

Multilingualism, Bi/Multilingual Education and Social Inclusion: A Case Study in Southern Thailand

Suwilai Premsrirat

Resource Center for Documentation, Revitalization and Maintenance of Endangered Languages and Cultures, Research Institute for Languages and Cultures of Asia, Mahidol University, Bangkok, Thailand

suwilai.pre@mahidol.ac.th

Mirinda Burarungrot

Resource Center for Documentation, Revitalization and Maintenance of Endangered Languages and Cultures, Research Institute for Languages and Cultures of Asia, Mahidol University, Bangkok, Thailand

mirinda.bur@mahidol.edu

Abstract

In a multicultural-multilingual society, inclusion requires equitable access to quality education as stated – UN Sustainable Development Goals, target 4 (SDG4). In the deep south of Thailand, the majority Muslim population speak Patani Malay in daily life, making language identity an issue as it is not recognized for official use. Students are required to study in Thai and as a result have the lowest academic achievement in the country. Furthermore, parents and the community have no confidence in government schools and some even fear that education is being used to destroy their ethnic identity. This paper presents a participatory action research, a Patani Malay-Thai mother tongue-based bi/multilingual education programme, implemented in Thailand's Deep South as a case study of academic efforts to create social inclusion. Policies and practices will be discussed and related to the reinforcement of ethnic identity, enhancing educational achievement and tightening social cohesion.

Keywords

mother tongue-based multilingual education – inclusion – Patani Malay

1 Introduction¹

Language plays an important role as a medium of communication and expression of identity as well as a tool to access cultural, symbolic, political and material resources. Language use and language choice in education are pivotal in determining social inclusion or social exclusion.

Linguistically diverse or multilingual societies are increasing worldwide. At the present time in the Asia-Pacific region, apart from the indigenous population, there are large numbers of people moving for work and higher education reasons as well as those who are internally displaced and migrate due to conflict, poverty, climate change and social injustice. This has produced an increasingly complex ethnolinguistic landscape in society today.

2 Linguistic Landscape of Thailand

A country such as Thailand is home to more than 70 indigenous languages belonging to five language families – Tai-Kadai, Austroasiatic, Austronesian, Tibeto Burman and Hmong-Mien. There is also a large diaspora who speak various Chinese dialects and Indian languages who have been living in Thailand for generations. Migrant workers from the neighbouring countries such as Myanmar, Laos, Cambodia and Vietnam including Bangladesh have added significantly to this mix not to mention those from other parts of the world. This has created a complex and linguistically diverse and multilingual society in Thailand.

Languages in Thai society function in a hierarchical relationship. At the local level, apart from indigenous languages in the five language families mentioned above, there are still other languages such as diaspora languages consisting of Chinese and Indian languages, the languages of migrant workers from neighbouring countries and sign language for the deaf. At the higher level, there are Thai regional languages that are normally used as the lingua franca of languages in the region. These include Khammuang or Northern Thai, Lao Isan or Northeastern Thai, Paktai or Southern Thai and Thai Klang or Central Thai in the central part of Thailand. At the highest level is Thai or Standard Thai, which is the official/national language. It is derived from a variety of Central Thai. It is used as the medium of instruction in education and mass media all over the country. Apart from that, international languages such as English, Chinese and neighbouring ASEAN languages are important socially and

1 All photos of this article can be found at the URL <https://doi.org/10.6084/m9.figshare.19228578>.

economically. People in Thailand who live along the border normally speak a language related to the language used across the border such as Malay (south), Khmer (northeast) and various hill tribe languages (north).

