

Views from teachers – sharing perspectives from practitioner workshops

Theo Marinis



Multilingualism in education: evidence in practice and policy
12th February 2020

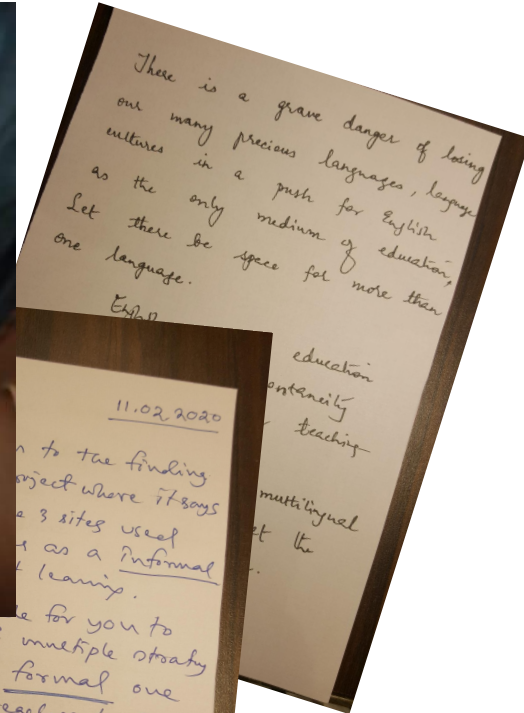
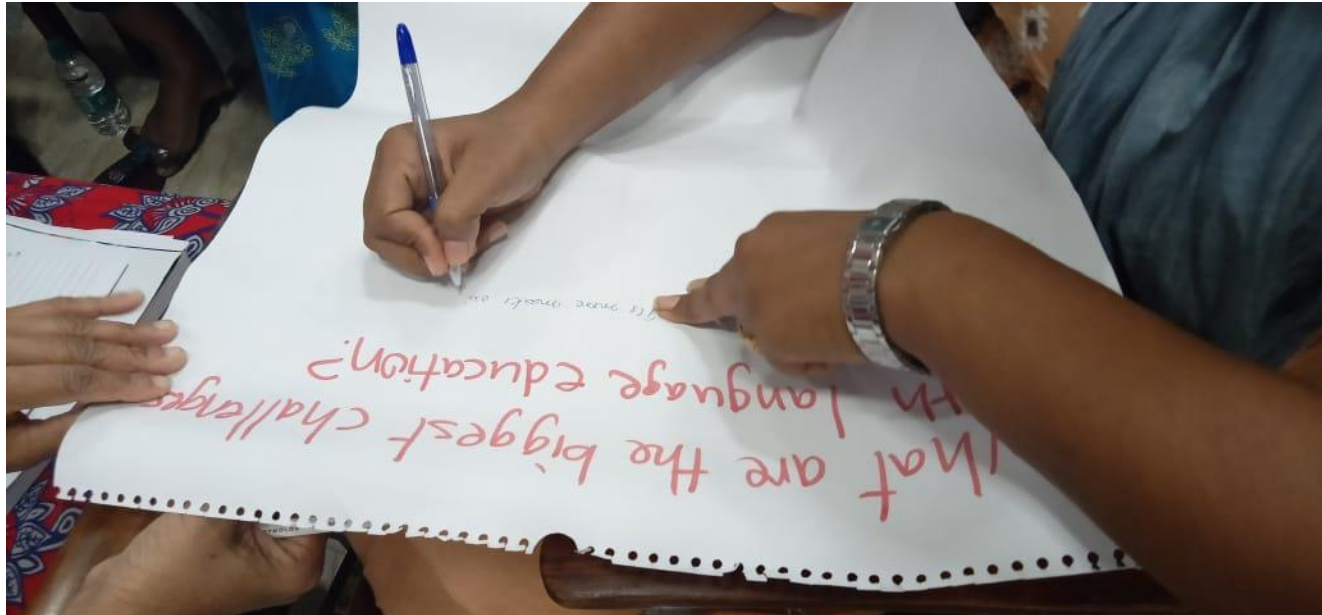
Practitioner workshops

