Language in Education Policies

Examples from Asia
2. Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education, hereinafter referred to as MLE, is the effective use of more than two languages for literacy and instruction. *Henceforth, it shall be institutionalized as a fundamental educational policy and program in this Department in the whole stretch of formal education including pre-school and in the Alternative Learning System (ALS).*
5. All Regional Directors and Superintendents are hereby enjoined to promote and encourage local participation in the following essential support systems of the MLE within the framework of School-Based Management (SBM) with the support of the local government units:
The gradual integration of MLE in all subject areas and at all grade levels (beginning in preschool and continuing by adding a grade level per year) in the school improvement plans (SIPs) and district ALS program is likewise enjoined effective immediately.
8. The language of instruction shall also be the primary language for testing in all regular school-based and system-wide examinations and in all international benchmarking and assessment exercises. It shall be maintained that the focus of educational assessment shall be specifically on the learner's understanding of the subject content and not be muddled by the language of testing;
Language Policies Across Southeast Asia

- Brunei
- Cambodia
- Indonesia
- Lao PDR
- Malaysia
- Myanmar
- Philippines
- Singapore
- Thailand
- Timor Leste
- Vietnam
Language Policies Across Southeast Asia

- Each country has an official language, although in Thailand and Vietnam it is not stipulated in the constitution.

- Seven countries mention the use of non-dominant languages in their constitution; four (Brunei, Cambodia, Lao PDR, and Thailand) do not.
Language Policies Across Southeast Asia

• Six countries stipulate the language to be used in education in their constitution (Indonesia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Timor Leste, Vietnam)

• Only one country (Myanmar) does not address the issue of language in education in either education laws or acts, or other important education documents.

Sunday, February 21, 2010
Brunei is the only country, according to official documents, that does not allow the use of non-dominant languages in education.
Some Examples of Language in Education
Realities in Southeast Asia
Brunei has an official policy of bilingual education, but the languages are Malay and English.
Cambodia

Recent laws in Cambodia allow the choice of local languages in some areas for the first time. This change comes, apparently, as the result of successful programs using non-dominant languages, strongly supported by local communities.
In Indonesia there are positive policy statements, however, in practice the formal system of education generally uses only Indonesian as the language of instruction. Non-dominant languages are rarely used in formal schools, except orally.
Laos

In Laos, the Education Law of 2000 stipulates the use of Lao in education. No non-dominant languages are being used in education, although some pilot projects are being planned.
In Vietnam the use of non-dominant languages is supported in various policy documents, but the education law declares that Vietnamese is the official language of education. Even though there is support for non-dominant languages, Vietnamese remains the main language of instruction at all levels of education.
DepEd Order 74 is likely the strongest policy statement mandating the use of MLE that exists in SE Asia. This order lays the foundation for creating a language-in-education policy that can be a model for all of SE Asia to follow.
Much of the information in this presentation, can be found in Kosonen and Young (Eds) (2009). *Mother Tongue as Bridge Language of Instruction: policies and experiences in Southeast Asia*. SEAMEO Secretariat, Bangkok Thailand. Downloadable from

http://www.seameo.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=blogcategory&id=63&Itemid=156