Thai is the only official/national language of the country but only about 50% of the population use it proficiently as their first language or mother tongue. It is used as a medium of instruction at all levels of education all over the country. This has led to language shift and language decline which is evident in all indigenous languages, especially among the small languages (Premsrirat 2018, 27–44). At the same time, underachievement in education is also a characteristic of those students whose mother tongue is different from the school language and this is most obvious among those living in border regions in the Deep South, in the highlands of the far north and on distant islands. For large language groups living along the border with neighbouring countries, not only is their mother language declining but the majority have little access to government services, education in particular; they experience exclusion in and by education. On the southern border of Thailand for example Patani Malay is the language spoken by the majority. Others are Thai (Standard Thai), southern Thai, Thai Je-he or Thai Takbai, Satun Malay, Bahasa Malaysia, Chinese, and Arabic which is the language of the Qur'an (Premsrirat et al. 2001)

3 Education in a Bi/multilingual Society: UN Recommendations and International Research

In multilingual-multicultural societies today, to enable groups from a diverse range of linguistic and cultural backgrounds to co-exist in harmony in society while retaining their individual ethnic identity, education can play a critical role in ensuring sustainable development and promoting a peaceful environment. However, ensuring that each individual has an equal opportunity to educational progress remains a challenge worldwide. UNESCO's *Sustainable Development Goal 4* on education and the *Education 2030 Framework for Action* emphasizes inclusion and equity as essential in laying the foundations for quality education for all.

Reaching excluded and marginalized groups and providing them with quality education requires the formulation and implementation of inclusive policies and programmes. In this context, UNESCO promotes inclusive education systems that; remove the barriers limiting the participation and achievement of all learners; respect diverse needs, abilities and characteristics; and eliminate all forms of discrimination in the learning environment.

What type of education is recommended? According to UNESCO's position paper "Education in a Multilingual World" (UNESCO 2003, 30), three principles are recommended.

Principle I: UNESCO supports mother-tongue instruction as a means of improving educational quality by building upon the knowledge and experience of the learners and teachers.

Principle II: UNESCO supports bilingual or multilingual education at all levels of education as a means of promoting both social and gender equality and as a key element of linguistically diverse societies.

Principle III: UNESCO supports language as an essential component of inter-cultural education in order to encourage understanding between different population groups and ensure respect for fundamental rights.

What is bi/multilingual education?² It is the use of ethnic minority mother tongues³ as the main language of instruction for all subjects in the early grades, and systematically bridging to other languages (national and international language). It is also referred to as "Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education (MTB-MLE)"; an education programme for children who do not understand or speak the official school language when they begin school. MTB-MLE students learn to read and write first in their mother tongue. They use their MT for learning as they learn to understand, speak, read and write the official school language (and additional languages according to the curriculum). They use both their MT and the official language for learning in later grades. The goal of strong MTB-MLE programmes is that students will become fully bilingual, biliterate and bicultural and achieve a quality education. (Malone 2016, 30–37). According to Cummins (2009), "The level of development of children's mother tongue is a strong predictor of their second language development. Children who came to school with a solid foundation in their mother tongue develop stronger literacy abilities in the school language". Worldwide research confirms the benefits to children of early learning and literacy in their mother tongue because this provides them with an excellent foundation for future learning. Well-known research by Thomas and Collier (1997) on various bilingual programmes in the US that took 14 years and involved more than 10,000 students

2 Bi/Multilingual Education (Bi/MLE): The use of two or more languages in the educational system. Bi/MLE is often used interchangeably with MLE and MTB-MLE. However, a programme that uses two or more languages but not the mother tongue of the student is "MLE", but it is not "MTB-MLE".

3 Mother tongue: the first language a child uses for communication in the home and community, usually the language the child knows best. Mother tongue (MT), home language and first language (L1) are often used interchangeably.

confirms that the longer the mother tongue is used in the classroom the better was the result achieved.

In this paper, Patani Malay-Thai bi/multilingual education (PMT-Bi/MLE or PMT-MLE),⁴ is presented as a case study of academic efforts to create better social inclusion to ensure educational development and peaceful co-existence in Thai society.

4 Patani Malay-Thai Bi/Multilingual Education

In Thailand's Deep South, 83% of the population or more than a million people in the four border provinces, are Muslim and speak Patani Malay. This area was once part of the Patani Sultanate and a major centre of Islamic Studies. The language identity issue is believed to underly much of the political unrest and violence experienced in this part of Thailand over the past few decades.

Two main issues concern Patani Malay speaking communities in Thailand's Deep South.

1. Language Identity. Local Melayu or Patani Malay (PM⁵), which is the mother tongue of the people in the area, is not officially accepted or used in education. At the same time, it is clear that the ethnic language and culture is declining at a rapid rate in the urban areas of the three provinces: Patani, Yala and Narathiwat where a creole-formation of a mixed language is increasingly being used and a case of language death has occurred in Satun. Local communities, as a result, suffer low self-confidence and insecurity.
2. Chronic under-achievement in school. The students in Thailand's Deep South have the lowest scores in national testing. Around 40% are still illiterate by grade 3, a result commonly blamed on the compulsory use of Thai only in schools. A large segment of the population feels excluded from national development because more than 700+ government primary schools in this area comprise PM speaking Muslims and there is widespread fear that education is being used as a means to destroy their language and religious identity.

4 a type of education that starts with PM and Thai then includes Bahasa Malaysia and English.

5 PM: Patani Malay is a variety of Malay spoken by more than a million people in four southern border provinces of Thailand; Pattani, Yala, Narathiwat and Songkhla (four districts). It is similar to the Kelantan Malay used in Northern Malaysia but very different from Bahasa Malaysia.

In 2004, long-simmering discontent in the Deep South erupted violently and the following decade would witness some 6,000 deaths including more than 170 teachers killed (Human Rights Watch 2010; Rattana and Chinnawornkomol 2014; Nanuam 2015; Deep South Watch 2016).

In 2005–2006, the National Reconciliation Commission (NRC) chaired by former Prime Minister Anand Panyarachun, recommended bilingual education as part of the solution (Macan-Marker 2012). In 2005, the Ministry of Education (under the Minister Chaturon Chaisaeng) subsequently approved the use of the Patani Malay (PM) language alongside Thai in government schools in the Deep South. In 2007, the Research Institute of Languages and Cultures of Asia, Mahidol University, with experts in researching PM oral literatures in the area, decided to spear-head a nine-year Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education (MTB- MLE) Pilot Project in the conflict zone as a participatory-action research in which the mother tongue in both spoken and written form were used as the language of instruction from kindergarten 1 to primary grade 6 in four government schools. UNICEF, Thailand Research Fund and Mahidol University provided funding and project design expertise.

The goals of the project were to facilitate Patani Malay speaking children to speak, read and write well in both Patani Malay and Thai, whilst retaining their Malay identity at the local level and Thai identity at the national level. Ultimately, the project aimed for them to be able to live with dignity in the wider Thai society and to foster true and lasting national reconciliation.

This conforms to the UNESCO Education 2030 agenda for Sustainable Development, with its focus on leaving no one behind and provides a unique opportunity to build more inclusive, just and fair societies. The children from marginalized groups such as those with disabilities, indigenous groups, ethnic minorities, migrants and refugees (who are not achieving minimum proficiency levels in reading and mathematics) are ensured inclusion and equity in education.

However, inclusive education is not just about making sure that all learners are enrolled and attending school, it is also about ensuring that they are participating, learning and achieving to the best of their ability, academically and for society.

To understand the ‘sociolinguistic realities in the region’, a language situation survey was carried out among PM speakers to examine language use, language ability and language attitudes.⁶ Three-quarters of survey respondents

6 Suwilai Premsrirat et al., 2007. Language Situation Survey in Southernmost Provinces of Thailand. Resource Center for Documentation, Revitalization and Maintenance of Endangered Languages and Cultures. Nakhonpathom: Research Institute for Languages and Cultures of Asia, Mahidol University.

answered that PM was the most frequently used language of their daily lives. A number of respondents cited a mix of PM and Thai and other languages such as southern Thai, Thai Je-he or Thai Takbai, Chinese, Arabic etc. Perhaps the most significant finding of the survey was the strong desire on the part of parents for the use of PM language with Thai in education.

5 New Practices and Policies to Address the Needs of PM Students

The Patani Malay-Thai Bi-Multilingual Education (PMT-Bi/MLE) project has made significant efforts to promote inclusion and equity through policies and practices that address the needs of PM students. Since the primary policy is to use the local language, Patani Malay (PM), as the language of education in school, language planning needs to be carefully carried out. This includes status, corpus and acquisition planning, and the language speakers and community are actively encouraged to be involved in all steps of the working process as a guarantee of inclusion and equity in education.

