

**For information
on 23 April 2001**

LegCo Panel on Education

Study on Enrichment of Language Learning Environment

Purpose

This paper briefs Members on the progress of a Study on “Enrichment of Language Learning Environment” (the Study), which was formerly known as “Study on ‘Two-mode’ Instruction in Secondary Schools”.

Background

2. The objectives and the content of the Study were explained in the Administration’s reply (Annex 1) to an oral question asked by the Hon Yeung Yiu-chung on 13 December 2000, and in the speech of the Secretary for Education and Manpower (Annex 2 Chinese version only) during a motion debate at the Council meeting on 7 February 2001.

3. To briefly recap, the Study was suggested in September 2000 by the Working Group (WG) on Medium of Instruction jointly set up in 1998 by the Board of Education and the Standing Committee on Language Education and Research. The WG recognised that the new Secondary School Places Allocation (SSPA) mechanism would result in greater diversity of students’ language ability in secondary schools and this would have impact on schools’ medium of instruction. The Study would provide reference for the Education Commission (EC) in its review of the SSPA mechanism in the 2003/04 school year.

4. A Steering Committee comprising academics and school principals was subsequently set up in December 2000 by the Education Department (ED) to work out the details of the Study and to monitor the progress. In its deliberations on the research design, the Steering Committee has proceeded on the basis of a clear understanding that the Government is committed to fully implementing the medium of instruction policy which emphasizes the use of the mother-tongue to ensure that students acquire subject knowledge and

develop high order thinking in an environment with the least language barriers, and that a multi-pronged approach should be adopted to create a favourable learning environment to enable students to become biliterate and trilingual.

The Study

Objectives

5. The Steering Committee has held a series of meetings to deliberate on the research design and the possible approaches, and resolved that the Study should aim to address the following issues:

- (a) Adaptation in English-medium (EMI) schools – The diversity in students' ability in a secondary school to learn effectively in English may widen as a result of the reform of the SSPA system. The Study would explore effective support measures to help students adapt to the English-medium learning environment; and

- (b) Enrichment and transition in Chinese-medium (CMI) schools – The Study would explore the effectiveness of an enrichment programme in helping students increase their exposure to English, while they continue to learn in the mother tongue to ensure effective subject content learning and high order cognitive development. As a number of CMI schools may use English to teach some subjects in Secondary 4 classes in the 2001/02 school year and onwards, the Study would also explore whether the enrichment programme can help students smoothen the transition from Chinese-medium to English-medium at Secondary 4 and above.

6. To more accurately reflect the above objectives of the Study and to avoid misinterpretation, the Steering Committee has agreed that the Study should be more appropriately named as '**Study on Enrichment of Language Learning Environment**' .

Research Design

EMI Schools

7. As the first step, a survey would be conducted on what support measures are being used by EMI schools to help students learn effectively through the English medium. The survey will cover all the 112 EMI schools. Good practices in addressing the diversity of students' ability will be identified.

8. EMI schools would be invited to try out the good practices. A sample of three to five interested schools would be given assistance in developing a more structured support programme for Secondary 1 students in the 2001/02 school year. The support programme would be further developed for tryout on the Secondary 1 students in the 2002/03 school year. To study the effectiveness of the programme, the two cohorts of Secondary 1 students of the participating schools in the 2001/02 and 2002/03 school years would be followed longitudinally as they move up to higher forms. The support programmes, if proved effective, would be disseminated to other EMI schools.

CMI Schools

9. For CMI schools, the Steering Committee recommended that an enrichment programme should be developed at Secondary 2 and 3 levels respectively to increase students' exposure to English learning. The main body of the programme would be a series of teaching modules (about 30 for each of the two levels) written and taught in English on cross-curricular themes or selected topics from some key learning areas.

10. About 10 - 15 schools would participate in the Study. They would take part in programme development and tryout. These schools would be requested to set aside a certain percentage of teaching time, say 5% at Secondary 2 and 7% at Secondary 3 (approximately 3-4 teaching periods per cycle), for teaching the modules. They would also have to design their own school-based implementation plans such as time scheduling, manpower deployment and support strategies.

11. The enrichment programme would be introduced concurrently to the cohorts of students at Secondary 2 and 3 in the 2001/02 school year. These students would be followed as they proceed to higher forms so as to gauge the

full effect. The Steering Committee considers it inappropriate to introduce the programme at Secondary 1, so as not to burden Secondary 1 students with adjustment problems.

12. All CMI schools would be invited to apply to take part in the Study. The Steering Committee would consider whether an applicant school is suitable to take part in the Study based on the following criteria:

- (a) whether the target student group(s) would be able to benefit from the programme, having regard to their language ability;
- (b) merits of the school's proposed implementation plan;
- (c) teachers' capability;
- (d) adequacy of the support strategies/measures; and
- (e) school's commitment to programme development and tryout.

