Developing pro-MLE language policies in Cambodia and Thailand: The role of civil society and academia

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5th International Conference on Language and Education: Sustainable Development Through Multilingual Education
19-21 October 2016, Bangkok, Thailand
Outline

- Non-dominant language (NDL)
- Multilingual education (MLE)
- Cambodia and Thailand in Southeast Asia
- Why pro-minority developments towards pluralistic language-in-education policies?
- The role of the actors on “the side”, in particular civil society and academia
- Remaining challenges
Non-dominant language (NDL)

Language or language variety **not** considered the **most prominent** in terms of:

- number (of speakers),
- prestige or
- official use by the government and/or the education system in a given state

(Kosonen 2010, 74)
Language Issues in Comparative Education
Inclusive Teaching and Learning in Non-Dominant Languages and Cultures
Carol Benson and Kimmo Kosonen (Eds.)

(Benson & Kosonen 2013)
Policies toward increased NDL use in education

“Change from above” (top-down) approach

National / state-level

Local / community-level

(Kosonen & Benson, forthcoming)
Policies toward increased NDL use in education

“Change from below” (bottom-up) approach

National / state-level

Local / community-level

(Kosonen & Benson, forthcoming)
Policies toward increased NDL use in education

“Change from the side” approach

National / state-level

The “side”

The Side: actors between the grassroots and the government; e.g. academics, activists, INGOs, multilateral agencies etc.

Local / community-level

(Kosonen & Benson, forthcoming)
โอ กะแตะ โอ กะแตะ ปากใจ
อาปัง ซั้ง ปากเนื้อ ยู่ยูน์
มาเจมานอน
อาถุย ละ ป่าแยงศุล, อยู่ นะ มาถุย์
อาถุย.
Cambodia & Thailand in the Southeast Asian context
Languages in Southeast Asia
(Source: Lewis et al, 2013)

Brunei: 19
Timor Leste: 19
Singapore: 24
Cambodia: 125
Thailand: 76
Laos: 86
Vietnam: 109
Myanmar: 116
Malaysia: 138
Philippines: 181
Indonesia: 706
Languages of Cambodia: Percent of total population (more than 3000 speakers)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Khmer, Central</td>
<td>91.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vietnamese</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinese, Mandarin</td>
<td>2.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cham, Western</td>
<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tampuan</td>
<td>0.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mnong, Central</td>
<td>0.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lao</td>
<td>0.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kuy</td>
<td>0.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jarai</td>
<td>0.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kru’ng</td>
<td>0.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stieng, Bulo</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brao</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chong</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kravet</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Lewis et al (2013)

- **Tampuan & Jarai:** New MLE pilot with long-term L1 use programs 2016 -
- **Kuy & Jarai:** Added to MLE programs 2016 -
Languages of Cambodia

- Khmer – 92%
- NDLs – 8%
## Languages of Thailand (1,000,000+ speakers)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language group (with the ISO 639–3 code)</th>
<th>Population</th>
<th>Percent of total</th>
<th>Percent of total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Thai [tha]</td>
<td>20,200,000</td>
<td>39.1%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thai, Northeastern [tts]</td>
<td>15,000,000</td>
<td>29.1%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thai, Northern [nod]</td>
<td>6,000,000</td>
<td>11.6%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thai, Southern [sou]</td>
<td>4,500,000</td>
<td>8.7%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Khmer, Northern [kxm]</td>
<td>1,400,000</td>
<td>2.7%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinese, Min Nan [nan]</td>
<td>1,080,000</td>
<td>2.1%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malay, Pattani [mfa]</td>
<td>1,000,000</td>
<td>1.9%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Lewis et al (2013)
Languages of Thailand

Thai-related – 90%

Patani Malay – 1.9%
Minnan Chinese – 2.1%
N Khmer – 2.7%
Other NDLs – 4.7%
Languages of Thailand

- Thai – S – 8.7%
- Thai – N – 11.6%
- Thai – NE – 29.1%
- NDLs – 11.4%
- Thai – 39.1%
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Languages of Instruction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Brunei Darussalam</td>
<td>Malay, English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cambodia</td>
<td>Khmer, 5 NDLs, 2 NDLs planned, new pilots</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indonesia</td>
<td>Indonesian, NDLs in Papua province</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lao PDR</td>
<td>Lao</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malaysia</td>
<td>Malay, English, Tamil, Mand., NDLs (pilots)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Myanmar</td>
<td>Myanmar, 60+ NDLs in NFE and ECE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philippines</td>
<td>Filipino, English, NDLs (now 19-212)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Singapore</td>
<td>English (main), other OLs (some subjects)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thailand</td>
<td>Thai, some NDLs (pilots) (15+)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Timor-Leste</td>
<td>Portuguese, Tetun, 3 NDLs (pilots)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vietnam</td>
<td>Vietnamese, some NDLs (pilots)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Cambodia
Toward multilingual education
The use of NDLs started in *nonformal education* in the mid-1990s – *pilot projects* by INGOs and government partners.