1. Status Planning is concerned with raising the function and status of PM in the society. PM is to be used as a language of education in school.
2. Corpus Planning is concerned with the language development and standardization of PM. This is very important because PM is a spoken language used in the daily lives of the people. The writing system for the PM has to be established and standardized to be used as a tool for recording and producing literature in PM including dictionary compiling, grammar and literature production and vocabulary expansion and all the instructional materials for each class from kindergarten to Grade 6. This includes teaching and learning materials in both PM and Thai and transferred materials from PM to Thai as well as from PM to initial standard Malay.
3. Acquisition Planning involves the implementation of PMT- Bi/MLE in pre-primary⁷ and primary education which comprises 11 components proposed by Susan Malone (2016). They are Preliminary research, Realistic implementation plan; Awareness raising and mobilizing partners; Acceptable alphabet and writing system; Curriculum and instructional materials; Reading and learning materials; Teacher recruitment and training; Monitoring and evaluation; Networking and supportive

7 Pre-primary: An educational programme for young learners before they enter Grade 1 of the formal system. Depending on the educational system, the programme may be called "preschool" or "kindergarten".

partnerships; and Supportive policy. In this paper, only some activities will be mentioned.

6 Establishing a PM Writing System

For establishing a PM writing system, the three scripts available in the area are considered.

1. Jawi is an Arabic-based script used for writing Central Malay rather than PM, and it is widely used especially for religious documents. People see it as their language identity.
2. Rumi is a romanized script used in Malaysia and Indonesia. It is really only popular among those who have studied in Malaysia or Indonesia.
3. Thai-based PM is commonly used in non-formal education and in PM lessons for teaching Thai government officials. It is also used as a tool for the documentation of cultural texts such as local poetry, folktales and songs.

After much discussion among the research team and PM speakers, a practical, Thai-based PM was finally chosen for pedagogical reasons. The Thai-based writing system is used for producing instructional materials in PM for early years of schooling and has proved able to be effectively transferred to Thai which is the medium of education at all levels.

7 Curriculum Development and Instructional Materials Production

Curriculum development is based on Ministry of Education standard/competencies with additional MLE principles. The PM-Thai curriculum builds on the knowledge and experience the students bring when they begin school. It focuses on three kinds of developments which form the basis for developing teaching and learning materials and activities, namely, language development, academic/concept development and socio-cultural development or “learning to live together”. Language development is a “step by step” language learning and literacy process. The children attend school immersed in their home language and culture in kindergarten 1. They can continue using their language or oral PM at school with the teacher without feeling stress. Oral Thai is introduced to them in the second semester using the Total Physical Response approach⁸ or TPR (Asher 1977) for learning and understanding simple Thai

8 Total Physical Response (TPR): A teaching-learning approach to language learning through actions, as proposed by Asher (1977). It is often used to teach a second or new language.

vocabulary and sentences. In kindergarten 2, literacy or reading and writing PM using Thai-based PM orthography is introduced while oral Thai continues to introduce more Thai vocabulary. At Grade 1, the children learn to read and write in Thai and become literate towards the end of the year while continuing oral and literacy skills in PM. Then, from Grade 2 to Grade 6, standard Malay and English are introduced, with PM and Thai continuing as before.

Since PM is used as the language of instruction in school together with Thai, it can be included at almost every stage of the work process from the very beginning. A large amount of instructional materials based on PM language and culture has been produced. The language speakers are involved in writing stories, editing, drawing pictures and book binding as well as transferring material content from PM to Thai.

In addition, higher-level and critical thinking can be emphasized for all subjects at every level (Bloom 1956). The language speakers are trained to teach bilingually (PM), focusing initially on the mother tongue using various teaching techniques and instructional materials such as community stories, reading and answering questions, cultural scenes using questions to stimulate higher level thinking, reading big and small books (top-down technique), learning to read and write in PM using PM primer (bottom-up technique) and learning Thai by using transferred primer from PM to Thai.

Once the students know how to read and write, they really enjoy reading and love writing.

For teaching general subjects such as science, the sandwich technique is used. The concept is explained in PM and then the academic terminology in Thai is introduced right after that because the students have to use the Thai text book and learn in Thai in higher grades.