13. In case of over-subscription, a random sample of 10-15 schools which satisfy these criteria would be selected for the Study by the Steering Committee.

Monitoring and Assessment

14. Participating EMI and CMI schools would be visited by research teams regularly to ensure that the respective programmes are implemented properly.

15. An in-depth qualitative study will be conducted to collect information on the implementation process and the impact on students' learning process. Achievement tests and questionnaires on the social and affective domains, such as self-concept and perception of school life will be administered. Class observations will also be conducted to assess the effects of the programmes.

Implementation

16. The first and second reports will be completed by October 2002 and September 2003 respectively. They will provide reference for the EC in its review on the SSPA System in the 2003/04 school year. The Study will continue until December 2005 when the two cohorts of students covered by the Study would have completed their Hong Kong Certificate of Education Examinations in 2004 and 2005 respectively.

Financial Implications

17. The Education Department has planned to provide \$3 million for the Study, to cover the costs for developing and producing support programme(s) for EMI schools and enrichment programme(s) for CMI schools as well as assessing their effectiveness.

Progress so far

18. The ED intends to commission out the development and assessment of the support programme for EMI schools and enrichment programme for CMI schools to experts. Tenders are being invited and contract(s) are expected to be awarded in May 2001.

19. Circulars have been issued to invite all secondary schools to apply to take part in the Study. A briefing session on the Study will be organised for schools on 28 April 2001. It is scheduled that the list of schools participating in the Study will be firmed up by early June 2001.

Conclusion

20. The Steering Committee will continue to steer the implementation of this longitudinal study. Members are invited to note the contents of this paper.

Education and Manpower Bureau
April 2001

LCQ1: Mother-tongue teaching policy unchanged

Following is a question by the Hon Yeung Yiu-chung and a reply by the Secretary for Education and Manpower, Mrs Fanny Law, in the Legislative Council today (December 13):

Question:

It is learnt that the Education Department will soon conduct a three-year trial scheme on "two-mode teaching" in junior secondary classes. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council of:

- (a) the names of the schools which will participate in the scheme;
- (b) the resources required for the scheme; and
- (c) the impact of the scheme on the existing policy on the medium of instruction, and how it ties in with the policy of mother-tongue teaching?

Reply:

Madam President,

The Government's objective in implementing mother-tongue teaching is to enable students to acquire subject knowledge and develop higher-order thinking in an environment with the least language barrier.

Since the implementation of the Medium of Instruction Guidance for Secondary Schools in 1998, it has been generally recognised in the education sector that mother-tongue teaching helps enhance students' cognitive and learning ability. It facilitates more lively discussion in the classrooms, expedites the progress of teaching, and promotes more in-depth learning. Thus, I would like to emphasise Government's affirmation of the benefits of mother-tongue teaching to learning, and its commitment to the policy of using mother-tongue

as the principal language in teaching.

In reviewing the secondary school places allocation system, the Education Commission (EC) proposed that starting from 2001, the number of banding will be reduced from five to three, and that five years later, students' banding will solely be determined according to their internal assessment. In other words, each primary school will have students of band one to band three. Under the proposed allocation system, the diversity in students' ability in a secondary school may widen, and it would be difficult to ensure that each and every student allocated to an English secondary school is suitable to learn through English as the medium of instruction.

In view of the above, the Joint Working Group on Medium of Instruction (JWG) has discussed whether secondary schools should be allowed greater flexibility in deciding on the medium of instruction so that they can properly take care of the diverse student abilities. Some JWG members suggested that secondary schools should be allowed to adopt different media of instruction for certain subjects or classes at S1 to S3, but the JWG could not reach any consensus. The JWG recommended in September 2000 that the Education Department (ED) should study the desirability of "two-mode" teaching for reference by the EC in reviewing the secondary school places allocation system in 2003/2004.

The ED has formed a steering committee comprising expert academics and principals to formulate the scope and other details of the study, work is still at an early conceptual stage. The ED has also contacted a number of secondary schools to see if they are willing to participate in the trial scheme and to solicit practicable options. There is no pre-set policy direction for this study. The role of the ED is to facilitate local experts and academics in jointly examining this issue. It is hoped that by collecting views from different parties, the study will accommodate a diversity of viewpoints so that the outcome of the study will be more credible and can serve as a more useful reference in policy formulation.

I must stress that the starting point of the study is to explore effective ways to deal with the widened range of abilities among students at the same level in a secondary school which may arise in future. In designing the study, we will remain committed to achieving the objective of mother-tongue teaching, that is, to ensure that students can learn in an environment with the least language barrier. The specific objectives of the study are to explore, on the premise that students' acquisition of subject knowledge will not be affected, the feasibility of "two-mode" teaching on a group, subject or topic basis, the pre-conditions for success, and the support measures required.