*Language development*: orthographies, literacy materials etc. (Brao, Bunong, Kavet, Krung, Tampuan etc.)

*Expansion* of bilingual education based on NDLs to the *formal system* – CARE International and their government partners, 2002 - >

2016: 5 *provinces*, 88 *schools* providing multilingual education, 5500+ NDL *students*
Cambodia

- *Education Law, 2007 (Ch.4, Art.24)* - local authorities have a right to choose the language(s) of instruction in areas where Khmer-related NDLs languages are spoken
- “*Guidelines on the implementation of bilingual education [MLE] programs for indigenous children in highland provinces*”, 2010
- *Bilingual Education Decree, 2013*
- *MENAP, 2014-15* (launched March, 2016): four-year action plan on MLE implementation
Multilingual Education National Action Plan (MENAP)

- Four-year (2015-2018) action plan on MLE implementation

- **Vision:**

  - “All ethnic minority children have the right of access to basic education, including the use of their mother tongue in the initial stages of education.”

  - “This Multilingual Education National Action Plan (MENAP) aims to improve the quality of education and expansion of multilingual education in all its aspects.”
Objectives:
- To ensure ethnic minority boys and girls have inclusive access to quality and relevant education;
- To build the capacity of national and sub-national education officials to manage and monitor MLE implementation;
- To scale up MLE provision in relevant provinces;
- To promote demand for quality MLE amongst School Support Committees, parents and local authorities.
Thailand

Toward multilingual education
National Language Policy (NLP) 2010

- By Thai Royal Institute (Society)
- Prime Ministers Abhisit and Yingluck signed the policy in 2010 & 2012, respectively
- The NLP provides strong support for the use of non-dominant languages in general and all learners’ first languages in society and in education
- Implementation plan being drafted
- Implementation budget promised several times, also in early 2016
- Pilot projects continue, good outcomes so far
- Political situation holding implementation back
“--- various ethnic groups ... have the right to use their mother tongues in their homes, in their communities, and in public places. This includes the use of their mother tongue in the education system for their young people.” (Sect 4.)

The NLP “--- support[s] the use of the ethnic languages, or the mother tongue, as the first language of children in the education system”. (Sect 4.)

“It is the policy of the government to promote bilingual or multilingual education for the youth of the ethnic groups whose mother tongue is different from the national language (Thai) ... in order to strengthen the study of the Thai language and to support the cognitive development and education of children.” (Sect 5.)
Pro-minority developments: Why?

- Long-term commitment of actors on ‘the side’ (local and international academics, mid-level govt. officials, local CSOs, local and international NGOs, and international organizations)
  - advocacy & awareness raising
  - corpus planning of NDLs (linguistic research, orthographies, standardization)
  - pilot projects (ECE, NFE, Formal PE)
Pro-minority developments: Why?

- Fruitful **partnership** between external actors, local communities and government agencies
- Persistent **advocacy** on the importance of the L1-based education by the actors on the side
- Strong **NDL community** participation
Pro-minority developments: Why?

- **In Cambodia:** Progressive national leaders – “visionaries” --> official support for NDLs in education
- **In Cambodia:** Timely and sustainable transfer of responsibility from external actors to government agencies
- **In Cambodia:** Relatively small NDL population (~ 8-10%)
Policies toward increased NDL use in education

“Change from the side” approach

National / state-level

The “side”

The Side: actors between the grassroots and the government; e.g. academics, activists, INGOs, multilateral agencies etc.

Local / community-level

(Kosonen & Benson, forthcoming)
Remaining challenges

- **Limited understanding** among many government officials of L1-based education, resulting in slow expansion of MLE
- **Lack of political will** and technical resources which would enable MLE to be implemented in all NDL communities
- **Political sensitivities** regarding many NDL communities due to increasing nationalism (of the dominant EL community), which hinder language development and MLE delivery
Remaining challenges

- Government agencies’ vs. academics’ understanding of ethnolinguistic classification
- Security concerns with some NDL communities in the border areas.
- Policy implementation only in some – not all – non-dominant languages
Kiitos!
Thank you!
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References:


References:


References:
