experts, especially people provided by international volunteer organizations. Priority should be given to schools that carry out training

programs proposed by foreign countries and in which foreign languages are used in some natural and technical fields.

IV. Conclusion

The strategy is long-term, comprehensive and ambitious. This is the first time that the strategy offers an official involvement of Primary Education in the teaching of foreign languages in Vietnam. It coincides with the common trends of teaching foreign languages in the world.

The involvement of Primary Education will create more favorable conditions, and simultaneously pose significant challenges to Primary Education.

The success of the whole strategy will heavily depend on the success of the starting point – the involvement of Primary Education.

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05

Innovation in PELT and Management of Change

K.S. CHANG

I. Overview of the last 10 years' PELT in Korea

In Korea the Ministry of Education first introduced English as a compulsory subject in primary school in 1997. Since then children have started learning English from the third grade, with one 40-minute class a week at Grades 3 and 4, and two classes a week at Grades 5 and 6.

A review of the literature on PELT shows that there are three main reasons for the MoE's decision. Firstly, there was the second language acquisition research rationale. That is, children benefit from learning foreign languages while their innate language acquisition device (LAD) is still active. The second rationale was related to the economy. In order to respond effectively to globalization and remain competitive, the government wanted to ensure that its people had adequate linguistic resources to take an active part in the global economy. The third rationale was its people's perception of English. For many, mastering English is considered as one of the most important tasks in life and can lead to, better job opportunities and an easier life. This is supported by a survey KICE carried out with the British Council in 2006, in which a majority of the primary school teachers interviewed said that the two most important reasons for the teaching of English in Primary Schools are related to children's' future careers and the national economy.

In terms of the impact of the MoE's policy, it has made a significant contribution to raising Korean' awareness of the government's language policy. Since 1997, English education has been the focus of reform whenever people talk about changes in

education. English has also become a vehicle for enabling Korea to take an increasing role in the global economy and has made a significant contribution to the improvement to Korea's economic competitiveness. Finally, English is no longer considered just a foreign language, but an essential skill for getting a job.

From the students' point of view, some studies show that primary school children's' communicative competence has improved since English was introduced in primary schools. The National Assessment of Educational Achievement carried out by KICE shows that students' scores in various English tests have improved over the past ten years (See Kwon et al) The policy provides children with more opportunities to be exposed to English and some studies have revealed that students have become more motivated to learn English.

On the other hand, the language policy has brought some problems and future concerns. Perhaps the major one is the huge amount of money spent on private English tutoring. It is widely recognized that wealthier parents in all major urban areas send their children to private language institutes after school because they want them to do better at school and gain the perceived benefits of early language education. This has resulted in wide differences between the English abilities of children from affluent families and those from poor rural areas, which has become a social issue as much as an educational one.

Another area of concern is the level of teachers' oral proficiency. When English was first introduced at the primary level, teachers' oral proficiency was one of the major worries and it continues to be a concern now. According to a recent survey on areas to be improved, a majority of the teachers pointed out that their oral proficiency was the area that most needed improvement. In addition, the effectiveness of change in PELT has been criticized at the level of classroom teaching.

II. The Korean government's proposed policy

The achievements and problems of the previous language policy provide the background to the MoE's current proposal to introduce English as a compulsory subject at grades one and two of primacy school. This is based on the assumption of 'the earlier, the easier' and the positive results from many studies on the effects of PELT over the last decade. It is also based on the strongly held belief that every child should have an equal opportunity to learn English regardless of their family background and the need to reduce the English divide between rich and poor, urban and rural. A final justification is that it will continue to contribute to an improvement in the nation's competitiveness in the global economy.

The MoE is currently conducting research into the effectiveness of introducing English at the beginning of primary school. Fifty experimental schools were selected for a comparative study on the effects of learning English in the first and second grades compared with other schools where English is still first taught in the third grade. A group of consultants were organised to provide support in terms of curriculum and materials development and the teachers in the 50 experimental are involved in developing their own curriculum and materials. The MoE is also supporting research into the effects of earlier English learning on children's literacy in Korean and the effects of increasing the number of hours of English in the third and fourth grades.

Views on the introduction of English as a compulsory subject at the beginning of Primary school are divided. Some teachers agree with the concept of 'the earlier the easier" and welcome the proposal if well-trained specialists teach the subject. Many parents welcome it because the policy will help them by reducing the burden of private tutoring and they hope it will lead to their children having better and more fulfilling lives than they did. Finally, university professors and academics agree that the proposal will increase children's exposure to English, which can only be a good thing.

On the other hand, some teachers disagree with the proposed policy because of their poor oral proficiency, the lack of specialist English teachers and lack of support from schools, Local Education authorities and the Ministry of Education. Some parents have indicated their concern about the potential increase in the financial burden of sending their children to private language institution to help them do better than their peers. Others have indicated concern about the possible confusion children may have between L1 and L2, the negative effect on L1 literacy and the limited number of classes. A few students disagree because of the additional learning burden.

The government has said that a final decision will be made on the basis of the findings of various studies and will not seek to impose the new policy. It says that if the change is introduced, it will seek effective ways to bring about change in the school. It has a plan to support teachers with improved and more teacher-centred pre and in-service teacher training, as well as recruiting more native speakers to work in primary schools.

III. Considerations for effective innovation

A review of the literature on implementing change suggests that the previous approach of the MoE has been top-down. The MoE has imposed change and control using a power-coercive strategy. It has been product-oriented and unidirectional from government to teachers, who have often been reluctant participants in the change and relies heavily on test results.

In an alternative, process-orientated, bottom-up approach, the MoE could support change in more effective ways in which individual teachers' voices are heard, all stakeholders are widely consulted, there is significant collaboration and teachers take an active role in the change.

A major area to consider within the change process is teacher education. To bring about effective change in PELT, along with changes in teaching in the classroom, the system of pre-service teacher training in colleges and in-service teacher training needs to be improved in order to meet the needs of the classroom. The following areas need to be addressed:

- Teachers' proficiency in English

- Teaching English through English

- Specialist English teachers versus homeroom teachers

- Use of communicative language teaching methodology

- Availability, quality and level of materials/ teaching resources

- Mixed abilities of classes.

In terms of pre-service teacher training, the following need to be addressed:

- Evaluation of the current curriculum of training institutions

- Integration of training content and methodology

- An emphasis on teaching practice in schools

- An emphasis on teacher observation and supervision

- Development of teacher trainers (Currently anybody with a PhD degree, and publications can train would-be teachers, but there is little consideration of trainer skills and competencies).

In terms of in-service teacher training, there needs to be:

- An emphasis on long-term professional development, along with language improvement

- An emphasis on reflective teaching

- A focus on teacher observation, supervision & evaluation for development, not just as a means for promotion.

- An increased role for the classroom researcher, as the classroom is the place to look at to improve teaching.

- Development of an action research network, involving cooperative teacher development, communication and support

- Training of Korean teacher trainers, who have had experience of teaching in the same context as their trainees and fully understand the issues and needs of teachers.

There is also a need to consider what teachers' needs are. Findings from research carried out by KICE and the British Council in Korea suggest that teachers need support in the following areas:

- Specialist training in how to deal with and implement change

- Supply of materials and resources

- Opportunities for teacher training abroad: They say that training abroad is very effective in improving their teaching and language skills

- Teacher training programmes to meet individual teachers' needs in areas such as language improvement, materials development, use of technology.

- The provision of models of teaching & assessment

- How to work effectively with native speaker teachers (co-teaching classes).

In terms of materials for young learners, there has been an increasing need for:

- Phonics

- Supplementary materials like flash cards, song & dance

- Graded storybooks

- Materials to stimulate students' interest

- Materials to meet individual students' needs

- Material around every-day topics that are meaningful for children.

Finally, for effective Primary English Teaching appropriate assessment tools need to be developed and introduced:

- Informal assessment needs to be encouraged.

- Classroom-based assessment should be emphasized

- It needs to feed into a formative assessment

- Effective means of diagnosing students' progress, strengths & weaknesses.

IV. Concluding remarks

Since English was first introduced as a compulsory subject in the third grade of Primary school in 1997, a number of benefits have resulted, including an improvement in the English skills of Korean children. The proposed introduction at grades one and two is hoped to further enhance these benefits. However, the development of effective English language teaching in primary schools in Korea remains a huge challenge and there are a large number of areas that need to looked at, not least how change and innovation is effectively implemented through a bottom-up, process-orientated approach that involves all the stakeholders, particularly teachers.

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06

A Brief Sketch of Taiwan's English Education at Primary Level

VINCENT WUCHANG CHANG

The year 2001 marked the beginning of a new era in Taiwan's English education. It was in fall of that year that English officially became a required course for all 5th graders. Since the implementation of the new policy, English teachers at primary level have endeavoured to ensure the success of English teaching and learning on the island in order to promote Taiwan's global competitiveness in the years to come. Over the years, however, several important problems have emerged and concerned ELT scholars are now deliberating over measures that may help resolve the thorny issues.

In this paper, the status quo of primary English education in Taiwan is introduced with a focus on the following critical issues: (a) non-uniformity in terms of the starting grade for English instruction, (b) lack of qualified English teachers in many cities and counties, (c) recruitment of native speakers of English to assist teaching in remote areas, and (d) heterogeneity of students' proficiency in the primary English class.

Non-uniformity in terms of the starting grade for English instruction

A survey conducted in 2004 showed that, among the 25 cities and counties in Taiwan, only 6 started from the mandated 5th grade. Cites and counties with more resources started as early as 1st or 2nd grade. Some counties that are less resourceful were found to also start at 1st or 2nd grade despite the lack of qualified teachers and instructional resources. Even within the same city or county, different schools were reported to begin

at different grades. This has posed problems especially for those students whose parents have to move from one part of the island to another. Faced with this "one nation, different practices" dilemma, the only measure the Ministry of Education (MoE) could take was requiring those counties and cities that wished to start early to submit proposals showing careful planning and adequate teaching resources. For those whose proposals were unsatisfactory but nevertheless insisted on an earlier start, reduction in MoE funding and subsidy was imposed as a form of penalty. However, with the recent craze of English learning in Taiwan as a "national sport" and the pressure from concerned parents and city/county councilmen, the MoE announced in 2003 its decision to lower the beginning grade of English instruction to the 3rd starting fall of 2005—with the hope that all cities and counties would start uniformly at 3rd grade.

A 2006 island-wide survey shows, however, that only 1,506 (60.7%) public primary schools now start English instruction at 3rd grade, as officially mandated. As expected, schools located in remote areas of the island, as a general rule, start at 3rd grade (e.g. all 18 primary schools in Kinmen County start at 3rd grade). The general tendency is for schools located in urban and more resourceful areas to start earlier, either in 1st or 2nd grade: 788 (31.8%) of the schools surveyed begin at 1st grade, and 182 (7.3%) start at 2nd. Not surprisingly, all public primary schools in Taipei City start uniformly at 1st grade, but the fact that counties like Nantou and Taichung, which are severely lacking in qualified teachers and instructional resources, also begin at 1st grade is particularly worrying.

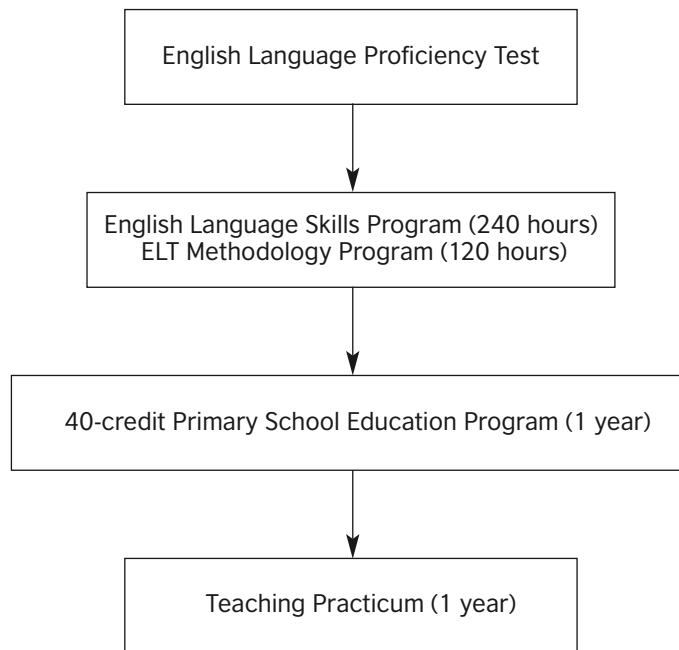## Lack of qualified English teachers in many cities and counties

Prior to the year 1999, there was practically no need for the training of English teachers at primary level since English was not yet one of the official school subjects. This, however, does not mean that primary school children at that time did not have any contact at all with English before they attended junior high. Actually, many concerned parents, realizing the importance of English as a global language, sent their children to English language institutes at an early age, hoping that their children would have a more competitive edge not only in school but also in their future career.

The urgent need for training primary school English teachers began to be felt in 1999 when the MoE announced that all grade five and grade six students would be required to learn English starting the school year 2001. It was estimated that to implement this new policy, 3,300 or so teachers would be required.

To meet this urgent need, the MoE established the Primary School English Teacher Training Program (PSETTP) in 1999 to recruit and prepare enough qualified English teachers by 2001 to ensure quality teaching. This was an unprecedented emergency

program and had involved the joint efforts of 27 universities and 9 teachers' colleges island-wide in order to train the needed teachers within the short time span of only two years (from July 1999 to June 2001).

The courses of PSETTP were designed by the Primary English Advisory Committee with four components in the following sequence:

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┌─────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│        English Language Proficiency Test     │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────┘
                      │
                      ▼
┌─────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│   English Language Skills Program (240 hours)│
│      ELT Methodology Program (120 hours)     │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────┘
                      │
                      ▼
┌─────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│  40-credit Primary School Education Program (1 year) │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────┘
                      │
                      ▼
┌─────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│          Teaching Practicum (1 year)         │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────┘
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In March 1999, a very competitive English language proficiency test was administered by the Language Training and Testing Center to the 45,495 applicants who showed interest in the program. After careful assessment and screening of the applicants' four language skills, only 3,536 were accepted as trainees for the program. The English Language Skills Program, which contained five language courses with a total of 240 hours, was specifically designed for those accepted trainees who nevertheless needed further improvement in their oral proficiency. All trainees were required to participate in the ELT Methodology Program, which consisted of seven courses with a total of 120 hours. Upon successful completion of the Methodology Program, the trainees were required to go to teachers' colleges of their own choice to participate in the one-year 40-credit Primary School Education Program, aimed at equipping the trainees with the professional knowledge for teaching the major primary school subjects and the skills to serve as homeroom teachers. Successful trainees of the program were then assigned to a primary school to serve a one-year internship, teaching English as well as other

primary school subjects. During the internship, the trainees were also assigned administrative duty to fulfil.

It is worth mentioning here that many of the trainees of the PSETTP, however, dropped out of the program during the process because of different reasons. According to the statistical data provided by the MoE, only 1,922 successfully completed all stages of the training process and, among them, only a total of 1,476 are now teaching at primary schools in different parts of the island, with the majority being employed in the urban areas.

Shortage of qualified primary English teachers has been a common phenomenon in many parts of the island, and this is again confirmed by the 2006 survey mentioned above. The survey in fact shows that only 51.7% of the 7,023 teachers currently teaching in public primary schools are considered qualified: 17.4% (1,192) of them have completed the PSETTP, 18% (1,238) are homeroom teachers with English or foreign language background in college/university, and 16.3% (1,121) are homeroom teachers who have completed city- or county-sponsored ELT training programs.

The survey also shows that many qualified primary English teachers prefer to serve merely as homeroom teachers so that they will not be burdened with heavy teaching load (i.e. teaching at least 12 different classes per week). Another finding worth noting is that due to the lowering birthrate in recent years, many public primary schools are undergoing the painful process of downsizing, and the sad fact is that many of the quite competent and yet newly recruited English teachers are usually the first ones to leave the school.

To ensure that there are sufficient teachers for English instruction, many homeroom teachers with some English proficiency are now urged (in some cases, required) to enroll in ELT programs in order to take over the English teaching responsibility in their respective schools. Another measure was to leave the responsibility to substitute teachers. The 2006 survey indicates that currently 1,194 substitute teachers are being employed, with the majority teaching in the remote areas of the island. As the professional knowledge and English proficiency of these teachers are generally found to be less satisfactory, learners in remote and less resourceful areas are thus further disadvantaged in terms of their English learning.

Recruitment of native speakers of English to assist teaching in remote areas

In view of the success of the Japanese JET (the Japan Exchange and Teaching) program and the EPIK (English Program in Korea), the MoE announced in 2002 its plan to recruit native speakers from the US, the UK, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand to

assist English teaching in remote areas. From the MoE's perspective, this measure could help alleviate the problem of shortage of qualified English teachers in those areas, and with the lowering of English instruction to 3rd grade, this was even seen as one of the priority measures: young learners in less resourceful areas can benefit tremendously from firsthand contact with the recruited native speakers. So far, however, the recruitment program has not been as successful as expected, compared with that in Japan and Korea, with only a total of 68 foreign teachers (35 by the MoE; 33 by cities and counties authorized to do so) recruited in 2005 and 104 (44 by the MOE; 60 by cities and counties) in 2006.

Evaluation of the recruitment program has generated mixed results. On one hand, students have been reported to be better motivated in English learning, and they have the advantage of using English as a genuine tool of communication. Some of the foreign teachers are also found to be more dynamic in their teaching than their Taiwanese counterparts. On the other hand, there are negative reports concerning foreign teachers' problems of adjustment (to the living environments, local cultures, among others), as well as those related to aspects such as personality of the teacher and even lack of expertise in ELT.

Recruiting native speakers to assist English teaching in remote areas is in fact best treated as a temporary measure. The MoE should provide extra incentives to attract qualified teachers to teach there. To resolve the problem of teacher shortage, local governments should consider sending top high school graduates to universities with ELT training programs to ensure steady supply of qualified teachers. Moreover, as the MoE's annual budget for the recruitment programme is fast shrinking, there is actually no guarantee that every year the school will have a foreign teacher to assist in English teaching. So it is best for the school to solicit help from its recruited foreign teacher to write up English teaching materials that capture the distinctive features of the school and its surroundings—in accordance with the principle of "school-based curriculum."

Heterogeneity of students' proficiency in the primary English class

Another major issue regarding primary English education in Taiwan is the large class size (30-40) and the heterogeneity of students' English proficiency in the class. In a 3rd-grade class, for example, there are, on one hand, students who have studied English since preschool and can speak and write fairly well. On the other hand, there are also students—mostly from socio-economically disadvantaged families—that have just started their initial contact with English. The teacher is thus constantly challenged by the questions: WHO to teach, WHAT to teach and HOW? As a general rule, though, the teacher focuses primarily on the better learners, leaving the slower ones struggling on

their own.

Related to the issue of heterogeneity are the self-perceived superiority of the more proficient students and the loss, however gradual, of self-confidence among the slower learners, both of which are of great concern to the primary teacher. Ability grouping has been implemented in several schools to help solve this problem. However, negative impact of this measure has been reported—in particular the "labeling" effect on the low-achievers.

Remedial teaching is another measure that has been implemented to bridge the gap. The 2006 survey cited above shows a considerable number of public primary schools (1,015, or 40.9%) are now implementing remedial English programs. Most noteworthy is the finding that this measure is being taken by a large number of schools in the Greater Taipei area: 81 schools, or 72.3% in Taipei City and 131 schools, or 64.2% in Taipei County. As this area is more resourceful than other areas in Taiwan, this finding seems to show not only that implementing this measure requires more budget and human resources but also that the problem of mixed English ability levels is probably more severe than expected—even in the Greater Taipei area!

Other issues of significance

Besides the issues discussed above, there are other problems concerning primary English education that need to be attended to. For example, the 1-2 weekly English instruction hours are actually not sufficient to ensure successful learning of English. This is in fact the main reason why many concerned parents are eagerly sending their children to English language institutes or cram schools. This undoubtedly has widened the gap between the more proficient students and the slower ones—whose parents in general cannot afford the expenses—and thus has created even more problems for primary English teachers.

Another issue that has caused tremendous concern in the past two years is the craze in many cities and counties to develop and administer their own English proficiency tests at primary level. The purposes of the tests are generally "to assess the effectiveness of English instruction" and "to identify students who are in need of remedial teaching." The 2006 survey shows that these tests are generally administered starting from 3rd grade (24.4%), and the percentage increases to 31.7% in 4th, 30.4% in 5th, and 39.7% in 6th grade. It further shows that city- or county-wide English proficiency tests are administered in the following parts of the island: Taipei County, I-lan County, Taoyuan County, Taipei City, Pingtong County, and Keelung City. The survey further shows that items assessing students' knowledge on sound-letter correspondences (35.7%), and those on their listening ability (34.8%) and writing ability (33.5%) are generally given

more weight than those assessing their reading ability (25.1%) and speaking ability (23.7%). The comparatively lower weight given to the assessment of speaking ability is understandable—considering the difficulty involved in administering a speaking test—but it is nevertheless an important skill to cultivate at primary level.

Developing English proficiency tests for primary students is in actuality no simple matter if we take into account the limited amount of vocabulary items and structures that primary students have learned in an EFL context. Teachers without special training find it very difficult to develop valid and reliable tests based on the limited vocabulary and sentence patterns. Poorly-designed tests have negative backwash effects. Worse still, they inevitably cause tremendous anxiety on the students, their parents, and even the teachers themselves. It is interesting to note in this context that 36.6% of the teachers in Taipei City who participated in the survey voiced their objection to the city-wide English proficiency tests at primary level!

As the learning of English has been fast becoming a national sport in Taiwan, more and more children are sent to bilingual preschools or English language institutes to get an early start in English learning. At the same time, many primary school teachers have voiced concerns that their students' competence in reading and writing Mandarin, the official language on the island, has been on steady decline. Related to this is the worry that while English teaching has introduced to the primary children many fascinating cultural aspects of English-speaking people, a growing number of primary students are not showing the same amount of interest in learning things related to Chinese/Taiwanese culture as before. To some, this is a warning sign that some primary students may be losing their cultural identity!

Conclusion

With English continuing to exert its influence on the global arena, the craze with English learning in Taiwan will definitely remain the dominant trend. However, in view of the critical issues mentioned above, ELT scholars and primary school teachers on this island indeed have greater responsibilities to shoulder and must work together with the government to resolve the thorny problems.

07

Issues in Pre- and In-Service Teacher Preparation

JEAN BREWSTER

Ancient Chinese wisdom

Sun Tzu, a famous martial strategist 2,200 years ago, identified three key elements for achieving the success of a mission: firstly, doing the right thing at the right time to meet future needs and mega-trends; secondly, taking strengths from the internal and external context; creating and materializing opportunities from local contexts to enhance development and finally, encouraging initiative, creativity and staff development; providing consistent support and promoting collaboration (see Cheng 2001:35). Tzu's work is still used in leadership training in military and business contexts and is, in my view, clearly relevant to educational contexts today. This paper will briefly examine each of these concepts - long-term relevance, environmental strength and encouraging staff development – in the light of current and future needs in teacher preparation.

Long -term relevance: meeting future needs and mega trends

Recent paradigm shifts in learning are certain to colour our future views on teaching and learning. For example, educationalists such as Hargreaves (2001) write that, *'schooling systems that excessively emphasize basic skills, memorization and recall of factual knowledge cannot develop the capacities for creation and innovation essential to live and work successfully within information societies.'* (p.:89). In fact, ten years ago, the Prime Minister of Singapore had stated that, *'the old formulae for success are unlikely to*

prepare our young for the new circumstances and new problems they will face… We must ensure that our young can think for themselves…'(1997:16, cited in Tripp). Changing views of education have also been incorporated in documents produced by the Hong Kong Education and Manpower Bureau (EMB) as part of their approach to 8 key learning areas (KLAs), including English. For instance, in their 2004 document the aim of English is *'to help learners lay a good foundation in learning English, paving the way for independent and lifelong learning and effective communication of knowledge, ideas, values, attitudes and experiences.'* (p. 4). To this end, language development strategies for Key Stage 1 include developing thinking skills, reference skills, library skills and information skills. One of the EMB's short-term focuses for teachers in the period 2001-2006 was to 'avoid excessive use of dictation and mechanical language practice exercises' (2004: 7). Hargreaves (op. cit.) writes that, *'(new approaches to) teaching means accommodating new technology and incorporating teaching strategies that help individuals and economies invent and apply new knowledge rather than merely memorize it.* (p. 89). This view is reflected in current EMB aims for English, which include *'to enable every learner to prepare for the changing socio-economic demands resulting from advances in information technology; these demands include the interpretation, use and production of materials for pleasure, study and work in the medium of English'* *(op.cit.* p.11).

Yet another paradigm shift has been a focus on individualized learning and learning-centred learning approaches, for example, students learning how to learn by developing the ability to plan, manage and evaluate their own learning and working with others. This is balanced by the growing need to recognize multiple sources of learning, both local and global, developing both a local and international outlook and life - long learning (see Cheng 2001:49). These kinds of seismic change necessitate changes in the way teachers are prepared to cope with learners facing these realities.

Responding to change

In attempting to prepare teachers for these kinds of changes, numerous publications highlight the inadequate preparation and involvement of teachers for the implementation of reforms such as those initiated by the EMB in Hong Kong (see Carless, 2003; Mok and Cheng 2002; Littlewood, 2007). As Elliott and Morris (2001) write, 'The problem of change is not that of securing compliance to external prescription, but of enhancing teachers' capacities for discernment, discrimination and judgement in relation to the particular contexts in which they are expected to effect change' (p.147-8). The following is an extract from an interview with a teacher in Taiwan (see Brewster, forthcoming) who, following professional development, seems to have developed this kind of ability.

...at the beginning when I saw the situation erm <u>I did have lots of doubts</u> but erm you know as time goes by because I believe that these are great ideas and can benefit our students so I tried try to get more resources you know because based on the way I taught or the you know original mind-set it sound impossible but er after that I tried to well ask myself the question could I make it possible? You know if we believe it's good for our kids why I couldn't adopt that way think that way? So then I try to observe other teacher er like the Chinese teacher er how they teach Mandarin because erm you know I realize that they do something similar to that. And so I realize that what are the things my students were familiar with and what are the things they are not familiar with so I would use the things they are familiar with and to change it to English teaching. I realize that it would be much more easier for them to you know to follow.

The ELT literature has long recognized context as crucial to language learning (e.g. Hayes, 1997; Holliday, 2001, Bax, 2003) and thus it is to this element we now turn, taking strengths from the internal and external context.

Environmental strength: providing contextual support

In the Asian context there are numerous examples of writers analyzing government attempts to introduce innovations such as communicative language teaching (cf. Wong and Ho, 2004) or task-based learning (Littlewoood 2007). For Bax (op.cit.) teacher education should focus not only on methodology but also on developing a heightened awareness of contextual factors and an ability to deal with them. In his view, 'the first priority is the learning context and the first step is to identify key aspects of that context before deciding what and how to teach in any given class' (2003:285). Armed with a range of pedagogical possibilities and knowledge of students' learning needs and styles, as well as knowledge of the local teaching and learning culture, the context-sensitive teacher trainer and teacher can then identify a suitable approach. As Wong and Ho (op.cit) report, this has clearly been taking place for some time in Asia since ELT innovations have gradually been modified to fit in with contextual requirements, leading to 'an extensive cross-breeding of elements, drawn from different ELT techniques, methods and approaches to form a localized methodology that supports the effective teaching and learning of English.' (2004:464).

An essential component in recognizing the role of context in sustaining innovation is the 'ownership' of innovative professional ideas, that is, the degree to which an innovation 'belongs' to the implementers (see Adey et al. 2004; Day 2004; Fullan & Hargreaves, 1994). Ownership and the sustainability of innovations are also linked to teacher autonomy and teachers' decision-making capabilities (e.g. McGrath 2000). Kohonen

(2003) stresses the importance in teacher autonomy of supporting teachers to develop an open and critical stance to their practice, thus enabling them to take conscious risks to try out and adapt new ideas. If teachers are to change the curriculum in action in their classroom, they require consistent support over a long period of time from a variety of sources, including policy-makers, and government officials, parents and teacher trainers. This forms part of the final key element, nurturing teachers' professional development.

Encouraging staff development, promoting collaboration.

Staff development is a key factor in providing and maintaining the quality of teachers. Day (1999) has defined professional development (PD) as 'the process by which, alone and with others, teachers review, renew and extend their commitment as change agents… '(p. 4). Adey et al (2004) propose a model of effective PD with four components:

- good quality professional development input which is sufficiently long, mirrors the target pedagogy and involves in-class support

- a pedagogically sound innovation with sufficient theory, evidence and materials

- a senior management which is committed, has a shared vision with the co-ordinators of PD and is prepared to make structural changes to maintain the innovation(s)

- groups of teachers who are supported and encouraged in developing ownership of changed beliefs and practice, who develop collegiality through sustained communication with peers and shared reflection.

The first three components are largely self-explanatory and are referred to briefly in later sections. With regard to the final point, collaboration and collegiality have been encouraged in Singapore through establishing Teachers' Learning Circles (see Tripp, 2004) which indicate a focus on the thinking teacher. These networks, established to foster collaborative inquiry and develop 'excellent practice' are seen to be 'best achieved through the constant collegial examination of pedagogy, the willingness to engage in a variety of improvement strategies and techniques, and the continuous up-grading of knowledge and skills' (p.194). This initiative has been accompanied by recognition of the need to alter and adapt former processes of staff development to those which 'value competencies built up through experience, practice and sharing and continual learning.' (Teo 2001:10, cited in Tripp). Taiwan, along with other Asian countries, is experimenting with an extension of a previously established select Professional Development Committee, consisting of practicing teachers and chaired by a School Principal, to a wider Professional Network for primary ELT (see Brewster, 2007, forthcoming). Here more practised teachers, some of whom have been trained as

teacher trainers, share their experiences and provide leadership for others.

Many educationalists identify collegiality and collaboration as key dimensions of teacher development leading to 'interactive professionalism' (cf. Fullan and Hargreaves ,1991). Richards and Farrell (2005) have found that the benefits of 'genuine' collegiality include developing greater awareness of issues in language teaching, increased motivation, more effective changes in teaching and professional empowerment. Although policy-makers may regard collegiality as a 'panacea for many ills', genuine collaboration is sophisticated and requires time. There are many critics of 'contrived collegiality' (see Davison, 2006) which, they argue, does not lead to professional collaboration and 'comfortable' collegiality, (Hargreaves, 1994), where a strong collaborative culture is established without strong individual development. As Fullan and Hargreaves caution, 'many forms of collegiality are superficial, partial and even counter-productive.' (1991:142). The question of native-English speaker teachers (NETS) may be considered a case in point.

These three areas, considered by many as key elements contributing to the success of a venture, cannot mask the reality of current problems in teacher preparation, both at the level of initial teacher education (ITE) and in-service education (INSET).

Current problems in ITE

Poor quality training for trainee teachers at primary level may arise from:

- an insufficiency of suitable training materials

- curricula which do not meet future needs and trends

- curricula which are out-dated and out of touch with current world developments

- curricula which lack coherence between departments, academic areas

- an inappropriate theory-practice balance

- insufficient demonstration, too much lecturing; too little participation

- out-of date assessment practices

- inadequate levels of teaching practice

- trainers who are not sufficiently experienced in primary level ELT.

Additionally, there may be other factors, such as teachers' poor levels of English, poor evaluation of courses and follow-up, low importance attached to the evaluation of overall training results.

TED Structure and Curricula

In terms of the structure and curricula for primary level ELT, individual education systems might consider how far is there a need for:

- clearer links between curriculum development bodies and teacher training institutions?

- organizational structures which shape the way courses are developed to make them more responsive to key issues and change contexts in schools?

- the use of partnership schools?

- a shift in assessment to teachers' propositional knowledge: how theory and practice are linked. e.g. tasks that require reflection, use of the library and technological resources and revision of work in the light of feedback?

- teacher education structures which act both as supporters and critical commentators on policy?

Teaching Practice

With regard to teaching practice key questions include:

- Is there sufficient practice? In HKIED, B.Ed. Primary years 1 and 2 observe classes, while years 3 and 4 teach for 8 weeks.

Are there:

- educators with relevant experience to prepare student teachers? In HKIED there have been 'attachment' programmes for teacher educators. More recently 'teaching fellows' straight from schools have been employed.

- clear links between course components? Good links between departments/sections often improve course content by providing greater consistency and transparency.

- consistent and relevant features required in lesson planning? For instance, does the format encourage a focus only on vocabulary and grammar?

- mechanisms for classroom language development and classroom language assessment (CLA)? See examples of revised descriptors from HKIED.

- sufficient provision, training and contact with mentors/supervisory teachers in participating schools?

- mechanisms to provide both developmental and summative assessment?

Assessment practices

Key questions here include:

- How far is there assessment of learning versus assessment for learning?

- What forms of assessment take place: examinations, tasks or essays?

- Are there both oral and written components of assessment? In HKIED this is often weighted 40% : 60%. with video/ DVD recordings. What forms and range of assessment tasks are desirable? E.g. tests, examinations, essays, lesson and unit plans, evaluations of textbooks, analyses of classroom processes, action research projects etc.

Unfortunately, the scope of this paper does not allow for more discussion with regard to ITE, so we now briefly turn to in-service teacher education (INSET).

Current problems in INSET

Key questions in this domain include the following relating to planning and organization, delivery and follow-up.

How far is / are there:

- a lack of incentive for teacher self development?

- a lack of coherent development programmes for INSET?

- appropriate motives for participation? In HK teachers need to attend a required number of hours every two years: does this lead to mere 'slot-filling'?

- equal opportunities to attend development programmes?

- a recognition of different stages in teachers' expertise and a concomitant recognition of differing professional needs? Is there a mismatch between INSET development programmes and teacher needs?

- opportunities for both top-down or bottom-up approaches to planning and organizing courses?

- high quality INSET training /development systems and materials which take account of local, contextual factors in teaching and learning?

- TED Curricula which are in touch with current developments and also of relevance to the local context?

- mechanisms to ensure there is teacher up-take from INSET courses? Research shows that short, sharp INSET with no –follow-up or further support simply does not work. Generally teacher up-take tends to be low; extensive in-school support from Panel Chairs /HoDs/Principals is needed for real change in curriculum-in-action.

- sufficient follow-up of evaluation results to modify subsequent courses?

- sufficient follow-up mechanisms after training/development?

An important skill in learning how to learn is the ability to ask the right questions. I hope that this series of questions serves to highlight key issues in both initial and in-service teacher preparation. I would like to turn now to the issue of local relevance in the content of teacher preparation.

Developing context-sensitive teacher preparation materials

It is important to bear in mind the caveats provided by Veenman et al. (cited in Hayes, 1997) regarding the adoption of an overly deterministic view of teacher preparation courses and materials. Their success, counted as instances when teachers adopt innovations as part of their classroom practice, is not solely dependent on the course content and methodology. Other key elements, as Hayes (op.cit.) reminds us, include features such as supportive school environments and individual teachers' personal biographies, situated within socio-educational contexts. Nevertheless, in this paper I would like to outline six key issues which trainers might consider in their teacher preparation. This is based on extensive experience in teacher preparation, most recently in Taiwan.

1. How is local knowledge used to select the training topics?

- In order to do this, teachers from the appropriate school sector must not only be included but have the autonomy to select their own topics.

- The topic(s) can be selected from these teachers' interests and experience but also canvassed from other typical local teachers.

These are key points since they provide ultimate responsibility and ownership for the selection of ideas and information which is so vital.

2. How is local knowledge used to create interest in a training topic?

- Are there links to local curriculum documents, textbooks, extra-curricular events, tests etc. ?

- Are there examples of typical teaching problems related to the local teaching and

learning context, such as highly differentiated classrooms arising from additional private schooling?

- Are there examples of typical classroom behaviour by local students and parents, such as an over-concern with assessment?

Attention to these points is likely to ignite the interest of local teachers; there is generally insufficient time to consider innovations which are not adapted to accommodate these features.

3. Is evidence provided of an understanding of input but which is applied to the local context?

- Is there mention of local constraints, class size, other teachers, students previous learning, methods used in other classes.

- Are practical examples provided of overcoming these?

As an illustration, there may be little point in talking to teachers about research on what constitutes 'a large class'. What they need are practical, realistic techniques for dealing with them.

4. Are examples related to the local curriculum?

- Are there adaptations of or examples from textbooks, school documents, local tests?

Teachers will often report something that is not directly relevant to their teaching context, no matter how practical, as 'theoretical'. Although this may be frustrating to the teacher, they do have a point. The trainer can draw many theoretical threads from a practical local exemplar.

5. Are there examples which show the suggestions are workable within the local context?

- Are there examples of students' work resulting from exemplars of revised textbook activities, tests?

- Are there DVDs of classroom practice - not showcase pieces - made by local teachers?

- Are there examples of initial difficulties which were overcome and how? Difficulties which could not be overcome and why?

Examples of these sorts of item contribute significantly to a trainer's 'face validity' and are useful tools in the novice trainer's 'training kit'.

6. Are there examples of local reactions to the innovations?

- Are there examples of students' comments, verbal or written?

- Are there examples of parents or other teachers' reactions? The Principal?

These will add value and capture teachers' attention; it is worth remembering that they need to be persuaded, not simply informed.

Conclusions

Educationalists argue that current thinking about the most effective approach to teacher education may suffer from the failure to ground recommended practice on adequate theoretical models of how teachers learn to teach and improve over time. To do this it would be useful to establish stages in a teacher's career and offer appropriate development at carefully defined stages. Thus, IITED courses would be regarded as a 'first stage' only; there would be no need to cover a wide range of teaching methods but rather, there might be a greater attempt to ensure trainee teachers initially do a few things very well. Further professional development appropriate to later professional stages, or in response to curriculum initiatives and the like would be provided in subsequent courses.

We also need to consider research into professional development after the initial teacher preparation stage. It has been argued that creating a collaborative professional learning environment is 'the single most important factor' for successful school improvement and 'the first order of business' for those seeking to enhance the effectiveness of teaching and learning (Eastwood and Louis, 1992:215 cited in Day et al. 2004) Mujis et al go on to write that it is 'imperative that schools adopt evaluative approaches to professional development that not only accurately gauge learning outcomes at organizational, teacher and student level but that also accurately assess professional learning needs. At present … evaluation mechanisms (are usually) limited to simple satisfaction checklists' (2004:303).

In relation to ITED and INSET we can raise two key questions: firstly, how far are these general views applicable to the East Asian context? Secondly, to what extent are the more specific questions raised earlier in this paper relevant to the debate on ELT teacher preparation in East Asia?

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08

Teacher Training for Low Proficiency Level Primary English Language Teachers - How it is Working in Indonesia

ITJE CHODIDJAH

Background

This paper aims at discussing the teacher training that Jakarta Local Education and Training Centre has been doing to support the policy from the central government on the teaching of English in primary schools. The Government policy no 060/U/1993 issued in 1994 mentioned that curriculum for primary education include some compulsory subjects that also called as national subjects and some local content subjects that can be programmed based on the needs and conditions of the schools.

In primary schools, English is one of the local content subjects and it is not a must for all schools in any provinces to adopt. English is started at grade four and taught in 40 minute sessions twice a week. The main purpose of including English in local content subjects is because of its global role (Suyanto, 2000) and the development of human resources in Indonesia (Chodidjah, 2000).

One of the aspects that a region should consider is at least to involve the local government (Bappeda) to get information on the priority of the development in its area, in Irianto, 1995. Therefore, the Centre of Education and Training for Jakarta region decided to look at the preparation of the English teachers in state primary schools, although this office has no direct connection to teacher development. The main reason is because they have the resources to train English teachers.

The background of teachers

In Jakarta region there are more than 2200 state primary schools, spreading in 5 areas. Since 1994 English has been chosen as one of the local content subjects to teach in primary schools which are ready with the teachers and resources. This decision was received enthusiastically by schools, so that by the end of 2006 almost all primary schools in Jakarta teach English to their students without careful consideration. One of the reasons is pressures from parents and society.

Schools which are located in wealthier areas are usually more capable of hiring extra English teachers because parents support. Some schools just hire university students who can speak English because of lower rate of payment. Some schools assign their permanent teachers who seem to have better English or have an English background. The training set up by the regional Education and Training Centre is mainly for those permanent teachers who are registered as civil servants. Some of them are home class teachers and some of them are special subject teachers (sport, religion or art) who speak a little English. The reasoning behind this is that those teachers understand the students better and have more contact with them too.

This annual training can only accommodate for 80 – 120 participants. Participants are selected based on their English proficiency. From the data of the English placement test, it is found that the levels of English of those participants range between elementary to lower intermediate level. Besides the English entry test the candidate participants should also fill in questionnaires to describe their motivation and availability. Considering this level of English, the time allocated for English improvement is longer than the time for the teaching methodology training.

The English training

The training is intensive from Monday to Friday four hours a day for 4 weeks for the English improvement course and 6 hours a day for 2 weeks for the methodology training. The topics chosen for the English improvement are those related to the topics that children have in their English classes in primary schools. The methodology applied in the training follows a task-based approach which is meant to give teachers ideas on how to teach English more communicatively. The activities in the classroom focus on improving oral ability and developing their confidence. No single textbook is used as reference, and instead more handouts and worksheets are applied.

In the language training process, trainers apply the use of simple instructions to make them used to listening to them. Trainees are then expected to apply the same techniques when they teach in their classroom. In most sessions, trainers use teaching

techniques which are appropriate for children. The teaching media used are also to represent those commonly used in ordinary children classes, such as pictures, flashcards, puppets, stories, etc.

The English training mainly focuses on these functional topics: greetings, numbers, alphabet, colours, things in the classroom, daily activities, appearances, describing people and things, food and drinks, and other similar topic. The language aspects introduced are also simple and functional so that they can use them, not just understand information about them. Classroom language is also taught to give the participants an opportunity to practise using classroom instructions and how to set the class.

To support them building their confidence in using the language a one- day immersion programme is done. It is an activity which involves at least two English native speakers. The purpose is to give them an opportunity to practise their English with native speakers and find out whether they understand them or they were understood. In this activity, participants are only allowed to use English when converse with anyone. Usually the native speakers act as the hosts who receive the guests (the participants), who are served with Western food in a Western way. Videos about the countries where they are from are also shown. This is to expose them to some culture of English speaking countries. In this programme, participants present their schools too.

The methodology training

The methodology applied is bottom – up, starting from the teachers' experiences in handling their English classroom. They usually share a lot of their success and challenges, in either their English class or other subject matters. They are then encouraged to link their experiences during the English training. At the end of the training the participants have to do peer teaching. Each of them is given 10 – 15 minutes to show their ability in following the right procedure in introducing new language concepts, setting up practice activities, and encouraging interaction among the students.

The training is a combination of workshops and presentations. In the workshops the participants are encouraged to discuss and create posters to ensure the learning. The module of the methodology training consists of these following topics:

- Training regulations and policies

- Children's characteristics

- How children learn a foreign language

- Lesson planning and classroom management

- Teaching all skills in an integrated way

- Classroom language

- Using and supplementing the course book

- Making use of teaching media

- Assessment.

The beauty and the beast of the training

Depending on their performance, each participant is given an Achievement Record with some recommendations for the head teachers. From the achievement record, the participants will know their strengths and weaknesses and how they can work on it. So far, about 70% of the alumni are now teaching English (in their own classes and some are to other classes to). From the 70 % who are teaching now, the majority did not have any experience of teaching English before. Those who are not teaching at the moment are prevented mainly because of administrative reasons.

From the questionnaire held by the centre, the alumni mentioned that this training has benefited them in their teaching in general. From the training they said they learn how to handle children and improve their confidence. They also become more independent and responsible for their own personal development.

The beast

The recruitment system is now still far from ideal, because it involves the Primary Education office. The distribution of the announcement often does not reach the right mix of participants. Sometimes a group from an area dominate only because the invitations. It is also more of 'favour' or 'just-easy-to-call' principle than proper identification of candidates. The lack of coordination among the supposedly involved institutions is not good enough. So far there has not been funding allocated for revision of the process.

As a matter of fact, although teachers are quite successful in the training and are capable of teaching, they still have problems with head teachers or supervisors who have not got enough knowledge about how language is supposedly to be taught. They still believe in conventional classroom delivery where teachers are actively teaching the students in a teacher-controlled environment.

It is still quite hard to convince the authority and the community to understand that if children only have about 36 hours of English lessons a year, it is not always necessary to test the children, and instead assess them.

The training is successful at the pragmatic level and still a lot of improvement at policy and administrative level. However, there are still some issues to deal with, among them are   collaboration among the policy makers; the cascading of the training through trainer training; mentoring and supervising which should be encouraged to speed up dissemination; standard training core materials should be developed; self study materials should be provided to improve English proficiency.

09

Philippines:
A Framework for English Language Instruction (K-3) in the Context of the Philippine Bilingual Policy

NEMAH N.HERMOSA

Objectives

This paper will attempt to do the following:

1) Describe the 4-Pronged Approach to literacy and language learning in the early grades

2) Recommend how this approach can be used in Philippine primary schools, within the context of the Philippine bilingual policy, and

3) Describe current projects and reform initiatives relating to the above, especially in the area of teacher development.

The 4-Pronged Approach: Theoretical Basis

The 4-Pronged Approach to literacy and language learning in the early grades uses an integrated affect-skills framework. It is literature-based but with a strong phonemic awareness/phonics instruction component.

What are the theoretical foundations of the approach?

Figure 1: 3 Types of Knowledge Needed for Reading/Writing Acquisition

Transfer

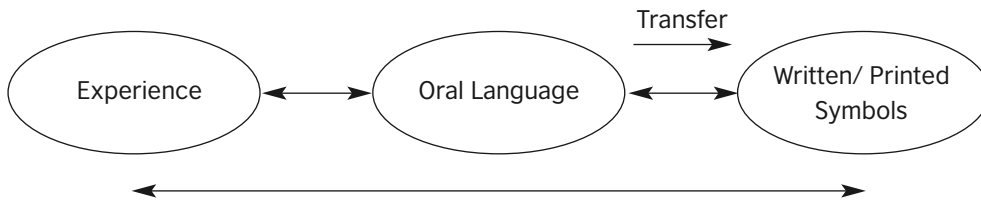Experience ⟷ Oral Language ⟷ Written/ Printed Symbols

Figure 1 shows the interplay of one's experience, oral language, and ability to interpret the written or printed symbols for that language. Oral language consists of symbols that stand for experiences. The written/printed symbols that represent oral language are, therefore, also a representation of experiences. According to Jennings (1965), the reading of Circle C is the culmination of all other kinds of reading. We cannot read Circle C unless we have become "skilled in all the other kinds," that is, Circles A and B. This idea is reflected by the schema-theoretic view of reading (Rumelhart, 1994) that emphasizes the interaction of these three types of schemata or knowledge for reading to take place.

The relationship of the 3 circles is also reciprocal. It is true that Circle A develops first, followed by Circle B, then by Circle C. However, once an individual has acquired a language, he uses it to learn more experiences. Similarly, once he has learned to read, Circle C becomes a very powerful tool for learning, even more so than oral language.

The nature of how one acquires Circle C in relation to Circles A and B has been more fully explained by Fries (1963). He speaks of the reading process as consisting of three stages. The first stage he calls the TRANSFER STAGE, the period during which the child learns a new set of signals--the visual symbols (the letters, spelling patterns, punctuation marks) that stand for the auditory symbols (the oral language) that he already knows. Before transfer can take place, the child should have already become proficient in the language, within his "narrow linguistic experience." Thus, the paradigm in Figure 1 mainly refers to a first language context.

The 4-Pronged Approach: Curricular/Pedagogical Basis

The 4-Pronged Approach was a framework developed by Prof. Basilisa Manhit after a 6-year research done at the University of the Philippines Elementary School (now part of the UP Integrated School) in early 70s. It was formally adopted by the UPIS in 1976 with the institution of an integrated K-2 curriculum. New features were revised or added through the years, mainly those reflecting principles of whole language.

The American Federation of Teachers may have put out this position statement in 1998, but even the original iteration of the 4-Pronged Approach already reflected the components of a balanced approach to early literary and language instruction.

All students must be guaranteed a carefully crafted, and appropriately balanced, approach to the teaching of reading. This must include early, systematic and explicit instruction in the necessary subskills -- including phonemic awareness and phonics -- as well as an early emphasis on listening skills, language development, conceptual and vocabulary development, storytelling and writing, a deep exploration of the treasure chest of rich and challenging children's literature, and literacy-related activities that can help enhance children's love of books and of learning.

Resolution on Reading, 1998
American Federation of Teachers (AFT)

The 4-Pronged Approach: Components and Features

The four major components or prongs of 4PA are:

Prong 1:   Genuine Love for Reading (GLR)

Prong 2:   Critical Thinking (CT)

Prong 3:   Grammar and Oral Language Development (GOLD)

Prong 4:   Transfer Stage (TS)

In developing the objectives for Prongs 1 and 2, learning activities revolve around storybooks. The reading habit can only be formed if the young child is exposed to enjoyable and meaningful reading materials. Meaningful and enjoyable literature is also a good vehicle for developing different levels of thinking, from basic literal understanding to higher levels, such as critical and creative thinking. The story is likewise a good vehicle to contextualize language study (Prong 3). Prong 4 involves instruction in phonemic awareness, phonics, and writing. The children learn the rudiments of reading and writing through a systematic and well-sequenced phonics program combined with sight word vocabulary development. The component and features of the approach are summarized in Figures 2-4.

Figure 2. Components of the 4-Pronged Approach

PRONG	GOAL	MATERIALS/ACTIVITIES
Prong 1 **GENUINE LOVE FOR READING (GLR)**	To develop a genuine love for reading so that it becomes a lifelong habit To respond to the literature through imaginative recreation of the aesthetic experience, individually or in groups	Storybooks and other trade books ▪ Engagement activities using a variety of media, reading-writing connection; collaborative learning
Prong 2 **CRITICAL THINKING** **(CT)**	To develop the habit of reflecting on what is read and exercising judgments, valuing, and decision-making.	Teacher-led discussion using questions on different levels of thinking, leading to discussion of theme and values. ▪ Small group engagement outputs incorporated in the discussion
Prong 3 **GRAMMAR & ORAL LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT (GOLD)**	To develop vocabulary and oral language proficiency	Story in GLR/CT is used as springboard for language lesson; realia, pictures, charts, role play, etc. to facilitate and scaffold learning of functions and grammatical structures
Prong 4 **TRANSFER STAGE (TS)**	To develop phonemic awareness, decoding, and encoding skills	Systematic phonics lessons Worksheets, charts, word cards, activity/task boards, games, puzzles, etc. High frequency words are developed as sight vocabulary Ability grouping

Figure 3. Lesson Structure of the 4-Pronged Approach

PRONGS	RATIONALE
GLR – CT (Directed Reading Lesson)	
A. Prereading	
▪ Developing concepts / vocabulary	Prepares the listener/reader for the experiential and linguistic content of the text
▪ Activating prior knowledge	
▪ Developing a purpose for reading	Prepares the context
	Enables the learners to set personal goals for listening/reading
B. Reading	
▪ Read aloud by the teacher	Learners respond to the literature
C. Post Reading	
▪ Creative/critical thinking through engagement activities	Students hold, explore, modify and refine their initial response to the literature; includes evaluating and valuing
▪ Critical thinking through discussion	
GOLD – TS (Explicit Teaching)	
A. Introduction/Presentation Shows examples of language structures / functions based on literature studied	Scaffolding the process
Introduce / Review PA, phonics lessons through examples	Based on the Vygotskian concept of the zone of proximal development, the core of this approach is modeling of language use or reading strategy by the teacher. It shows the transition from full support given by the teacher during the initial learning to student independence when the teacher has released the responsibility to the student.
B. Teaching or Modeling Teacher demonstrates language use or reading skill/strategy	
C. Guided Practice Examples are done together by class or group with teacher guidance	
D. Independent Practice Learners work through same exercise but do so on their own.	

Figure 4: Classroom Format of the 4-Pronged Approach (Sample 2-hour lesson)

PRONG	TIME	WHO?
GLR-CT	45 minutes	
Pre-reading	15	Whole class
Reading	5	Whole class
Post Reading	25	Interest groups > Whole class
GOLD	30 minutes	
Introduction/Presentation	5	Whole class
Teaching or Modeling	10	
Guided Practice	10	Whole class/grps
Independent Practice	5	Individual students
TS	45 minutes	Ability groups/Individual Students

	Basic Group	*Average Group*	*Fast Group*
15 minutes	OW	SW	SW
15 minutes	SW	OW	SW
15 minutes	SW	SW	OW

OW = Oral Work (Presentation, modeling, guided practice
SW = Seatwork (Independent practice, taskboard activities)

The 4-Pronged Approach in the Context of the Philippine Bilingual Policy

The bilingual policy in basic education in the Philippines was promulgated through the National Board of Education (NBE) Resolution No. 73-7, s. 1973 of the then Department of Education, Culture and Sports (DECS), now the Department of Education. Bilingual education in the Philippines is defined operationally as the separate use of Filipino and English as the language of instruction in specific subject areas. As embodied in DECS Order No. 25, s. 1973, Pilipino (or Filipino since 1987) shall be used as medium of instruction in social studies/social sciences, music, arts, physical education, home economics, practical arts, character education. English, on the other hand, is allocated

to science, mathematics, and technology subjects. The same subject allocation is provided in the 1987 Policy on Bilingual Education disseminated through Department Order No. 52, s.1987. The languages spoken by the children or the local languages are used as auxiliary languages which may be used as aid in instruction.

English and Filipino are also taught as subjects. In Grades 1-3, the daily time allotment for each is 100 minutes. The curriculum is embodied in the Revised Basic Education Curriculum (RBEC), which lists the learning competencies expected of the students in each subject area. Given that there are learning competencies to be developed in both English and Filipino one question that arises and which has not been resolved is: Should the teaching of beginning reading and writing be done simultaneously in both languages? Should it be done in Filipino first? Or should it be done in English first?

Earlier, in Figure 1, it was pointed out that a certain level of oral proficiency is needed for a child to effectively learn to read in that language. Thus a child who enters school and embarks on learning to read in the first language is ready to make the "transfer." But what happens when he is confronted with learning to read in another language? Figure 6 shows a modification of Figure 1.

Figure 6: 3 Types of Knowledge Needed for Reading/Writing Acquisition: Implications for Second Language Contexts (Hermosa, 2002)
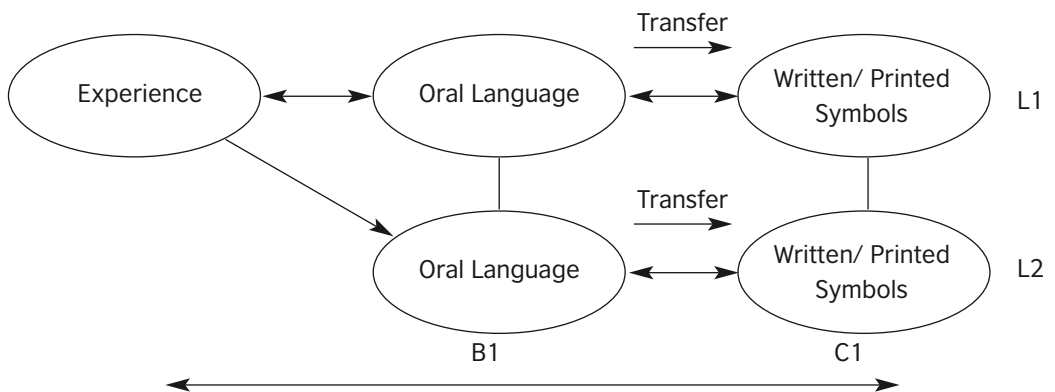
What do the additional circles mean? In learning to read in a second language, the child need not have another set of experiences. However, he has to learn the oral symbols for these experiences (Circle B1) before he can read these symbols in their written or printed form (Circle C1). For instance, a child who has experienced silya will not understand the word chair unless he has learned that it is the English equivalent for the same experience.

For Filipino children to read in English, oral development in English is a must. This

includes not only vocabulary but also grammatical patterns of English. The same requirement applies to non-Tagalog children learning to read in Filipino.

If the first and second languages use the same writing system (as Filipino and English do), then the child saves time because the sound-symbol relationships and other writing conventions can be generalized from L1 to L2. However, the child has to learn differences in other features, such as spelling patterns and additional sound-symbol correspondences.

It can be inferred from Figure 6 that it is easier for a child to learn to read in L1 than in L2 since he has to grapple with Circle C concerns only. Indeed, as the UNESCO position statement on "Education in a Multilingual World" states, "It is an obvious yet not generally recognized truism that learning in a language which is not one's own provides a double set of challenges, not only is there the challenge of learning a new language but also that of learning new knowledge contained in that language (UNESCO, 2003, p.14). The same document cites studies showing that, in many cases, instruction in the mother tongue is beneficial to language competencies in the first language, achievement in other subject areas, and second language learning.

This is the reason why at the UP Integrated School K-2 department where the 4-pronged approach was first institutionalized, the following format is used in Kindergarten, where the transfer stage takes place:

		Semester 1		Semester 2	
Subject	Time Allotment	Coverage		Time Allotment	Coverage
Filipino	90-120 minutes	Prongs 1-4: GLR, CT, GOLD, TS		45-60 minutes	Prongs 1-4: GLR, CT, GOLD, TS
English	45-60 minutes	Prongs 1-3: GLR, CT, GOLD		90-120 minutes	Prongs 1-4: GLR, CT, GOLD, TS
Math	30 minutes			30 minutes	

In this set-up, the children start the "transfer" stage in Filipino while doing a lot of oral language development activities in English. Most of the children become independent readers in Filipino by the end of the first semester. They are also ready to start to learn to read in English in the second semester having developed a sizeable vocabulary and a level of oral proficiency that warrants efficient transfer of the knowledge from oral to printed symbols. Most of the TS lessons in Filipino are for developing fluency, rather than lessons in phonics.

From the results of an action research done in the mid-1990s, one of the most positive results in this set-up is the high level of cognitive development and self-confidence among the children.

Without a clear answer from the Department of Education in terms of the question, "In what language should children learn to read first?" Grade 1 children learn to read in both Filipino and English simultaneously, regardless of whether they are ready for the "transfer" process in the second language.

In addition to the language issue, it must also be noted that the 4-Pronged Approach, has not permeated the public school system. Only Region 4 and, more recently, the National Capital Region has extensively used the approach. I belong to a team who has been doing teacher training for the last three years on the 4PA for representatives of nine regions. From interviews with teachers that have been involved in our training programs, language instruction in either Filipino or English, is still very skills-based, with the four language areas approached separately rather than in an integrated manner. Due to lack of resources, literature in the form of tradebooks is mostly absent. Most classrooms use a textbook and, possibly, a workbook for each subject.

Recommendations

Based on the foregoing discussion, two major recommendations are forwarded:

1) That literacy and language instruction in the primary grades move towards a more

literature-based integrated program, balancing code approaches with whole language, and structural and communicative methodologies, as exemplified by the 4-Pronged Approach; and

2) That children be taught to read first in a language they speak and understand.

What about non-Tagalog children? The BESRA recommendations

Tagalog is the basis of Filipino, and majority of Filipino children are non-Tagalog speakers. In effect, for these children, Filipino is also a second language.

Due to the incongruence between the target languages in school, namely Filipino and English, the mother tongues have been regarded as a hindrance to learning. Many students, particularly in the early years, feel dissociated from school and do not enjoy their learning experiences. This results in the lack of language proficiency and mastery in Filipino and English (i.e., low levels of comprehension), which, in turn, compromises performance in the other subject areas (Ocampo et al, 2006).

How does one factor in the mother tongue into the equation? A series of consultations with different stakeholders was recently conducted nationwide, as part of the Basic Education Sector Reform Agenda (BESRA). A major reform recommendation that emanated from these consultations follows the framework of additive bilingualism, where the native language is maintained while succeeding languages are developed.

Teacher preparation

Snow, Burns, and Griffin (1998) have identified the key curricular areas in preparing teachers for beginning literacy instruction:

1) how to provide rich conceptual experiences that promote growth in vocabulary and reasoning skills

2) lexical development, from early referential (naming) abilities to relational and abstract terms and finer-shaded meanings

3) the early development of listening comprehension skills, and the kinds of syntactic and prose structures that early grades children may not yet have mastered

4) young children's sense of story

5) young children's sensitivity to the sounds of language

4) developmental conceptions of written language (print awareness)

5) development of concepts of space, including directionality

6) fine motor development, and

7) means for inspiring motivation to read.

Snow et al (1998) also emphasized the crucial role of teacher preparation: *"A critical component in the preparation of preschool and early grades teachers is supervised, relevant, clinical experience in which pre-service teachers receive ongoing guidance and feedback. A principal goal of this experience is the ability to integrate and apply the knowledge base productively and reflectively in practice."*

Pre-Service teacher preparation

A study by Pado (2004) revealed the inadequacy of teacher preparation, particularly in the field of early literacy instruction, in the Philippines. Most teacher education institutions follow the curriculum prescribed by the Commission on Higher Education

(CHED) whose curriculum is generalist in orientation. Literacy and language instruction is only part of a course called Teaching Strategies I.

However, at the College of Education, University of the Philippines, pre-service teacher preparation for teaching early literacy is given close attention. All those studying to be teachers of elementary school, regardless of area of concentration take the course EDR 169 (Theory & Practice in Teaching Beginning Reading), which is preceded, among others, by foundation courses on language and reading education. EDR 169 is a concrete example of the kind of clinical, supervised experience that Snow et al described.

The CHED has recently revised the curriculum. Fortunately, there is one course in this curriculum, Developmental Reading 2 (Theories, techniques and materials in teaching beginning reading and their application), with a syllabus that uses the 4-Pronged Approach framework. Still, it is doubtful if this curriculum includes the courses that provide the knowledge base of the curricular areas that Snow et al mentioned.

In-Service teacher training

In-service training programs have been conducted in the past three years on the use of 4PA. The MacDonald's –funded project Bright Minds Read implemented the alternative program in using the 4PA in 70 schools, with intensive training of teachers involved. The National Capital Region was pleased with the results and is continuing with the program. I heard they are planning to implement a nation-wide program.

The Jesus V. Del Rosario Foundation has teamed up with the Department of Education in sponsoring Grade 1 and multigrade teachers to undertake a training program on the 4PA. To date, 360 teachers from 9 regions have been trained. Each of these teachers is also given a set of 32 storybooks with a 4PA teacher's guide and other teaching materials to help them implement the approach. One hundred twenty (120) Grade 1 teachers in the Division of Tarlac are scheduled for training in April-May, 2007.

As far as Recommendation 1 above goes, the prospects seems quite promising, with the revised teacher education curriculum, as well as the continuous in-service teacher training, courtesy of corporate foundations.

The BESRA recommendation has been submitted to the Department of Education. Assuming that the DepEd considers it, it may be headed toward a collision course with legislation, since the Gullas Bill (House Bill 4701) has already been passed by Congress and awaiting action by the Senate. Be that as it may, the basic principle remains, and Recommendation No. 2 still holds.