152 practitioners participated

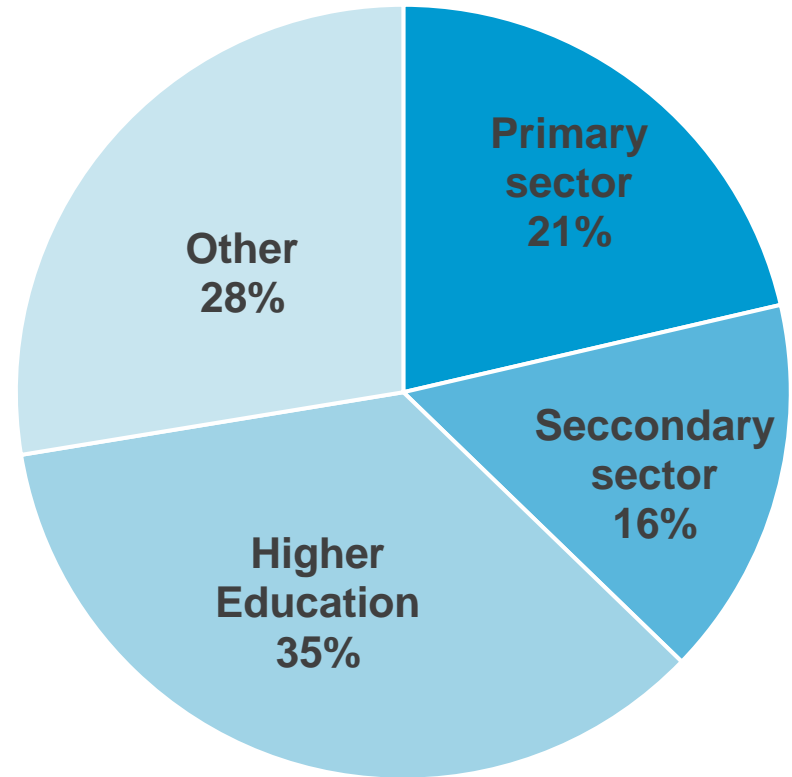
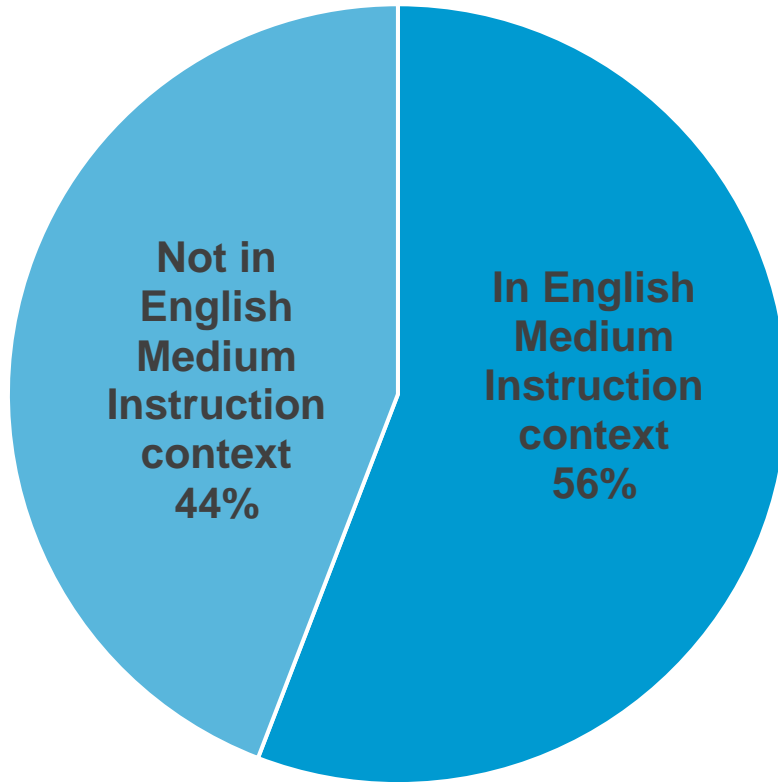
Group work to answer the following questions:

- How do I feel about **multilingual education**?
- How do I feel about **English Medium Instruction**?
- What are the **biggest challenges** when it comes to language education / language of instruction?
- What do I need the **most support with** when it comes to language of instruction?
- How do you use **a mixture of languages** in your classes – how do you feel about this?
- What is the **one thing that you would ask policy makers to change** with regard to language in education?

Practitioner workshops



Practitioner workshops



Languages used by learners

Languages	Languages
Assamese	*Lambadi
*Banjara	Marathi
Bengali	Malayalam
Boro	Oriya
Braille	Punjabi
English	*Sign language
Gujarati	Tamil
Hindi	Telugu
Kannada	Urdu
Konkani	

* Not used by the teachers



Multilingual education

- **Positive for learning**
 - It helps learners learn content better (maths and sciences) because they are already familiar with the language
 - It enhances creativity and brings cognitive advantages
 - It leads to active involvement and reduces anxiety
 - It supports learning English

- **Positive for the maintenance of languages and cultures**
 - It gives equal importance to languages other than English
 - One of the good ways to protect and give respect to the native languages
 - Opportunity to get introduced to multiple cultures

Multilingual education

- **Positive for teachers / classrooms**
 - As a teacher I love it
 - Supportive for both learners and teachers
 - Most comfortable, enjoyable learning environment
 - Most encouraging idea, especially in India
 - Helps in giving better understanding of national integration
 - Acknowledges students' background and experiences
 - Essential in the global context to cater to various needs of learners from different linguistic background
 - Very important in terms of social justice, cross-culture (inclusivity)
 - Creates a strong sense of multilingual identity