In general, the students are happier, more talkative and more creative. They love going to school now and love reading and writing. The teachers are happy and the parents are proud of their children. The community is pleased and has more confidence in the government schools.

8 PM Community's Responses

The followings are examples of comments⁹ by parents, teachers, community members, educational supervisors and local scholars. Their satisfaction and

9 With regard to the community's comments, these were recorded on multiple occasions over the 10 years. Here, they are used as examples only but a footnote has been added to cite the Final Report of Patani Malay-Thai Bi-Multilingual Education Research Project (2007–2016)

confidence in the government school as expressed below indicates that Thai and the Malay speakers are living happily and peacefully together.

"This project is very useful. It has brought back our Melayu identity. I would like to pray for Allah to make this project sustainable forever." Teacher of Islam.

"This bilingual program has solved the problem of language incompetency. In addition to being proud of their native language, children have learnt to live with others who speak different languages. Communication using different languages or unequal levels of language understanding causes dissatisfaction among people. Thai and Malay people should be able to effectively communicate since we live in the same country." Veteran (20 years) preschool teacher.

"I am very pleased and happy to have the PMT project. It was the first big project with cooperation from various stakeholders: well-known people, big universities, government agencies, international organizations. This has empowered us to work more and given us an opportunity to raise quality of our young generations." Former university lecturer in Pattani.

"I will dedicate all my heart and energy to work on this project. It is an educational development project for our students in the Deep South. Three basic things needed for educational development here are; 1) Patani Malay 2) Critical thinking and 3) Thai literacy. This is an advantage of using the Thai-based Patani Malay writing". Former teacher and Chair of Patani Cultural Council.

"Parents could see their child's development in speaking and reading Thai and Patani Malay from the beginning of the bilingual program. They are greatly satisfied and proud of their children."

"Bilingual education is a good start for youth education in the Deep South. It helps with the students' cognitive development, provides good basics for Thai language study and is a way to preserve their Malay language identity."

(PMT Project) (Suwilai Premsrirat, Sahe Abdullah Al-yufri, Waemaji Paramal, Waeyusoh Samaalee, Jehusen Je-Ubong, Hassana Je-Ubong, Mirinda Burarungrot, Uniansasmita Samoh, Rusdee Masor, Siripen Ungsittipoonporn, et al. 2019) which contains information of these comments.

"This project represents a new way of thinking about education for PM speaking students, which is opposite to the original thinking of Thai education authorities and Thai education policy."

The head of the Pattani educational area supervisor has expressed her contentment with the PMT-MLE.

"I am so happy to be a part of the team that developed the educational curriculum based on the students' cultural and society context which is valuable not only for the students but also for their family, society and country. I am very proud to see the teachers could help develop the students' abilities according to their potential to make them quality students using this approach."

Over a decade of working in this program, I have seen students really enjoy learning. They are very happy in class. The approach is really child centered based on individual differences and the students' social, cultural and community context. This approach has solved the language problem. Our students have a good command of Thai. PM helps them to learn Thai better. It is obvious that they are very happy to learn the three basic skills needed for children in 21st century, Reading-Writing, arithmetic and communication technology (critical thinking, communication ability, collaboration with others, and creativity)."

Teachers' Comments:

"I am very proud and very happy to see the children's eagerness to learn."

"I have seen our students are happier in their language studies and they are also achieving more in other subjects compared to students in other schools of the same level."

"The kindergarten students have fun here. Nuzara-heeda enjoys the lively teaching method. She has had more chances to express herself, and ask questions about the lessons in her own language."

"My students better understand Thai. They are more intimate with me. They look happier when studying. They dare to express their creative thinking and imagination because there is no language obstruction."

"The bilingual education destroys the language barrier. The effective learning process helps students to have a strong foundation in Thai."

“Apart from having a good command of Thai, the students dare to express themselves more than before; they are more tolerant and softer because they understand Thai more.”

“Learning Thai-based PM helps the students to learn faster because they understand what they are doing.”

Parents' comments:

“(The PMT Bilingual Education) is very very good. The students know how to read and write when they go up to Grade 1. They know both Melayu and Thai.” Member of local community council, Pattani.

“Using PM helps my child to learn mathematics very fast. The use of PM helps her to understand thoroughly and she can think by herself.”

“My child has confidence in herself. She is able to present her work in front of the class. She can speak Thai very well and is very fluent. She can be the leader of the class. I am very proud and very happy.”

“I am so happy that my child has confidence in herself. She can apply the bilingual education to learning Al-Qur'an and Arabic.”

“In the past my elder child could not read, but now my younger child can read and write with no difficulty”.

Children really enjoy their study. They are very happy to go to school every day – do not want the school break. They sometimes do not want to sleep during the day but want to write.”

The PMT-Bi/MLE has had a positive influence on the families by bringing the different generations closer together. Using PM language, parents and grandparents can better relate to their children's schooling. Before this, they felt alienated by their children's education and had no opportunity to help their children with their school work.

9 PMT-MLE Programme Academic Assessment

A longitudinal assessment carried out by Yala Rajabhat University (YRU) and the Institute for Deep South Research and Development revealed that the MLE

experimental schools outperformed the regular schools that use only Thai as medium of instruction. In 2011, YRU staff began student evaluations of both the experimental (PMT-Bi/MLE) schools and Thai-only comparison schools, when the first cohort of students were beginning primary grade 1. YRU followed these students until 2016, when they completed primary grade 6.

In this longitudinal study, Cheni et al. (2017) evaluated the first cohort of students who had studied from grades 1 to 6 during the academic year 2010 to 2015 in six schools (three for the experimental schools and the rest for the comparison schools) in the Deep South of Thailand. The instruments used were the achievement tests of three learning areas including mathematics, science and Thai language, as well as reading skills developed through the construction process of a standard test. The objective of the study was to evaluate the achievement of the MLE programme using PM and Thai.

The academic achievement for students in the experimental schools was found to be significantly higher than that of students from the comparison schools at a level of 0.01. The number of students who passed the basic educational criteria was higher for the MLE schools than the comparison schools over the six-year period at a rate of 72.5% to 44.5%. PMT-Bi/MLE was found to be very helpful for low and mid-level performing students – who make up the majority of students in the South – helping them to achieve a satisfactory performance at a rate much higher than similar students in the comparison schools. The greatest impact for MLE was in early primary (grades 1–3). Finally, scores on the critical thinking skills assessment of the MLE students was higher than the comparison schools at a level of 65.15% to 38.02%. Thus, this six-year research project has clearly shown that MLE can help solve the problems of teaching and learning in Thailand's three southern border provinces (Cheni and Sintana 2016).

Cheni and Sintana (2016) compared the number of PMT-MLE students (98) with the number of students (72) in Thai-only pre-primary and primary classrooms. The scores represent the result of tests in mathematics, science and reading. The bars on the graph show the number of students from each group whose scores were in each range, from 0–10 up to 90–100 (in other words, the range from poor to excellent). Most students in the control school group (38 out of 72) scored in the 20–50 percent range, while most students in the PMT-Bi/MLE group (58 out of 98) scored in the 70–100 percent ranges. Looked at another way, almost 60 percent of PMT-Bi/MLE students score in the 70–100 range, while only 25 percent of Thai-only PM students scored in that range. PMT-Bi/MLE has helped the majority of students move from low-mid level achievement to mid-high achievement, and almost all of the students have benefited from PMT-Bi/MLE.

Burarungrot (2016) examined the Thai writing skills of first grade PM students in two PMT-MLE experimental schools and two Thai-only comparison schools. The test consisted of five parts: letter dictation, filling in the initial consonant of words, ordering words in a sentence, writing a word from a picture and constructing sentences from given words. The results show that PMT-MLE students had higher scores across all five parts of the test compared to students from the Thai-only comparison schools, especially in parts 1, 2, 4, and 5 of the tests, which were statistically significant, as indicated in Figure 1.

One of the key arguments used against MTB-MLE, is that it takes time away from the learners' study of the Thai language. Nevertheless, the PMT students spent considerably less time (at least 50 percent less) on Thai language learning than Thai-only students, yet were able to perform significantly better in Thai writing tests than the Thai-only students.