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Progress and Challenges in Primary ELT in Singapore

RUTH Y L WONG

Introduction

The Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) 2001 reported that for the overall reading achievement, Singapore is ranked 15th out of 35 participating countries – no mean feat for a country where the majority of the students learn English as a second language. The findings suggest that our students perform better on basic decoding and standard comprehension measures compared to those in other comparable non-English-as-first-language countries, and that our increasing percentage of English-at-home students achieve better results than students in predominantly English-speaking countries such as New Zealand. However, on teachers' self-report of practices, the study claimed that 90% of classroom activities in the reading classroom in Singapore are at the basic factual level, requiring students to identify main ideas and to explain or support their understanding of what has been read. More specifically, the findings reveal that the three main reading instructional activities in a Singapore reading lesson are "understand new vocabulary", "teacher reading aloud" and "pupils reading silently". "Identifying main ideas" and "Explain/support understanding of what has been read" make up 90% of reading activities in Singapore classrooms, and the three most common follow-up activities are pupils answering questions orally, pupils writing down their answers, and pupils talking to each other.

What is really happening in our reading classrooms? This paper reports on the design of a research project that describes the reality in our reading lessons by empirically

describing actual, not self-reported, practices in the teaching of reading in Singapore primary classrooms at the Primary 3 (age 9) level. Preliminary data collection and possible implications of various reading activities are discussed. The paper ends with a discussion of one preservice teacher education programme to prepare beginning teachers for language teaching in Singapore primary classrooms.

The research project

Design and sample

This paper describes the design of a coding scheme to describe Reading lessons in Singapore primary classrooms. The sample is Primary 3 (age 9) pupils. This level was selected to make the findings more generalizable and comparable to the PIRLS study, which looked at a cross-section of Primary 4 pupils.1

Methodology

With the implementation of the new 2001 English syllabus, four commercial textbooks were available. These are: Celebrate English, Instep, My Pals are Here, and Treks. These textbooks were phased in in stages, starting with Primary 1 and Primary 2 in 2001, Primary 3 in 2002, and so on. Thus, all Primary 3 classes started using the new commercial textbook from 2002. Coincidentally, all the four textbooks organize English language lessons around thematic units. Each thematic unit generally lasts from two to three weeks. Treks is the only textbook that is not used in any of our sample schools. Until recently, all Primary 4 pupils sat for a national streaming examination at the end of the year. Thus, it would have been extremely difficult for the research team to get access to Primary 4 classes for this research.

Two research assistants (RAs) were attached to this project. Each stayed in a class for the duration of an entire thematic unit for English. Even though the focus of the project was Reading lessons, it was felt that looking at Reading lessons in isolation would not give us the general sense of the flow, sequence and coordination of the lessons within each thematic unit. It was also not very fair to the teacher for us to analyse the Reading lessons without considering the objectives of the lesson(s) that came before and after the Reading lessons. All the Reading lessons were audio- and video-taped. Notes were made for the other English lessons.

At the end of the thematic unit, the teacher as well as twelve pupils (selected by the teacher) from different ability groups were interviewed. During the interview, questions about Reading and Reading practices were asked.

Instrumentation

The coding scheme

To avoid being caught up in the web of the various Reading debates, and, more importantly, in order not to be trapped into making preconceived assumptions about what happens in a Reading classroom in Singapore, it was decided that our coding scheme would incorporate the existing taxonomies documented in Reading research to date.

Reading lessons are broadly divided into three main phases: Pre-reading stage, During reading stage, and Post-reading stage. Within each stage, there can be one or more phases. Each phase is determined by a change in activity.

Each phase is in turn coded for the following categories:

1. Focus

This research study adopts the four-resources model proposed by Freebody and Luke (1990):

> (a) Decoding skills: Concerned with basic decoding of the text.

> (b) Comprehension skills: Concerned with overall meaning of the text.

> (c) Functional skills: Focused on the sociolinguistic, pragmatic and sociocultural appropriateness of the text.

> (d) Critical analyzing skills: Focused on critically analyzing and questioning the underlying assumptions in a text.

The analysis of this category helps to inform us how teaching can be designed to address the various roles. While coding this category, we look at what the teacher does.

2. Personal text connectedness (PTC)

This category allows us to check for teachable moments when the teacher creates opportunities for pupils to relate their prior knowledge/experience to the text that is being read. A five-point scale is used to measure this category.

3. Technical metalanguage (TM)

This refers to specialized language or talking about the language. In particular, we would like to find out whether the teachers are using metalanguage to raise the pupils' awareness of text types. The teaching of text types is a new feature in our 2001 English syllabus. Thus, this category will provide insightful data on whether our pre- and in-service programmes have been effective in equipping our teachers with both the

knowledge and the pedagogy of teaching different text types.

4. Discourse format

This refers to the discourse that is carried out during the lesson. For a more meaningful description of the data, the format the teacher uses is differentiated from that of the pupils. In general, it is expected that only one discourse format will be checked during any single phase.

5. Participation structures

This refers to the interaction patterns between the teacher and the pupils.

6. Engagement

This describes the level and/or extent of the pupils paying attention or are engaged in the task at hand.

7. Classroom management talk

This refers to the amount of time spent on disciplining and managing behaviour, and will inform us on the extent that our teachers have classroom management problems which impede their teaching.

Findings: realities

The text

Generally, the teacher sticks closely to the prescribed textbook. This is not surprising, given the examination-oriented emphasis in our curriculum. There are two areas of concern in this finding. Firstly, it implies that our teachers, despite the teacher training, continue to view the teaching of English as a content subject, and so feel the need to "complete the syllabus", in this case, complete the textbook. Secondly, it implies that our teachers see product (as opposed to process) as being more important in the teaching of English. This pedagogy is, of course, largely driven by the examinations, which are currently more academic in nature.

The pupils

The pupils in the sample range from above average to below average. Most of the classes had pupils of mixed abilities. It is expected that by Primary 3, the pupils would already have mastered basic reading skills such as word recognition, decoding skills and answering literal questions. Our findings indicate that this is true for the majority of the pupils. Unfortunately, and not surprisingly, a few pupils fall through the cracks. For example, one teacher lamented that in her class, there were "twelve pupils reading at

the Primary 1 level". In another class, one pupil "still does not know the letters of the alphabet", and some pupils in another class "have not even bought their textbook". Given the fact that our Reading lessons are so heavily dependent on the textbook (see above), this means that these pupils become more and more academically disadvantaged. The pupils are usually highly engaged in tasks assigned to them.

The lesson

There is more reading than we had originally thought. As expected, the bulk of the time is spent on reading aloud. This is done in various forms – the teacher reading aloud, the class reading aloud, groups of pupils reading aloud, or individual pupils reading aloud. The most common teacher discourse is the Initiation-Response-Evaluation (IRE). This is not necessarily a bad thing. In a class of 40, the IRE format serves as an effective and quick means to check for comprehension.

Teachers are highly conscious of time in the Singapore classroom. The transcript below illustrates an occasion when a teachable moment was not capitalized on:

> T : The action or the problem first?
>
> Ps: Problem.
>
> T : Problem. You have to tell me your problem. After that the action,
>
>   then the?
>
> Ps: Morale!
>
> T : Moral. Morale ends with an "e", ok? Now, we will not turn to this
>
>   particular "Fox and the crow". We'll look into your worksheet.

The amount of PTC and TM varies according to the thematic unit. For example, there was a lot of PTC and TM used for the thematic unit on "Stories that teach".

Interestingly, for a nation that is so obsessed with doing worksheets and grammatical accuracy, there is less teaching of Grammar during the Reading lessons than we had originally expected.

The teacher

The teachers' understanding of reading varies. Most of them define it as "comprehension" and "reading aloud". A few say reading is synonymous with "phonics", "doing worksheets" and "group work". Many of the teachers feel inadequate when it comes to the TEACHING of reading strategies, and express that this is an urgent area of need for in-service teacher education.

English proficiency varies from teacher to teacher. Some teachers articulate their words very clearly, and speak impeccable English. Others tend to be sloppy in their speech, especially in the word endings, and occasionally, grammatical mistakes are reflected in their speech.

Given the big classes and the range of reading ability among our pupils, the teachers in the research project are able to handle their classes in the area of classroom management. There is usually a variety of participation structures in each lesson, with movement between whole class to group or pair work.

Teacher education: Challenges of the pre-service training

As pointed out earlier, the teachers' understanding of reading varies. Why are teachers so fuzzy about the process of reading? Firstly, the reading process is an abstract one. Many teachers do not seem to know what reading strategies are, and therefore they are not able to TEACH their pupils how to read. "Doing worksheets" help to concretize Reading lessons somewhat, in the sense that if the pupils are able to answer the questions on the worksheets, the teachers then conclude that the pupils have "comprehended" the passage. However, the TEACHING component remains dubious.

Secondly, our pre-service programmes are very rushed, and many trainee teachers graduate from pre-service teacher education in a daze. For example, in the Postgraduate Diploma in Education (Primary) programme, the breakdown of the number of hours devoted to Reading are as follows:

Table 1: Number of hours on Teaching Reading in the PGDE (P) programme

Topic	Number of hours
The Reading Process	05
Teaching Reading (Lower primary)	10
Teaching Reading (Upper primary)	11
Children's literature	03
Text types	06
Total	**35**

Considering that Reading is a critical foundation skill, we spend only 35 hours (less than 2 days!) on teaching our beginning teachers how to teach this skill! The "problem" is

compounded by the fact that the first degree of the trainee teachers in this programme is neither English nor English Literature. They are mostly engineers, accountancy and business graduates. It is not realistic to expect them to master ALL the strategies taught in a whirl-wind pre-service programme. The target is to give them enough strategies for the first two years of their teaching career, and encourage them to return for in-service teacher education.

Conclusion

What are the ELT challenges we face in Singapore?

Firstly, as a teacher educator, our challenge is a very condensed teacher training pre-service course within a short training period. A total of approximately 80 hours contact time is simply inadequate to cover a methods course on Teaching English, and which includes the teaching of Reading, Writing, Oral Communication skills as well as Grammar.

Secondly, many of our trainee teachers are not English graduates. This means that BOTH the content as well as the pedagogy are new to them (compared to, for example, a subject like Mathematics, the content of which might not necessarily be new to them). The fact that the programme is jam-packed with several (new) modules does not help. The trainee teachers find themselves galloping along on automatic gear, with no time to consolidate and reflect on what they have learnt.

Thirdly, a strong foundation in reading can be built with lots of storying and oralling in our English lessons, especially in the lower primary years. In our Singapore classrooms, our teachers spend little time on reading stories and/or just having conversations with their pupils. Encouraging extensive reading and talking about books read would contribute towards an increase in language proficiency, and is particularly critical for those pupils who come from non-English-speaking homes. Many of our younger teachers did not grow up with a reading habit. The challenge is for us to instill a love for reading in these teachers so that they can in turn pass the love for reading to their pupils.

Reading is a fundamental language skill. The ability to read helps tremendously in the understanding of the other subjects in the curriculum. As the PIRLS results show, our pupils are good at answering literal questions. However, this skill is not going to serve them well in a world where knowledge is constantly changing, and where the process of obtaining information is going to be more critical than the product of the knowledge itself. If we want our pupils to succeed in this global world, we have to TEACH them not just how to read, but how to read critically.

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Pilot Intensive English Programme in Ho Chi Minh City: A Programme that Meets the Needs of Society

NGUYEN HO THUY ANH

The birth of the programme

Preparation of human resources for the future

Ho Chi Minh City is the biggest city in Vietnam with the population of 8.000.000 people. It is considered a dynamic, metropolitan city heading for regional and international integration. As a result, the need for future generations who can use English to communicate is urgent. In 1998, Ho Chi Minh authority agreed to let Department of Education and Training recruit teachers, and select children for teaching and learning English at grade 1 with 8 periods (35 minutes / a period) per week.

Management

Before the birth of the programme, with the parents' growing need for their children to learn English when they are young, many primary schools cooperated with English centres to teach English for young learners. Consequently, teaching and learning quality was been controlled. That lead to very poor performance in English since there had been no curriculum, no training course for the teachers and no guidelines on the way the centres had been operating. Teaching English, especially for young learners, at primary schools had become a messy picture. The birth of the programme proposed a top – down management structure with 24 districts divided into 4 zones with a zone leader to ensure that teaching learning activities are kept on track.

Needs of the society

The purpose of the programme is to provide "standard English" to a large number of poor students whose parents want them to study English but cannot afford to send them to evening classes or extra class. Each student in this programme pays 50.000 VN dong per month = 80 US cents comparing to 50 US dollars or 100 US dollars per month paid to evening or extra classes. As a result, the programme covers all areas in Ho Chi Minh City even the poorest, most remote areas.

Requirements to join in the programme:

- Teachers

  o BA in English

  o Pass a 3 -step recruiting process (in the first step, candidates are shortlisted on the basis of professional documents. The second step consists of a written test and voice recording. The third step is a face to face interview conducted by native speaker teachers from British Council)

Benefits: permanent teaching status will be granted to the teachers who pass the three – step recruitment process. This policy assures an official recognition of English teaching positions for Primary teachers and stability for them to commit themselves to teaching English.

Salary: Beside the salary of being granted a permanent status, the teachers are allowed to get partial money from the 50.000 VN dong paid by each child to assure that their salary ranges from 25.000 VN dong to 30.000 VN dong per period. This is considered a high salary compared to the salary of teachers who work at extra classes or evening classes.

Training: The teachers have rights to participate in professional experience exchange every Thursday. (They watch a classroom demo, and discuss the strengths and weakness of the classroom demo and share the ideas of what they could do to be better in their teaching and learning activities). The Department of Education and training assures at least two training courses for all of the teachers every year. Outbound visits to regional countries for 10 teachers will be carried out yearly from 2007- 2008.

- Students

  o Pass an entrance exam to join the programme. In order to avoid the reality that parents who want their children to pass the entrance exam push preschoolers to go to private class or tutoring class after their time at preschool, the entrance test is designed to be similar to the programme the students study at the

preschools and to test their pronunciation.

o   Maintain GPA at average score. Besides, the students are compelled to drop out the programme if their Vietnamese performance result is worse than their English performance result. That is the only way to deal with the public issue that letting children learn English at a very young age will influence their mother tongue results negatively.

▪   Schools/ Classrooms

o   removable chairs and desks

o   VCR, cassette player with CD, class size: 35 students

Programme development statistics

Competition for a place on IEP is fierce. In 2006 – 2007 only half the applicants were accepted on the programme. The reason for this is we lack teachers, and appropriate facilities. The programme started in 1998 with 70 students in one school (district 1). Now, the programme has over 23.000 students in 113 schools in 24 districts

How to transfer parents' needs into children's needs for the programme

a/ Encourage games and songs in the programme

b/ Encourage arts and crafts in the programme

c/ Story telling

d/ Teaching Maths and Science through English and developing English skills and content through those other core subjects.

It had been customary that songs, games, and story were used to reward the students for good behaviour, as learning was believed to be about formal tests and formalized learning and teaching. So when games, songs and stories are used to create an English learning environment, the problem of changing the teachers' awareness is challenging. We have to design training workshops to shift teachers from traditional methods to more student-centred approaches to make them aware that they can use songs, games and stories to build up English for the children in a very natural way.

Training

▪   Self training (Department of Education &Training)

- External supported training courses: Singapore, British Council, Oxford University Press

- Even though we get outside support to organize some training courses, it is very important to work together with the supporter to design the training courses that meet the need of the teachers

Difficulties the programme faces

The programme has 317 teachers whose major is not teaching English for primary students. That is why they are very keen to learn new methods and child psychology. However, organizing training workshops has not solved the root of the problem of the lack of professional teachers for primary students. With the growing need for children to learn English, we cannot answer this need at present because the whole country does not have any university which can train teachers to teach English for primary students. And so the challenge continues.

Working with Teachers in Challenging Teaching Contexts: Lessons Learnt

HANNAH PILLAY

Background

The most popular model of INSET in Malaysia is the "one off "course model as this allows a greater number of teachers to attend courses and it also allows for quick dissemination of information. In this model the content and delivery modes are determined solely by the agency that designs and delivers the course. The task of the State Education Office is to identify the teachers who would attend the course. In most cases there are no follow up procedures to ascertain how these ideas are being translated into practice in the classroom.

But how effective are short, one off in-service courses, in bringing about any long lasting benefits or change in teachers' practices? My own research into curriculum implementation has led me to question the value of the "course driven" one off model of professional development. (Pillay 1995) In the case study which researched the implementation of a new English language curriculum in secondary schools, teachers indicated that although they were introduced to the curriculum changes through the "one off" course model, they encountered many problems when they tried to implement the strategies and approaches especially when the changed involved moving from a teacher centred classroom to a pupil centred one. As they did not have any recourse to professional support or discussions that would have helped them work through the problems, many of them gave up trying and reverted to the "old ways. This has led me to question the use of the "one off' course model as I felt it had very limited impact on

changing teachers' classroom practices.

 Hence, I felt it would be worthwhile to develop a model of teacher development based on the model of "Follow - up and Follow through" (Pillay and Thomas 2004) which would centre on teachers working in the local school context. This model would include short courses but would also have several elements of support built in to help teachers navigate the changes they would have to make in their classroom.

The project

The team chose to work with an existing curriculum programme introduced by the Curriculum Development Centre (CDC), Malaysia in primary schools called the Structured Reading Programme (SRP). This programme is aimed at developing literacy skills in English amongst Year 1 and 2 pupils and is targeted at schools with below average examination results (i.e. below 40%) for the English Language subject at Primary Year 6 national examination.

The SRP is a reading programme based on the concept of the English Hour. The English Hour procedure, modelled after the National Literacy Hour introduced in England, is implemented as a 60 minute literacy hour per week. The procedure is made up of four stages. In the first stage the teacher uses the Big Book to read to the pupils. At the second stage the teacher takes the pupil through focussed word work that involves a study of phonics and word attack skills. The third stage is independent group work where pupils work on reading activities with reference to other stories of their choice or practise phonics and word recognition skills. In the last stage the teacher gets pupils to sum up what they have learnt about the reading process as well as to express personal views about the stories read. In addition to the Big Books schools were given sets of graded readers from the Sound Start and the Ladybird series that pupils use for independent reading.

Challenged contexts

We chose to work with a range of schools which reflect pedagogically challenged contexts for teachers. These schools could be located in either the urban or rural areas but are within communities that face difficulties because of various factors. One could be the socio-economic background which is often related to educational levels of parents and the income levels of the families. In these communities, home educational support and academic role models may be limited. Also, access to reading materials which could provide a wider enriching experience may not be readily available. This in turn would affect the world view children bring to the classroom and thereby influence

teaching –learning.

In addition to socio-economic and geographical factors, our definition of challenged schools includes issues of teacher quality where ELT is concerned. In many of these challenged schools, teachers who teach English are non-optionists, i.e. teachers who have no TESL training and many may have a command of the language which one would expect of English Language teachers.

The training model - design and process

A number of elements make up the model design. These elements clarify goals, roles and processes for the effective management and implementation of the model over a period of time as a developmental process. These elements are described in the following section.

Consultations with stake holders and partners

A national educational innovation is a government initiated venture by the Ministry of Education (MoE) and hence it automatically assumes key stakeholder position. Under the MoE various education agencies are actively involved in the project. The degree of involvement would depend on the role played by the various education agencies as the project developed through the different stages.

The project was conceptualized within a collaborative school based mode involving a number of stages. At the planning stage members of the Department of Language and Literacy (English Language Teaching Centre Malaysia / ELTCM) met with officers from the Curriculum Development Centre (CDC) to set out a working parameter.

This was followed by discussions with the English Language Officers (ELO) of 3 states we would work with. The officers helped to identify 21 schools representing both government aided schools and the vernacular schools. The officers also helped to facilitate the chain of communication and the building of partnerships between ELTCM and the schools; support which is essential if a project is to take off at the state level.

Head teachers were briefed about the project and encouraged to make commitments to the project by including a budget for resources to build up the book selection for their pupils.

As the programme needed additional resource materials for the schools, we included external agencies like the British Council. Discussions with officers of the British Council and a primary literacy consultant helped shape and support the project.

Needs Analysis

In order to plan a programme that was responsive and participant- centred, a needs analysis had to be carried out continuously throughout the project. The project team members visited schools to meet with headteachers and teachers involved in implementing the programme to determine their understanding of the SRP and the status of the implementation. Information about the school and the context of the school was collected in order to map contextual understanding of the school, the pupils, as well as the socio-economic context.

The initial needs analysis indicated there were some serious problems to start off with. Firstly, our visits indicated that primary schools faced a number of problems where the teaching of English is concerned. There is still a shortage of trained English language teachers in many schools. Hence the tendency is to have "non-optionist" teachers to teach the Lower Primary and trained TESL teachers teach the Upper Primary to prepare pupils for the National examinations.

Secondly, many of the teachers we met lacked confidence in expressing themselves in English. This could be a result of their own proficiency not being up to the mark but could also be attributed to teachers working in a "language deprived environment" where they themselves have little opportunity to use/practise their English at a higher level. This is critical because the success of the Structured Reading Programme (SRP) and the Literacy Hour depends on the teacher interacting with students formally and informally and telling stories in English. If the teacher does not have confidence to tell stories, then an important component of the programme is missing.

Thirdly, the teachers had limited understanding of the SRP. In a number of schools the programme was not being implemented in the way it was conceptualized. Part of the problem is that only one teacher from the school was sent for the course. The danger in this is that if the teacher was transferred, the information appears to have left with her. The other issue is that the "non-optionist" teachers needed longer processing time to understand some of the fundamentals underlying a literacy programme. Fourthly, most of the teachers see the SRP, the textbook (the syllabus) and the ICT software supplied to schools, as three separate components. They failed to see the link between the three and often talked about the lack of time to use the three sets of resource materials.

These insights were incorporated into the training programme at different stages. To ensure that the programme was continuously responsive to the needs of the teachers, evaluation and needs analysis were incorporated into every phase of the project. The data from these visits was then used to design the next structured training course.

Building a school community

The needs analysis showed us clearly that the model of identifying one teacher per school to be trained to implement the innovation has its own set of problems especially when it comes to implementing a new programme in schools. Teachers in challenged schools form a transient population because of the very nature of the context within which they work. If a single teacher is trained to implement a project then it is more likely that the knowledge of the programme will leave with the teacher. Further, as the project involved the lower primary we find that the head of Panel who is usually a person teaching the Upper Primary has very little idea of the programme and as a result does not know how to manage the programme. Hence we decided from the onset to include the Head of Panel and two teachers from each of the schools involved.

Follow up and follow through training

Innovation challenges teachers to adapt their knowledge and skills to implement the change within the classroom. This challenge is further compounded if the teacher's own language competency is not that of a first language user. Teachers also need feedback on their own effectiveness in implementing the innovation. Given this context the training design had to include the commitment to provide continuous support throughout the full duration of the life span of the project. The support could take various forms.

Structured Training Programmes

Firstly, the teachers needed a structured training programme to enhance their skills, develop materials and test them as well as to practise teaching adopting the new strategy in a safe environment. Further as most of the teachers involved were not trained English teachers with a wide range of proficiency levels; it was felt that the structured training programme could not be overloaded. The three phase model adopted for the first year was one that incorporated school based teaching and monitoring between each phase of a 4-day structured training course. Providing a safe environment in the three phases of training would allow teachers to address their fears and to build their confidence. In the second year, we adopted a two phase model.

Portfolio and Action Plan

The model operates as a partnership between the participating school and ELTCM. Each phase is not an end in itself but a means to an end. After each phase the teacher leaves with a portfolio building task that she has to complete and bring with her into the next stage of the training. The portfolio comprises several tasks. They include gathering data on pupils in the class, peer feedback on their teaching plus feedback to trainers on issues they faced in implementing the Literacy hour.

Teacher as "Researcher"

Very often in a training context the trainer is the active researcher and this model encourages teachers to do the same. Getting teachers to build a portfolio of classroom data is an integral part of the training. Enhancing teachers' observation skills with appropriate data collecting instruments and methods is aimed at getting teachers to gain confidence as researchers ready to discuss issues from a teacher's perspective.

Monitoring

Common in a one-off training course is the lack of provision of a monitoring system to support the implementation process. To ensure that the monitoring is non-threatening, achievable goals must be set for teachers. Each phase was followed by monitoring school visit involving an observation of the implementation of the English Hour, discussions with the teachers with regard to the lesson and other issues which they wish to raise and gathering of data to plan the next phase of the training.

Teacher support group

A top down innovation often reduces the role of a teacher to a mere recipient at its worst. It is common knowledge that long lasting change or effectiveness in the implementation of an innovation depends on the ability and the readiness of the teacher to manage the innovation. Generally a teacher works best when she is ably supported by a team of colleagues who share similar interests and concerns. But such a collaborative culture rarely exists in schools in Malaysia. But at the same time if a teacher is to make sense of the innovation in his or her teaching context, collaborative learning and support is essential. Such mutually supportive groups are often not easily set up. Only teachers can mobilize fellow teachers to support one another.

The structure proposed in this model involves using the nearest Teacher Activity Centre as the place for meetings. Teachers divided themselves into clusters according to the locality where their schools were situated. Each cluster was to form a committee that plan and organize a schedule of activities. These activities would be carried out by the teachers themselves and it was hoped the organisation of these support groups would encourage teachers to support one another as they grappled with the implementation of the SRP.

Professional conversations

The teacher's set of beliefs and attitudes that influence his/her teaching behaviour cannot be divorced from the local school challenges. We had to explore and understand how teachers function in the different contexts and link the theory to classroom realities

and teacher beliefs and attitudes. Hence, discussions between professionals on teaching and learning within a context are an important part of professional development. We hoped that the development of professional conversations during the schools visits and further conversations amongst teachers themselves would help teachers develop insights about teaching and learning in challenging contexts. The professional conversations took two forms: one was the school visits by the lecturers involved in the project and the other was the teacher support group in the districts.

Web communication

The Web has become an important means of communication in today's world. ELTCM has its own web portal which could be used to further facilitate professional communication not only between facilitators and teachers but also amongst teachers involved in the project. It was hoped that through web communication teachers would have access to and exchange teaching ideas with one another.

Project implementation

The project was implemented over two years. In the first year of the project the team focussed on ensuring teachers' understanding of the SRP and the implementation of the English Hour. In the second year of the project, the focus was training teachers to asses the literacy skills of their learners. Over the two years there were five structured training courses lasting 3-5 days per course and six school visits per school to monitor as well as promote professional discussion by the facilitators. In between the teachers met but the intensity of meetings varied from state to state. Two of the structured training programmes were held at ELTC, creating an opportunity for teachers from different states to meet and exchange ideas. The project was evaluated[1] but for the purposes of this paper, the discussion will focus on lessons learnt from working with teachers in challenging teaching contexts.

Lessons learnt

Lesson one – Be realistic

When starting a project involving teachers in challenged teaching contexts, teacher educators have to be realistic in their expectations. Teacher educators tend to be well meaning in their intentions of improving the quality of teaching-learning in the classroom. Teachers on the other hand view them as people who intrude into their comfortable world and further burdening them with work. Furthermore schools come

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1. Pathways to English Language Literacy: A research and teacher development project to enhance literacy instruction in primary schools.(Unpublished report , English Language

under a different purview of authority and although access can be gained we have very little power to mandate anything in schools.

When working with teachers in challenging contexts, we were often working "non-optionist". Some teachers had a limited working knowledge of English as it was the policy of most schools to place the best teachers in upper primary rather than in the lower primary. Working with teachers whose English language competence is limited puts them in a highly vulnerable situation of revealing their inadequacies to so called competent speakers. We needed to be sensitive to their vulnerability and be realistic about what can or cannot be done or what can or cannot be changed. So our expectations as to what these teachers could achieve had to be adjusted accordingly.

The key is to have simple realistic goals that the teachers feel are achievable and to break down course components into manageable parts. For instance our first course focussed on getting teachers to understand the SRP and how to implement the literacy hour in their classes. Hence our objective of our first monitoring visit after the first course was to get the teachers to implement the literacy hour with its four phases. At the end of the second phase of training which dealt with the intricacies of improving the quality interaction our goal was to get teachers to improve the quality of interaction during the literacy hour. By having realistic goals which were more likely to be achieved, teachers found the project less threatening and were willing to implement the ideas introduced to them.

Lesson Two- Plan, implement and re-plan

Planning and implementing a project of this nature involved multiple skills. Setting out an outline of the project design is the first step in the process. However many aspects of the project had to be factored in as the project evolved since the project team had to consider the needs and views of the teachers involved. Given this model some issues were unforeseen and others were specific to the needs of the differing school contexts.

An example of project adaptation was the use of Web Communication as a means of stating professional dialogues. Although the team was well versed in the vagaries of web communication and had ready access to internet facilities, we found that most of the teachers had very little experience in using the internet or email. Further many schools did not have internet facilities. Hence we had to abandon this form of communication as it was not feasible.

Further, although we chose schools that were deemed as challenging teaching contexts, there was variation in teacher quality. Teachers from schools in or near urban areas were more proficient in the English Language and therefore quicker in grasping the content of the course than their counterparts in rural schools. Hence trainers had to consider the teachers' level of competence in the English Language when determining

the pace of implementation and the level of challenge in the choice of course materials.

The lesson learnt in planning such projects is that one had to plan, then implement and then review/adapt and plan again. Planning cannot be seen as a linear process but rather a cyclical one which is adaptable and flexible in responding to needs.

Lesson Three- Expect attrition

One of the most frustrating aspects of a long term project is the attrition rate that inevitably occurs. It seems that the concept of a long term commitment to working on a project is one that is not the preferred practice in many Malaysian school contexts. Schools and teachers are used to the idea of the "one off" course model of professional development which allows them to send teachers at random for courses. Although the project team had met with headteachers to explain the commitment that would be involved, it appears that the schools did not work out the implications and commitments they had to make. The idea that the project involved the commitment on the part of the school to send the same 3 teachers for all the phases of the project also seemed alien to them. As a result we had teachers dropping out of the project or being substituted at various stages of the project because of other competing demands.

The introduction of a "follow up –follow through" model of professional development entails a major cultural mind shift for administrators and teachers. As such, the importance of continuous follow-up and monitoring of schools after the first phase of the project to ensure commitments made were clearly understood and honoured cannot be overemphasized. It also underlies the complexities of working in a centralised system of education, straining under the weight of innovation overload and the demands made on schools by different masters within the system.

Lesson Four- Building Accountability

Teachers are comfortable with the "one-off" course model which makes very little demands on the teachers in terms of accountability in implementing strategies or ideas they have been introduced to in courses. However, built into every phase of structured training in the "follow up-follow through model" is a series of tasks which were to be included in the teachers' portfolios. Teachers had to compile data on teaching and the learners through reflections on lessons taught, peer observation reports, class profiles and learner progression on the reading milestone. This portfolio of information and observations was to be used in the next phase of training. Despite monitoring and reminders there was a wide range of completion levels of the portfolio building tasks ranging from those who had not done anything to those who kept a meticulous documentation of records. Our experience showed us that it is not easy to build in notions of accountability of practice in a system that has yet to demand of its teachers the openness to learn and commitment to change signalled by a willingness to

incorporate new insights into their teaching.

Lesson Five – Building Collaboration and Collegiality

Collaboration and collegiality have been advocated by teacher educators as a means of promoting and improving teaching learning within the community of teachers. (See Lieberman and Miller: 1989, Earley and Bubb 2004). In this project we tried to promote these two dimensions by first by ensuring at least two teachers and the Head of English Panel were part of the project. Secondly, we built into the teacher portfolio project tasks which would involve teachers within the school observing each other and sharing ideas and issues about the implantation of the SRP.