Multilingual education

- **Concerns**
 - It is a challenge for teachers
 - It is difficult to implement it because of the variety of languages available / not required for everyone to know all languages
 - Teachers might not be proficient in all the languages of the learners
 - Learners might not be motivated enough to use English

English Medium Instruction

- **Positive attitudes**
 - Good, nice and comfortable;
 - EMI is the demand of the society
 - English as a lingua franca demands the implementation of EMI
 - Best for urban environments where classes are highly linguistically diverse because it becomes easier for learning and teaching
 - Window to a world of opportunities
 - Students benefit even if teachers' proficiency is limited

English Medium Instruction

- **Concerns**

- In Indian context it is difficult to implement it
- Quite challenging to teachers as well as students
- Lack of properly trained teachers and teacher trainers
- Subtractive bilingualism is an issue – students can't read and write in their mothertongues / loss of dialects
- Potentially killing creativity
- EMI should not be at the expense of home languages
- Emotions, feelings and more difficult to express in English
- Uncomfortable – my blind or visually impaired students have a huge problem with accessibility

English Medium Instruction

- **Recommendations**
 - By imposing EMI without any groundwork at the grassroots level, it may become counterproductive
 - Groundwork: teachers' proficiency / available teaching resources / teacher training programmes / learners' preparedness / technical support
 - Governments should think of funding and training teachers before implementation
 - EMI – rules and principles need to be followed
 - Make sure to add English rather than replacing mother tongue with English
 - EMI could begin in Grade 5 or Grade 6 with exposure to English

Biggest challenges in language education / language of instruction

- **Teachers / Classroom**

- Teachers' proficiency in multiple languages
- The sheer number of languages available around me is overwhelming to me
- Teachers lack the skills to handle language in a multilingual context and they lack the required qualifications or training
- Large classrooms
- Heterogenous classrooms
- Lack of resources in the target language

Biggest challenges in language education / language of instruction

- **System**
 - Curriculum design – loaded with syllabus content
 - Institutional pressures and lack of academic space for teachers
 - Memory-based evaluation
 - Instructors' textbooks insistence on use of grammar to teach functional English is a huge challenge
 - Implementing the language policy
 - Policy makers, administration, lack of support from administration



Support for language of instruction

- **Resources**

- Better classroom space
- Use of technology
- Teaching aids (visual / auditory / audio-visuals)
- Tools for complex multilingual classroom situation
- Conducting activity-based learning
- Please make the classrooms friendly and accessible to blind / visually-impaired and other disability communities

Support for language of instruction

- **Pedagogies**
 - Pedagogical knowledge and skills
 - Curriculum design must involve teachers
 - Flexibility in my teacher strategies / techniques
 - Open-ended assessing design – freedom for teachers and choice for learners
 - The liberty to use the mother tongue while explaining difficult concepts



Support for language of instruction

- **Training**

- More refresher courses – upgrading of skills
- Proficiency in language
- Minimum knowledge in the regional language
- Skill based in-service training with periodic follow up
- **Training, training and more training**

Using a mixture of languages in class

- **How**

- Asking the learners – take help of learners / involve learners in the teaching process. This leads to a very interactive classroom and motivated learners
- We use it in different contexts – to carry out instructions, to teach difficult concepts
- Helps to retain info for a long time when given in mother tongue and target language
- EMI schools do not want the teachers to use any regional language in English class
- Teachers ‘do use’ other languages when the needs arises

Using a mixture of languages in class

- **Negative attitudes**
 - Challenging
 - Guilty – fear the management

- **Positive attitudes**
 - We feel quite satisfied as it helps in comprehension and in turn leads to better performance
 - Using other languages helps me to connect to the students affective realm
 - Teacher becomes approachable
 - Language learning is enhanced through regional languages
 - Students feel good – teachers also feel good

One thing policy makers could change

- Mother tongue education @ primary level
- Teachers have the liberty to use any languages
- Change in policy so that not using English isn't penalised
- Multilingual [additional] material should be made available (e.g. textbook / workbook / additional reading material / activity cards)
- Teacher training (in-service / pre-service) to educate them about policies
- Students' active involvement in drafting multilingual textbooks

There is a grave danger of losing
many precious languages, language
with for English

11.02.2020

In the context of Language Education,
→ Policy makers do focus on in service
training or professional development
of teachers. ~~in the~~

Let
multicultural
essence of
education. Let
India remain.

training



A big THANK YOU to:

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- **The practitioners** who worked hard to give us their views from their everyday experience in the classroom



Thank you

Danke schön

Merci

शुक्र

Gracias

Ευχαριστώ

Grazie

ధన్యవాదాలు

спасибо

Aitäh



t.marinis@uni-konstanz.de