In order to determine whether the process mentioned in the preceding section was effective in helping PM students learn Thai, Grade 6 Ordinary National Educational Test (O-NET) – regarded as an important benchmark of students success to O-NET scores in each school – Cheni and Sintana (2016) analyzed the O-NET results of PMT-MLE 'experimental' students in a comparison with the aggregate scores of students in the three southernmost provinces, the southern educational region (consisting of 14 provinces) and national scores.

The results displayed above reflect the average scores across three subjects: Thai language, science and mathematics. It is clear that PMT-MLE students performed much better overall than their peers in the Deep South, although they still lag slightly behind regional and national averages. Still, the O-NET scores do indicate the PMT-Bi/MLE students are meeting Ministry of Education benchmarks. This is testament to the success of mother tongue-based education in developing learners' potential across all academic domains.

Since skilled teachers are so important, PMT-Bi/MLE has been included as part of teacher education at the Faculty of Education, Yala Rajabhat University, since 2014. About 30 student interns undergo teacher training and practice at the PMT experimental schools each year.

10 Conclusion

PMT Bi/Multilingual Education in Southern Thailand, as a case of inclusive education, addresses long-standing problems about language identity and educational development. Relying on active community participation, it provides a good foundation to higher grades and lifelong learning, supports

school-based language revitalization and maintenance and also introduces a tangible component toward national reconciliation.

The process of language development and mother tongue-based education and its positive results are evident in the community's responses and longitudinal academic assessment. These have been shown to empower communities, a key ingredient to social inclusion for indigenous and ethnic minorities. Furthermore, it lays a strong foundation for achieving SDG4¹⁰ by 2030 which calls upon education systems "to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all".

The linguistic landscape of Thai society today is increasingly complex and using mother tongue-based multilingual education has yielded positive results both academically and socially. This should be recognized by the national government and adopted as part of its education policy. This would encourage the powers-that-be to utilize it as a national policy.

A serious challenge however has come from policy makers who consistently underestimate the value of ethnic languages, making it hard to obtain financial support for teacher training or instructional material production. Most positively though, the National Language Policy of Thailand now recognizes the value of using the mother tongue as the foundation for learning other languages and other subjects, and together with the new Twenty-year National Strategic Plan (2019–2039) promises support for languages other than Thai to be a part of mainstream education including local ones, many of which may yet be saved from extinction.

Inclusive and equity-based language education policies can play a vital role in improving social cohesion and building trust between government and minority communities, as well as improving the lives of children and it is encouraging that the Thai leadership now understands this. Regarding multilingualism or language diversity as a "problem" has for too long contributed to social exclusion and, in southern Thailand's case, social tensions/violence. This can be changed by recognizing language as a resource and a right that can serve to bind and unite diverse communities in peace and informed understanding. It is through equity and equal opportunity that true inclusion can be achieved.

References

- Asher, James J. 1977. *Learning Another Language Through Actions*. Los Gatos CA: Sky Oaks Productions.

¹⁰ SDG4: Sustainable Development Goals Target 4. It is one of the 17th targets of the SDGs.