Thirdly, we focussed on the building of support groups in the belief that teachers learn best from teachers. Schools were divided into clusters and teachers were encouraged to meet in the Teacher Activity Centre nearest the cluster of schools. Incentives in the form of additional resources were offered to the cluster of schools if they succeeded in setting up their professional support group and have regular meetings. However we had limited success in this. Teachers did carry out the portfolio tasks which involved observations but again the quality of task completion and regularity of discussions varied from school to school. Further although some of the cluster schools did meet, we found that as the project progressed this petered out.

The difficulties faced by the project developers in building a sustainable culture of collaboration and collegiality shows that the road to building these dimensions in schools will be a long and arduous process. The lack of collegiality, Ghani (1992) says, can be explained with reference to behaviours appropriate to the Malaysian culture. One is that it is difficult for a person to seek assistance from colleagues because it may involve "a loss of face" as it shows up one's deficiencies. Secondly, it is difficult to place one's self above ones colleague by sharing or offering assistance. "action-eh[2]". Another explanation can be related "to the uncertainties inherent to teaching, particularly with regard to the relationship between teaching and learning. No matter how a teacher has prepared the lesson, she can never be sure of how successful she is going to be about learning" (Ghani 1992:11) Hence by being "private" and not sharing her insecurities, the teacher gains security.

However, in evaluating the different aspects of the training model, teachers rated professional discussions and observations by the trainers as the most useful aspects of the model. Does it mean that collegiality and collaboration works when one party is not from the same educational entity? Does it mean teachers find opening their practice to scrutiny by their colleagues more threatening than opening it up to scrutiny by relative strangers? Or is more value being placed on "expert" opinions than on opinions of fellow teachers?

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2. "action-eh" is a term used in the Malaysian variety of English to mean that one is showing off.

Although the notion of collegiality and collaboration still remains one of the dimensions of ongoing professional development, the lesson we have learnt is that although structures can be built in to encourage this, the uptake is something project developers cannot control.

Lesson Six- Don't overlook the learners

Curriculum Innovation tends to be introduced using an instrumental model of implementation where the innovation is likely to be perceived as a new commodity to be dispensed by the teachers and consumed by pupils. (Aoki 1984). Hence training and support structures generally tend to focus on the teacher and curricular support systems in order for the innovation to take off. Learner preparation is generally overlooked and seldom addressed in terms of a national programme. It has often been left to the individual school to help learners make the transition and often there are no formalized systems to support the learner's transition "Pupils are guardians of the existing culture and as such represent a powerful conservative force, and that unless we give attention to the problems pupils face, we may be overlooking a significant feature of the innovation process. (Rudduck 1991:57).

In the project we overlooked the learners initially because it was assumed that since we were dealing with young children between six and eight, they would be far more malleable to be moulded into the practices of the English Hour. Also we were uncertain as to how to elicit "the pupils' voice" had they been given the opportunity. However as part of the project evaluation in year one, we had two independent evaluators (staff members not involved in the project) to interview pupils.[3] The interview data shows that children have views of the programme, about the books they liked or disliked and what they liked about the programme. Some were able to express their views in English whilst others used Bahasa Malaysia. I think the point to note that it is worthwhile to involve the learners in any innovation as their feedback can help shape aspect of the programme like selection of books and choice of activities.

Lesson Seven – Juggle your partnerships well

Although the Teacher Education Division is part of The Ministry of Education (MoE), we found that building working partnerships with national and state level educational agencies is often a process swamped by red tape and endless phone calls and letters. It is a time consuming process that has to be carefully staged beginning with informal dialogue and visits, culminating into a formalising process. There is no mechanism that is available for this type of networking and collaboration. The team had to work through these layers of bureaucracy in order to set out a working procedure. Sustainability and continuity is often the concerted effort of individual energy represented by the officers concerned.

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3. Details of the interviews can be found in Pathways to English Language Literacy: *A research and teacher development project to enhance literacy instruction in primary schools.*(Unpublished report , English Language Teaching Centre) pp45-49

Juggling the partnerships is a difficult task. The task of ensuring different agencies are consulted, kept informed of the different stages of the project is a delicate and diplomatic task. Relationships between the different government agencies tend to be more formalised due to the bureaucratic nature of our civil service. It could be that each educational agency seemingly has clearly defined roles with regard to curriculum when in actual fact there are many overlapping programmes and each agency needs to safeguard its purview as it could involve matters of funding. Relationship with schools however, tend to less formalised, depending very much on the rapport established between the school and the lecturers involved in the project.

The dynamic nature of the interactive process involved in the partnership entered with the parties mentioned varied in intensity over the period of the project. In the initial stages CDC was a more significant partner as we grappled with the programme and its implications for the project. As the project progressed, the state education office, the school and the classroom teacher play a more significant role. The different partners made their entrance and exit at the different points in the staging of the project. This makes it a challenging round of moves where the project team changes partners according to the demands of the stage in the process without losing touch with the other partners waiting in the wings.

Conclusion

In this paper I have discussed the conceptualisation of a model of in-service training i.e. "Follow up and Follow Through" that we used in the project. The model is based on the teacher's classroom realities and allows for teachers to experiment with the approaches and strategies promoted in the training. Throughout the processes teachers are supported with resources and professional consultations. It is also a model that demands a high level of commitment and investment by the schools involved and it is costly in man hours requiring teachers to be absent from their classrooms for periodic lengths of time during the duration of the training. It also a model, that demands accountability from the teachers, as they have to demonstrate the inclusion of the new learning into their practices.

The analysis of lessons learnt show that managing this model of in-service is not easy as the project developers were introducing a new form of in-service which overturns some of the "comfortableness" of the existing cultural landscape of in-service training. If the cost is too high than we need another model of training that meets the rigours of classroom realities in order to truly enhance ELT pedagogy in schools.

What we know is that the "one off" course model is not a sustainable model for introducing curriculum change as it cannot address, the issues posed by Seok Moi Ng, "Working on what needs to be changed and how that change is to be achieved are only the initial stages of educational improvement. What needs to follow is attention to how the change can be sustained in a particular context" (Ng, 2001:178).

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13

Using CLIL at Primary Level: Linking English Language Learning with the Primary Curriculum

JEAN BREWSTER

As long ago as 1978 Widdowson recommended that the most natural and authentic context for young learners learning a foreign language was the school curriculum itself. Many countries such as Spain, Italy, the Basque country and Finland, have introduced CLIL at primary level. Curriculum documents from Hong Kong (2004) make reference to the fact that 'schools are encouraged to establish cross-curricular linkage when developing their school based English language programme (p.107).

Why CLIL?

Reasons often cited include the following:

- It can draw on students' everyday experience, linking home and school, and bringing school knowledge to their language work.

- Appropriately selected topics or tasks can be very motivating and engaging.

- They help to consolidate students' educational needs by reinforcing concepts,content and learning skills.

- They offer opportunities for exploring facts, imagination and creativity.

Important factors

These concern the teachers themselves, the learning context and the students.

The learning /teaching context: time available, type of syllabus and materials in

use, attitudes of key personnel towards this kind of work.

The teachers: confidence and autonomy in innovating; their pedagogical knowledge to develop and use materials and activities.

The learners: their age and interests, linguistic and conceptual level; their

motivation, and familiarity with different styles of learning;

Starting points: stories, investigations, mini-projects

- Children's Fiction and Non-fiction Story Books e.g. The Very Hungry Caterpillar, A Tail Show; leading to e.g. life cycle of a butterfly; animal body parts, tails and their function.

- Textbooks e.g. Step Up (2005) robots, seahorses

- General education books/textbooks

- Investigations: Science and Maths, Social Studies

  ➢ e.g. .Maths e.g. Dice throws; Magnets; The Environment e.g. Our Ideal Park

- Projects and Web quests e.g. Seahorses, Insects

How can I plan ideas?

Start with:

- interesting, age and language-level appropriate curricular topics

- concepts linked to school subjects; Art, Maths, Science, Social Studies

- a clear language focus e.g. language skills; language functions, vocabulary, grammar

- a range of text types and visual aids: e.g. diaries, menus, recounts, procedures, graphic organizers of various kinds: maps, Venn diagrams, flow charts...

- thinking e.g. predicting, classifying, collecting and interpreting data

- learning to learn activities: planning, checking

- check for clearly 'scaffolded' task sequences, with supporting exercises

- outcomes e.g. completed charts, labelled diagrams, rewritten stories, pupil produced quizzes or activities for other children to complete, reports or booklets.

Sources

- Local textbooks for projects on Mathematics, Geography etc.

- International educational books e.g. Scholastic, Usborne, Dorling-Kindersley

- Teachers' practical magazines

- IATEFL SIG YL site

- Story books

- the Internet

Activities and language development

- Activities: naming and identifying, matching, comparing, selecting, contrasting, sequencing, comparing, sorting

- Vocabulary – nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs etc.

- Sentence patterns and grammar – e.g. predictions using 'going to' or 'will'; degrees of probability

- Language functions – comparing, classifying, cause and effect, etc.

- Listening, speaking, reading, writing, learning to learn.

Learning skills and strategies

Common learning skills in school which can be reinforced in the English class include:

- Observing

- Memorizing

- Following instructions, formulating questions to carry out investigations

- Simple tallying, data collection, recording and interpreting

- Experimenting, hypothesising

- Seeing patterns and connections

- Drawing conclusions

- Using and interpreting graphic organizers

- Reflecting on and evaluating learning.

Example: butterflies

- Listening to a story

- Labelling butterflies and caterpillars

- Understanding timelines and life cycles

- Creating caterpillars using 4 hexagons, how many shapes can they make?

- Differences between moths and butterflies: Venn diagram

- Butterflies of the world, compare and contrast habitats, colours, food.

Example: magnets

- Predicting which things will 'stick' e.g. cork, paper, rubber, plastic, metal

- Formulating simple hypotheses

- Carrying out a test

- Comparing predictions with their test

- Recording results on a chart

- Checking hypotheses

- Drawing conclusions.

Matching language to thinking

- This is going to/ will/ might stick: prediction

- This is made of …: observing, classifying

- This goes with…matching and classifying

- It did /didn't stick: reporting observations

- It didn't stick because…hypothesizing/giving reasons

- These belong together because…drawing conclusions

- Metal sticks to magnets: making generalizations

- This comes first then …sequencing

- This is the most important because…ranking

What skills do teachers need?

It is important that teachers can spot the potential in subjects/topics and the ability to exploit their learning potential.

- Predicting the learning demands of the task sequence e.g. the thinking and language demands of the topic

- Finding a learning focus and planning objectives in relation to language and thinking

- Planning activities which match objectives

- Task design: sequencing tasks

- Task design: creating audio-visual support.

Possible benefits of CLIL

If well planned cross-curricular learning can:

- create an authentic environment for language learning

- be motivating and provide variety for the students as well as the teacher

- provide purposeful, contextualised learning

- reinforce students' conceptual development

- help students learn how to learn

- provide opportunities to re-cycle curriculum resources to develop new language and reinforce concepts

▪ provide opportunities to explore facts and to encourage creativity, imagination and critical thinking.

Useful reading

Brewster, J. (2002) 'English Across the Curriculum' Chapter 9 in Brewster, J et al.

The Primary English Teacher's Guide. Harlow: Pearson.

Brewster, J. (2004). 'Content-based language teaching: a way to keep students motivated and challenged?' in Autumn CATS p. 25-28. IATEFL YL SIG

Brewster, J. (2007). '''Is the nine-times table magic?' Opportunities and constraints in using investigations to promote content-based teaching' IATEFL Voices. (forthcoming).

Bryant Mole, K. (1994). *Charts and Graphs. Usborne.*

Lee, M. and Miller, M. (1993) *Great Graphing*. NY: Scholastic Professional Books.

Useful websites

For the IATEFL SIG Young Learners fielded discussions on CLIL

http://www.iatefl-ylsig.org

Other sites

▪ http://www.bbc.co.uk/education

▪ http://groups.yahoo.com/group/factworld

▪ http://www.cilt.org.uk/clil/faqs/htm

▪ www.ofsted.gov.uk

▪ www.nelliemuuler.com.NelliesEnglishprojects.htm (great for WebQuests)

▪ britishcouncil.org.hk/eltnetowrk/detail

▪ www.angelfire.com.sk/monkeypuzzle/mindmaps.html

▪ www.enchantedlearning.com.school

▪ www.bbc.co.uk/schools

▪ www.bbc.co.uk/ni/education/uptoyou

- http://www.bbc.co.uk/cbeebies/tikkabilla

- www.channel4.com.learning/microsites/

- http:/projects.edtech.sandi.net/encanto/

Maths

- www.lifelong.com/monstermath

Geography

- http://www.4seasons.org.uk

History

- http://www.kidlink.org/KIDPROJ/MC

Design and technology

- http://www.howstuffworks.com/

Music

- http://www.talkcity.com/

Science

- www.ase.org.uk

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Primary Innovations
All Country Research Summary Report

LAURA GRASSICK

1. Objectives and approach

1.1. Objectives of the research

The aim of the research is to enable the British Council to identify common issues in Primary English Language Teaching (PELT) across the 8 participating countries and to focus on areas in which the organisation can add value through the Primary Innovations project. The research findings from the individual country reports have been shared with Ministry officials and other stakeholders in order to inform discussions at the Primary Innovations seminar in March 2007. This report provides a summary of the key issues emerging from the 8 countries involved in the Primary Innovations project. Detailed individual country reports are available for those seeking further information.

1.2. Countries involved

Vietnam, Thailand, Indonesia, Japan, Taiwan, South Korea, Singapore and the Philippines.

1.3. Methodology

Between October – December 2006 in-depth face-to-face interviews were conducted with stakeholders from the following target groups : policy makers, local education officials, heads of teacher training institutions and university departments, teacher trainers, school principals, teachers and students. These were mainly T2s, though T1s and T3s were also included.

Face to face interviews were preferred in order to use the research exercise to build new relationships and strengthen existing ones.

Classroom observation studies were included in a range of primary schools to record aspects of teaching methodology and the local context in which PELT takes place.

Overall, 376 stakeholders were involved in the research exercise. Some countries involved external consultants or officials within the Ministry of Education to help with the interviewing due to constraints of capacity and time. To ensure a standardisation of topics and questions across the region, each country based their interviews on an agreed standard Interview Record Form. (See Annex 1)

2. Main findings

2.1. Policy

Among the countries involved in the research there are differences in policy related to the context and use of English. For example, in Singapore and the Philippines, as a result of their colonial history, English is an official language used widely in society and is the medium of instruction in major subject areas from primary school through to university level. Both countries are now directing policies towards bilingual education in recognition of the need to maintain proficiency in both English and the mother tongue.

In contrast, English is a foreign language in the 6 other countries and has a much shorter history of use in schools and society and in some of these countries English is not yet an official subject taught in primary schools. For example, in Vietnam, it wasn't until the early 1990s that English replaced Russian as the preferred language taught in schools following the government's "open-door" policy. However it wasn't introduced at primary level until 1997. Currently it is still an optional subject although there are plans to make it compulsory by 2010. Korea, Taiwan, Indonesia and Thailand also introduced English at primary level in the 1990s.

The research findings indicate a strong demand for English at primary level, and regardless of whether English is a compulsory subject or not, the majority of primary schools in these countries teach English. However, in countries like Vietnam and Indonesia, outside the big cities, there is a much smaller uptake of English at primary level. In Japan, PELT is not compulsory, yet 96% of state elementary schools engage in some form of English language instruction. This is similar in the big cities in Vietnam. For example, there are 281 state primary schools in the capital city, Hanoi, and all of them offer English as an optional subject, despite English being a compulsory subject only from Grade 6. In Vietnam, Japan and Indonesia, English is not a compulsory subject at primary school, but there is mounting pressure to make it so. Research respondents in Vietnam and Japan

mention that English will become a compulsory subject from Grade 3 in 2010 and Grade 5 next year[1], respectively. In Thailand, English is a compulsory subject, but the grade that it is introduced is flexible and some schools ignore the mandate.