The ED has not yet finalised the list of participating schools. The resources required for the study will be determined by the number of participating schools, the methodology of the study, and the support required for the schools. Insofar as school sampling is concerned, we aim to include schools adopting different admission standards and medium of instruction. For greater comprehensiveness, we may also conduct the study at different class levels.

The Government's policy on medium of instruction is very clear. We must, taking into account the language ability of both teachers and students, adopt the suitable medium of instruction to ensure the effectiveness of learning. At the same time, we have to take appropriate support measures to create a favourable language environment to enable students to become biliterate and trilingual. The basic policy of mother-tongue teaching will remain unchanged.

End/Wednesday, December 13, 2000

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立法會：教統局局長就「中英並行教學模式」議案致辭全文（只有中文版）

以下為今日（二月七日）立法會會議上教育統籌局局長羅范椒芬就「中英並行教學模式」議案的致辭全文：

主席女士：

有關雙語教學研究的目的和內容，我在十二月十三日回答楊耀忠議員的口頭質詢時已經作出解釋，但我亦很多謝張宇人議員今日再提出議案，讓我在這裡再就中英並行教學試驗計劃再作闡釋。今日我亦希望藉此機會，更詳細地解釋政府的語文政策和教學語言的關係。

特區政府的語文政策，是培養年青人掌握兩文三語，即中、英文和普通話。對大部分香港人而言，母語或第一語言是廣東話，普通話和英語都是第二語言。所以，回答司徒華議員的提問，母語教學在香港是指以廣東話教學，目前政府無意以普通話作為教學語言。掌握母語與學習第二語言的過程，有很大的分別。人自出生便接觸母語，通過生活的體驗，潛移默化，自然地掌握母語的規律和運用，這是潛意式的學習。掌握第二語言通常需要經過正規的訓練，熟習文法的規律與詞彙的特性，這是有意識的學習，需要下更多功夫。

多項研究顯示，年紀越輕越容易掌握第二語言。除了年齡之外，尚有四個因素會影響第二語言的學習成效，包括社會環境、教師的能力、學生的特性和教學的條件等。社會環境是指社會對第二語言的重視程度、語言環境和日常運用的普遍性。教師的能力包括教師本身的語文水平、對語文結構的認識以及教學的技巧。學生的特性包括家庭背景、年齡、學習態度和方法等。而教學環境是指課程、教材、教學和評估的方法。以上每一個因素都影響學習的成效，而且環環緊扣，必須整體配合。語文教育及研究常務委員會將會全面研究如何加強學習第二語言的四項因素，以提升年青人兩文三語的能力，陳智思議員亦是委員會的成員，大家可以將你們的意見向他反映。

政府的教學語言政策，是讓學生在最少語言障礙的情況下，掌握學科知識和發展高層次思維。社會上有不少人誤以為只要利用英語教學，英語能力自然會好起來。這種想法單純地把語文能力建基於語言環境上，而忽略其他學習因素，結果只會弄巧反拙。

語言學中受到廣泛認同的「閾限理論」(Threshold Theory)指

出，一個人的語言水平，反映他的認知發展程度。而母語和第二語言的運用能力必須達到基本水平，才可以有效地透過第二語言學習其他學科。否則，不單第二語言學不好，連對學科知識的掌握亦會大打折扣。

事實證明，自從一九九八年政府推行中學教學語言政策以來，教育界普遍認同母語教學有助提高學生的認知及學習能力，不但令課堂內的討論氣氛變得活躍，更加速教學的進度和加強學習的深度。因此，政府將繼續全力貫徹以母語為主的教學語言政策，同時亦從多方面着手，改善兩文三語的教學成效。

有鑑於部分學校的傳統是採用英語作為授課語言，長期以來亦取得良好成效，所以政府亦容許已證明具備適當條件的學校，採用英語作為教學語言，在不影響學生掌握學科知識的大前提下，加強學習英語的環境。這些學校的教師和學生，都必須有足夠的英語水平，能應付教與學的需要。否則，我們不但達不到「添加性雙語能力」(Additive Bilingualism)，即第一和第二語言皆精的目的，反而會做成「削減性雙語能力」(Subtractive Bilingualism)，即在一種語言能力有所進益時，另一種語言能力卻被削弱。同時對學科的學習成效亦產生負面影響，因而減低學生對學習的興趣。

我舉出這些學理，是想說明如果我們要提高學生的兩文三語能力，絕不能單憑直覺，必須以事實辯證，找出切實可行的辦法。過往中英夾雜的教學語言，「掛羊頭賣狗肉」式的英語教學環境，對學生所做成的損害已是鐵證如山，我們萬萬不能重蹈覆轍。