- Bloom, Benjamin. 1956. *Taxonomy of Educational Objectives 1: Cognitive Domain*. London: Longman.
- Burarungrot, Mirinda. 2016. "Writing Skills Transfer from Patani Malay (L1) to Thai (L2) in Mother Tongue-based Bi/Multilingual Education Schools: A Case Study in Patani Malay-Thai in Southernmost Provinces of Thailand." PhD Dissertation, Mahidol University.
- Cheni, Yapar, and Supaluk Sintana. 2016. *Report on an Assessment of the Bilingual Teaching and Learning Administration Using Thai and Melayu Dialects in Schools in the Four Southern Border Provinces of Thailand*. Institute for Southern Border Area Research and Development, Yala Rajabhat University. Unpublished manuscript.
- Cheni, Yapar, Suppalak Sintana, Supa Watcharasukum, Pimonpun Leelapatarapun, Pranee Lumbensa, Pimpawee Suwanno, Anas Rungwittayapun, et al. 2017. "Has the Implementation of MLE Improved the Achievements in Thailand's Deep South?" *International Journal of English Linguistics* 7(5): 54–64.
- Cummins, Jim. 2009. "Bilingual Children's Mother Tongue: Why Is It Important for Education?" *Sprogforum* 7(19): 15–20.
- Deep South Watch. 2016. "Than kho mun DSID: Kan wikhro khomun hetkan khwam mai sa-ngop nai phuenthi changwat chaidan phaktai nai rop pi 2558 [DSID database: The Analysis of the Unrest Situation Data in the Southern Border Provinces in 2013]." *Deep South Watch*, January 4, 2016. <https://deepsouthwatch.org/th/node/7942>. (in Thai).
- Human Rights Watch. 2010. *Targets of Both Sides: Violence against Students, Teachers, and Schools in Thailand's Southern Border Province*. New York: Human Right Watch. https://www.hrw.org/reports/thailand0910sum_web.pdf.
- Macan-Marker, Marwaan. 2012. "Thailand: Malay-Muslim Insurgency – Lesson Learnt." *Inter Press Service News Agency*, January 17, 2012. <http://www.ipsnews.net/2012/01/thailand-malay-muslim-insurgency-lessons-learnt>.
- Malone, Susan. 2016. "Overview of the MTB MLE Resource Kit." In *MTB MLE Resource Kit Including the Excluded: Promoting Multilingual Education*, Edited by Sandra Mary Barron, 1–12. Paris: The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.
- Nanuam, Wassana. 2015. "Violence in South Down ahead of Peace Talks." *Bangkok Post*, March, 20, 2015. <http://www.bangkokpost.com/news/security/503293/violence-in-south-down-ahead-of-peace-talks>.
- Premsrirat, Suwilai. 2018. "Mahidol Model for the Preservation of Language Diversity: Thailand Experience." In *Language Revitalization: Insights from Thailand*, edited by Suwilai Premsrirat and David Hirsh, 27–44. Bern, Switzerland: Peter Lang CH.
- Premsrirat, Suwilai., Issara Choosri, Akapong Suwannaket, Sutjaritlak Deeaphadung, Sophana Srichampa, Greg Lyon, Philip Dil, et al. 2001. *Ethnolinguistic Maps of*

- Thailand*. Bangkok: Institute of Languages and Cultures for Rural Development, Mahidol University.
- Premrirat, Suwilai., Ubonwan Pitipattanakosit, Sahe Abdullah Al-yufri, Waemaji Paramal, Mirinda Burarungrot, Rusdee Masor, et al. 2007. *Language Situation Survey in Southernmost Provinces of Thailand. Resource Center for Documentation, Revitalization and Maintenance of Endangered Languages and Cultures*. Nakhonpathom: Research Institute for Languages and Cultures of Asia, Mahidol University.
- Premrirat, Suwilai, Sahe Abdullah Al-yufri, Waemaji Paramal, Waeyusoh Samaalee, Jehusen Je-Ubong, Hassana Je-Ubong, Mirinda Burarungrot, Uniansasmita Samoh, Rusdee Masor, Siripen Ungsittipoonporn, et al. 2019. *Final Report of Patani Malay-Thai Bi-Multilingual Education Research Project (2007–2016) (PMT Project)*. Nakhonpathom: Institute of Languages and Cultures for Rural Development, Mahidol University, Thailand.
- Rattana, Supitcha, and Nakarin Chinnawornkomol. 2014. "Pattani Teacher Killed by Gas-cylinder Bomb." *The Nation*, August 29, 2014. <http://www.nationmultimedia.com/national/Pattani-teacher-killed-by-gas-cylinder-bomb-30242031.html>.
- The National Reconciliation Commission. 2006. *Report of the National reconciliation Commission (NRC): Overcoming Violence through the Power of Reconciliation (Unofficial Translation)*. Bangkok: Printing Division of Secretariat of the Cabinet.
- Thomas, Wayne, and Virginia Collier. 1997. *School Effectiveness for Language Minority Students*. Washington DC: National Clearinghouse for Bilingual Education.
- UNESCO. 2003. *Education in a Multilingual World: UNESCO Education Position Paper*. Place de Fontenoy, Paris: UNESCO.