A summary of PELT policy by country can be seen in the table below

	Singapore	Philippines	Thailand	Vietnam	Korea	Taiwan	Japan	Indonesia
Year when English was first introduced at primary level	No data available	1901	1991	1997	1997	1998	2002 (optional basis)	1993
English is an official language	√	√						
English is a foreign language			√	√	√	√	√	√
English is a compulsory subject	√	√	√		√	√		
English is an optional subject				√			√	√
Grade English officially starts	1	1	1*	3	3	3	3	4
Grade English is being introduced	1	1	1	1 and 2	3	1	1	No data available
There is an official curriculum	√	√	√	√	√	√	X	X
Number of hours of English	No data available	90 mins per day (Grade 1 -3) 60 minutes per day (Grade 4-6)	No data available	2 x 40 mins per week	40 mins per week (Grades 3-4) 80 mins per week (Grades 5-6)	2 x 40 mins per week	12-20 hours per year	60-70 minutes per week

*Table 1   * The Thai Ministry of Education has a 5-year ELT Strategy Plan (2006-2010) which states that English should be taught from primary level 1 (P1). However it was made non-compulsory from P1 in 2005.*

1. It is likely to be included formally in the curriculum in Japan in the next national guidelines.

2.2 Perceived benefits of teaching English at primary level

The perceived benefits of introducing English at the primary level seem to be the same across all 8 countries. The most common benefits are listed below:

- It prepares learners for secondary levels and higher education

- English is an international language and proficiency in it will increase opportunities to compete professionally in the global market

- Young children learn easily and so they will have a head start in English

- It develops self confidence and communication skills.

However, despite these benefits, there were some concerns raised about introducing English at the primary level. Respondents in Singapore "felt that the emphasis of English as a common language could lead to a dilution of the cultural heritage intrinsic to each racial group…"[2]. In Japan the Minister of Education has spoken about the need for children to attain an excellent command of Japanese before they begin to learn another language and that for this reason children don't need to learn English in elementary schools. In Vietnam questions were raised by some respondents about the need to make English compulsory at primary level as children need to develop language skills in Vietnamese first; particularly important for the many ethnic minority groups for whom Vietnamese is not their mother tongue. Similar concerns were also raised by respondents in Taiwan.

Very little research seems to have been done in the participating countries to evaluate whether English language teaching at primary level is being successfully implemented and what the desired outcomes might be. In Korea, research indicates that each year Grade 6 students have improved listening skills. However, writing skills have not improved. A study of the long-term outcomes of 10 years of PELT in Korea is being conducted this year.

2.3 Perceived difficulties in teaching English at primary level

While respondents in all countries mentioned the benefits of PELT, they also expressed concerns in implementing English in primary schools. The most common concerns and difficulties are listed below:

- Large class size. This ranged from 30 pupils in Singapore to over 60 in the Philippines

- Mixed ability classes

- Lack of teacher training in learner-centred approaches. Respondents cited the need for training to focus more on interactive, child-centred approaches

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2. Jane Boylan "Country Summary Report, Singapore" 2007

- Low levels of English proficiency among English teachers

- Teacher supply - lack of suitably qualified teachers (i.e. non-English majors)

- Little opportunity to use English outside the classroom

- Lack of creative and stimulating materials

- Lack of confidence in teaching pronunciation.

One problem mentioned in Korea is the competitive society and the increasing demands from parents; demands which schools cannot always meet. In all 8 countries, the result of the increasing push from society to learn English from an early age with or without official policy in place, has led, in many instances, to English being introduced before establishing the necessary conditions for PELT to be effective. For example, in Thailand, in 2005, policy recommendations moved away from English being compulsory in Grade 1. This turn-around was mainly due to the fact that schools did not have teachers with the relevant experience and skills or materials to teach English from Grade 1. In Japan, some of the teachers interviewed felt that PELT in elementary schools had not been successful, mainly for the reasons listed above. Interestingly, in Korea and Japan, some research findings show that children's motivation decreases when they move from elementary school to middle school because of the differences in teaching methods and assessment. In Japan, Korea and Taiwan, the curriculum places an emphasis on receptive skills at primary level. However in middle and high school the emphasis is on reading and writing and grammar. In Korea, this often results in children having poor basic literacy skills in middle school.

2.4 Teachers and Training

For all countries (perhaps with the exception of Singapore) teachers face the same dilemma: they are eager to teach English but are overwhelmed by the concerns mentioned on the previous page.[3]

> "Everything is difficult about teaching children English. Honestly speaking, I have so many things in my mind that I would want my pupils to accomplish but I feel upset because I don't know where to start".[4]

> "Children are very young and naughty. They don't listen or attend. I feel sad because it is not suitable for my education. I was trained to teach older children."[5]

The training provision for primary English teachers differs from country to country. To understand the type of training provided it is necessary to describe the profile of English teachers in each country. In Singapore, the Philippines, Japan, Korea and Taiwan,

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3. Marlu Vilches "Country Summary Report, the Philippines" 2006
4. Teacher from the Philippines – Marlu Vilches "Country Summary Report" 2006
5. Teacher from Vietnam – Jayne Moon " Investigating the Teaching of English at Primary Level in Vietnam: A report" 2005

primary teachers are "home room" teachers or "class teachers", meaning that they have one class of children and teach all subjects (similar to the system in the UK). In these countries (with the exception of Japan), teachers are required to follow a pre-service primary teacher training course for general primary education. Some of these courses include an English language component (see Table 2 below), while others don't. In the case of Vietnam, Indonesia and Thailand[6], English is taught as a subject with a subject teacher. (In the case of Vietnam, there are no class teachers at primary level -children have a different teacher for each subject. The English teachers do not necessarily have any primary teacher training qualification. The other subject teachers tend not to teach English because of a lack of English proficiency, as English language is not a criteria for successful completion of a primary teacher training degree.

	Singapore	Philippines	Thailand	Vietnam	Korea	Taiwan	Japan	Indonesia
Home room teachers	√	√			√	√	√	
English subject teachers			√	√				√
English teachers complete primary teacher training course	√	√	√		√	√	√	
There is a required PELT component of pre-service training	√							
There is a required additional qualification in ELT	√				√	√		
Official in-service training for PELT	√	√	√		√			

Table 2

In Thailand, Vietnam and Indonesia, there is a shortage of skilled PELT teachers (and at other levels). In Thailand this shortfall is estimated to be 30,000.[7] For these three

6. In Thailand this is true in large schools. In smaller schools, the homeroom teacher teaches all subjects.
7. This total includes the national shortfall for both primary and secondary teachers.

countries the shortage is particularly acute in more remote areas. In Vietnam and Indonesia, where English is not yet a compulsory subject, teachers are hired on a contractual basis. They do not have permanent status like their peers in the same schools and often have to take jobs in several schools or private institutions. Motivation levels can be low and the turn-over rate is high. For these two countries, in-service training is sporadic and limited.

However, even for countries with official pre-service and in-service training programmes, respondents cited concerns. For example, in Korea, in-service courses have tended to be very theoretical with little connection with the real classroom situation. In most countries there is little or no follow-up after the training to help teachers implement changes to their teaching.

With the exception of Singapore, all countries mentioned the problem of low levels of English proficiency among English teachers. In the Philippines and Vietnam, respondents said that this results in teachers using L1 in the classroom. In all these countries there is a need for language improvement and methodology training, particularly in the areas of interactive, child-centred approaches.

For most countries, English teachers are 'non-native' speakers. However in Korea, there are plans by the MoE to recruit 'native speaker' teachers for every school in Korea by 2008. There has been a similar scheme in Japan (JET). The rationale behind this is that children are more motivated to learn and can learn a more accurate model of pronunciation. However, these schemes pose problems as the majority of 'native speaker' teachers are unqualified and have little experience of teaching.

2.5 Teaching Methodology

Table 3. below shows the main findings based on the classroom observations carried out in each country.

	COMMENTS ON METHODOLOGY
Singapore	Teacher-student interaction Good classroom management Age appropriate materials Upper primary – more formal and less-interactive approach Use of supplementary materials
Philippines	Formal style Teaching aids Variety of activities Integrating skills Teacher-centred
Thailand	Songs and games Pair work Some group work Focus on all 4 skills Limited communicative activities
Vietnam	Teacher centred Choral drilling and whole class drilling Emphasis on grammatical accuracy and form of the language Pair work Limited group work Mostly oral practice Little meaningful communication Large amount of L1 used Adult-oriented approach to teaching
Korea	Teacher-centred Whole class activities Drilling Few meaningful or communicative activities Emphasis on correct pronunciation
Taiwan	Emphasis on listening and speaking Variety of activities
Japan	Topic-based approach Games and songs Emphasis on listening and speaking Not text based
Indonesia	Grammar translation method Emphasis on grammatical accuracy Low student involvement Teacher-centred Little meaningful communication

Table 3

The table above gives a summary of the comments from classroom observations. There are some exceptions to these and not all lessons showed evidence of the above, but these comments can be taken as an average. Within countries there can be big differences. For example, in Korea the wide differential between different teachers in terms of their competence in English translates into big differences in methodology.[8] In Vietnam, teachers in Ho Chi Minh City and Danang displayed a more interactive and communicative approach to teaching than teachers in Hanoi.

The explanation for the methodology used can be linked to many factors. In Indonesia and Vietnam, for example, there is no pre-service and very little in-service training for primary English language teachers. A lot of the teachers are graduates from secondary teacher training courses and so it makes sense that they use methodology more suited to adults or teenagers. In Korea, there is little attempt to integrate theory with practice on many in-service courses and text books do not encourage the use of communicative activities.

2.6 Textbooks and Materials

	TEXTBOOKS
Singapore	Set texts: "My Pals are here", "In-Step" and "Celebrate English"
Philippines	Set textbook – "English for All Times" , locally produced. Other textbooks are also used.
Thailand	No recommended textbook. Texts chosen from locally and internationally produced books.
Vietnam	Majority of schools use new MoE textbook – "Let's Learn English" or the old version "Tieng Anh". Only other text used is OUP "Let's Go".
Korea	National set of materials- developed in 1998.
Taiwan	No recommended textbook. Texts are chosen from an officially approved list.
Japan	No specific textbooks. MoE has produced a practical handbook which mentions materials that can be used.
Indonesia	15 kinds of textbooks used. No guidelines from MoE on materials to be used for PELT.

In general, it seems that most schools are free to choose which textbook to use for PELT. However, in some cases, there are no guidelines given by the MoE on selection criteria which means that schools often have difficulty in selecting the most suitable materials for their students.[9] In the Philippines feedback from respondents indicates a lack of materials. Not every child has a textbook. In Vietnam, the MoE textbook is popular because it is cheap. The other options are beyond the means of most parents,

8. Itje Chodidjah "Country Summary Report, Indonesia" 2006
9. Itje Chodidjah "Country Summary Report, Indonesia" 2006

since schools do not provide textbooks for English. There and in Indonesia, lessons are very textbook-based, possibly because teachers lack the confidence and training to experiment and supplement. In Thailand, 36% of respondents felt that the books they use are unsuitable because of their content, difficulty, availability and teaching support. Teachers would like to use a centrally produced MoE textbook that follows the national curriculum and is linked to the national tests. In Korea, teachers cited 'too little variation in activities, too much content to get through and not challenging for students' as the main critiques of the set textbook.

Most teachers interviewed mentioned that they use some form of supplementary materials such as flash cards, puppets, listening material, DVD, internet. In Taiwan, Japan and Singapore, teachers also use storybooks in class.

All countries expressed a need for more materials to supplement textbooks, although another concern is that the curriculum often does not allow much time for activities outside the textbook.

3. Key themes

Despite the differences of the 8 countries involved in the research, a number of recurring themes can be identified.

- Huge demand for English language teaching at primary level

- A tendency to start PELT as early as possible

- Levels of English language competence among primary English language teachers

  □ Where there is competence (Singapore), the issue is level of confidence in teaching pronunciation

- Teacher supply:

  □ Where primary English teachers come from – English majors, general primary teacher training graduates, secondary teacher training graduates, 'native speakers' – and the problems that this can create

- Pre-service training:

  □ PELT modules within exiting general primary teacher training courses

  □ Shorter, intensive courses to retrain graduates

- In-service training courses which:

    □ harmonise interactive, creative PELT techniques and approaches with effective classroom management of large, mixed ability groups

    □ focus on practical rather than theoretical aspects

    □ have follow-up and on-going support

- Teaching methodology:

    □ A move away from teacher-centred, whole class teaching

    □ More meaningful communicative activities

    □ Increased student involvement in lessons

- Policy:

    □ Clearer national guidelines for PELT related to curriculum and textbooks.

4. Implications

From the research studies carried out in the 8 participating countries, the themes mentioned above were considered by respondents to be essential for the successful implementation of primary English language teaching. Training stood out as the most frequently cited concern and the area which often prompted the strongest feelings and reactions from respondents. What was interesting was the common basic need of training in learner-centred approaches.

The scale of the needs of primary teachers in the region is huge, yet the needs are often remarkably similar. The challenge for Primary Innovations will be to take a small fraction of these needs and develop different types of activity, exchanges, and knowledge and skills development in and across all countries, and at the same time building relationships with partners locally and in the UK to ensure longer term sustainability of changes in primary English language teaching.

These themes will be discussed further at the Primary Innovations seminar in Hanoi from 7-9 March 2007.

Annex

Annex 1 Sample interview record form

Questionnaire for research for Regional Project: Primary Innovations

Notes:

- *This template condenses the questions from the questionnaires created by Jayne Moon for her research consultancy in Vietnam in 2005.*

- *The questions on the template give the minimum scope of questions required to enable a 'country comparison', therefore all countries will need to use these questions and complete the grid.*

- *The additional questions on the original questionnaires are optional. If you decide to use them please add them to the template alongside your answers.*

Rationale for introducing the teaching of English language at primary level	Policy makers/local education authorities	School principals	Teachers	Teacher trainers/heads of teacher training colleges
Why is English being taught at primary levels in XXX?				
What is the current government policy on teaching foreign languages at primary schools?				
Are there schools where other subjects are taught through English?				
Benefits of teaching English at primary level				
What benefits do you see for society and the long term?				
What benefits will children gain?				
What problems does/will this create?				
Expected outcomes at the end of primary school				

Rationale for introducing the teaching of English language at primary level	Policy makers/local education authorities	School principals	Teachers	Teacher trainers/heads of teacher training colleges
What outcomes do you expect by the end of primary level?				
What level or which competencies do you think will be achieved?				
Are you satisfied with the outcomes of teaching English at primary level in (your) school? Why/why not?				
Measures taken to implement the teaching of English at primary level in terms of developing appropriate curriculum				
Is there a curriculum for ELT at primary level?				
Is their an attempt in current curriculum to link primary and secondary syllabuses and textbooks?				
Measures been taken to implement the teaching of English at primary level in terms of developing appropriate textbooks/materials				
What teaching materials do teachers use for English?				
How suitable are these materials for teaching English at primary level?				
Measures taken to implement the teaching of English at primary level in terms of developing appropriate training.				
Is it compulsory for primary teachers to be trained before they begin teaching? Type of training and for how long				
Who is eligible to teach English at primary levels?				

Rationale for introducing the teaching of English language at primary level	Policy makers/local education authorities	School principals	Teachers	Teacher trainers/heads of teacher training colleges
What are the entry requirements?				
How do you decide if a teacher has a sufficient level of English to teach at primary level?				
Is there any in-service training provided for teachers?				
Is there any official supervision of teacher once they start working?				
Are English teachers given any special training for teaching English to YLs?				
Has your training prepared you for teaching English at primary school?				
How are teachers assessed during training?				
Perceived problems in implementing the teaching of English at primary level. What problems do you face with implementation?				
What problems do teachers face?				
What problems do schools face?				
Success measures of implementation				
How successful do you think ELT at primary level is so far? Any evidence for success?				
What effect has the introduction of English at primary level had on children's achievements in English at secondary level?				
How do you test children's English and how often?				