政府於一九九八年正式推行中學教學語言政策時，曾根據學生能力、教師能力和學校的支援策略及措施三項準則，批准一百一十二所學校以英語授課。不過，當我們細心分析這些學校目前的收生情況，不難察覺到有些學校，有部分學生並不符合利用英語學習的基本條件，包括有些是第三、第四組，甚至少數第五組的學生都在英文學校內。從學校行政和運作的穩定性而言，沒有可能要求學校每年按照收生的情況來改變教學語言，但也不能因此而犧牲少部分學生的利益。我很同意余若薇議員的意見，教育應該為學生服務，要因材施教，所以我們一定要尋求辦法，讓所有學生也能通過適切的語言媒介，充分掌握學科的知識。這亦是進行中英並行教學模式試驗計劃的目的。

教育統籌委員會（教統會）去年檢討中一派位機制時提出，由二〇〇一年起，派位組別將由五組減至三組，若情況許可，在二〇〇五年起，學生派位組別將完全憑校內成績決定。展望將來，二〇〇五年後每一所小學都會有第一至第三組別的學生。在這個制度下，將來中學校內學生的能力差異有可能進一步擴大，很難確保每一名被派往英文中學的學生都適合以英語學習。張宇人議員建議以英語能力作為升中派位的唯一標準，這與教統會的建議及教育改革的基本意念有所違背。

學生之間存在能力差異，是十分自然的事，即使目前劃分五個派位組別，每所學校內的學生之間亦有一定程度的能力差異。派位組別減少後，英文中學有可能取錄更多語文能力未達到可以用英語學習的學生。如何選用合適的教學語言，讓每一個學生都能夠充分掌握學科的知識，是英文中學必須面對的課題，假如處理不善，將嚴重影響學生的學習成效，絕不能掉以輕心。根據現行的教學語言政策，英文中學基本上不容許用中文授課。到底目前英文中學如何照顧英語能力較差的同學，是我們關注的問題。我們絕對不願意見到不適合英語授課的學生被勸喻轉校，作為解決問題的方法，但這個情況現時是存在的。

除此之外，學校還有兩個選擇，就是轉用母語教學或加強英語培訓，讓能力較差的學生可以追上。據我們所知，現時某些英文中學已有採取措施，幫助語文能力稍遜的學生，例如在開課前及利用長假期為學生提供以雙語進行的輔助課程。教育署的雙語教學研究督導小組，會先行全面了解英文中學現時採用的各種輔助措施，然後把其中一些證明有效的方法，在其他英文中學試行。

對於中文中學而言，教統會建議的派位制度，亦同樣會令他們取錄到能力差異較大的學生。由於這些學校採用母語教學，以上情況不應對教學語言造成新的問題。反而我們值得研究可否在母語教學的主體上，因應教師和學生的語文能力，以不影響學生掌握學科知識為大前提，嘗試豐富校內的語言環境，使學生在紮實的母語及學科基礎上，增加他們以外語學習學科知識的機會。這種增潤學習活動，適用於所有具備足夠第二語言能力的學生，因此不會在中文中學之間做成分化，亦有助學生在升學時，更容易適應以英語為主的學習環境。

對於已選擇由下學年在高中轉用英語教學，或部分科目採用英語授課的學校，我們有需要密切留意學生的學習成效和適應情況。研究結果對於初中銜接課程(bridging programme)的設計，有一定的啟示作用。

因此中英並行教學的研究主要會有三部分，包括英文中學處理學生之間語文能力差異的方法、中文中學在高中階段轉用英語授課的適應問題，以及中文中學在初中階段的增潤英語學習活動。教育署已成立督導小組，設計各項研究和訂立選取樣本的準則。小組成員包括語言專家、學者、校長和多位學校議會代表。小組在定出研究方案的細節後，一定會公布有關詳情。較早前有些關於研究的初步構想經過非正式渠道過早披露，以至引起無謂的揣測，這是令人遺憾的。我希望議員不要基於以往的資料作太多揣測，讓督導小組有詳細情況後，自然會全盤公布。

由於香港獨特的歷史因素和社會環境，討論教學語言政策往往滲入情意的考慮。但制訂政策必須建基於紮實的學理和驗證，所以我們必須進行嚴謹的研究，以便教統會在二、三、四學年檢討升中派位制度時，能同時協調教學語言政策。我必須強調，我

們並無任何預設的政策取向，我亦衷心希望大家能以理性、客觀和科學的態度去討論問題。最後，我更希望校長、校董和辦學團體，不要以能否招徠學業成績好的學生，作為決定教學語言的主要考慮，而是着眼於學生的利益。我亦寄語家長，在替子女選擇學校時，充分照顧子女的性向和能力，避免揠苗助長而弄巧反拙。

主席女士，我謹此陳詞。

完

二 一年二月七日（星期三）