Springer Education Innovation Book Series

Series Editors

Wing On LEE
David Wei Loong HUNG
Laik Woon TEH

Executive Editor

Dennis KWEK
Aims and Scope – Springer Education Innovation
Book Series

Education holds the key to unlock human resources that a society needs to survive and flourish. This is particularly salient in a borderless knowledge economy. For the past decades, the sterling performance of economies such as Hong Kong, Finland, Japan, Singapore and Taiwan in international studies (e.g., TIMSS, PIRLS and PISA) has channeled much attention away from the traditional centers of education research in America and Western Europe. Researchers, policy makers and practitioners all over the world wish to understand how education innovations propel the emerging systems from good to great to excellent, and how different their trajectories were compared to the systems in America and Western Europe.

The Education Innovation Book Series, published by Springer, will delve into education innovations enacted by the Singapore education system and situate them in both the local and the broader international contexts. Primary focus will be given to pedagogy and classroom practices; education policy formulation and implementation; school and instructional leadership; and the context and interface between education research, policy and practice. We believe that the latter is critical in making education innovations come to bear. Each volume will document insights and lessons learned based on empirical research (both quantitative and qualitative) and theoretical analyses. Implications to research, policy and professional practice will be surfaced through comparing and synthesizing Singapore’s experience with those of successful systems around the world.

The audience of the edited volumes and monographs published in this series includes researchers, policy makers, practitioners and students in the fields of education and teacher education, and public policies related to learning and human resources.

Series Editors
Wing On LEE
David Wei Loong HUNG
Laik Woon TEH
Office of Education Research
National Institute of Education
Nanyang Technological University
Singapore

Executive Editor
Dennis KWEK
Office of Education Research
National Institute of Education
Nanyang Technological University
Singapore

More information about this series at http://www.springer.com/series/10092
Quadrilingual Education in Singapore

Pedagogical Innovation in Language Education
Series Editors’ Foreword

Language is the means and the medium through which people, race and nation share information, ideas and feelings and make meaning. And through such sharing, identity and commonality can be forged. Issues related to language education policy and language-in-education system are therefore highly complex and emotional for any society, especially those which are racially and ethnically diverse. Furthermore, language policy and language-in-education system are also affected by geopolitical and historical contexts.

This book *Quadrilingual Education in Singapore* is the 10th book in this *Education Innovation* series and is therefore an important addition to the series because language policy is a cornerstone of the Singapore education system. This is an ambitious book. While the majority of the literature of language education focus on bilingualism, this book examines quadrilingual education. Singapore’s current bilingual policy or “quadrilingual education system” (as described by the editors) is in fact a relatively new policy innovation, even if we compare it to modern Singapore’s relatively short history of less than 200 years. While the instructions of two, or more, languages\(^1\) have started in Singapore schools since the 1960s, the existing language policy of adopting English language as the medium of instruction in schools and the teaching of one other mother tongue language to all Singaporean children was formally introduced in the late 1970s and was only fully universally implemented across all Singaporean schools in the late 1980s. The trajectory of Singapore’s language policy over the last 50 years plays a significant role in shaping Singapore’s prevailing language environment, particularly the diversity in terms of the beliefs, expectations, language competencies and aspirations of adult Singaporeans (e.g., parents or teachers or policymakers), which intimately affect language learning in and outside schools. And this context is how the four main areas (i.e., transitions, competencies, practices and reforms) around which this book is organised have to make reference to.

\(^1\) Singapore experienced a short period of trilingual education system in the early 1960s when it was part of Federal Malaysia. Malay language was adopted as Singapore’s national language, and this continues till today.
While Singapore’s sociopolitical and historical context may be different from many other systems around the world, we are certain that researchers, students, practitioners and policymakers of other countries – especially those who also share a bilingual dream of their children being proficient in the mother tongue and another language, say English – will find the multiple case studies in this volume to be relevant and useful. This volume’s unique focus on Singapore English language and mother tongue language classrooms – what students and teachers brought with them, what they believed, how they behaved and learned and on how changes and innovations took place – will provide the readers useful information to piece together and infer how circumstances might pan out in the classrooms of a different space at a different time, with similar aspirations. The book’s focus on classroom-based research, e.g., pedagogical practices and student profiles, provides empirical information about how language-in-education evolves, taking into account the quadrilingual backgrounds of the students, when students and teachers interact in the classroom. We therefore congratulate the editors and authors of this volume for astutely capturing rich and detailed pictures of the journey undertaken by Singapore’s language-in-education system. And since the system is not static but constantly evolving, we encourage the authors to continue to study and research Singapore’s quadrilingual education system, so that the children’s need to be able to express their ideas and feelings, to work with people around them productively and to learn throughout their life can be more effectively and efficiently met.

National Institute of Education
Nanyang Technological University
Singapore, Singapore

Wing On LEE
David Wei Loong HUNG
Laik Woon TEH
## Contents

### Part I Introduction

1 Overarching Themes, Bilingual Dreams and Multilingual Landscapes: Quadrilingual Education in Singapore ........................... 3  
   Rita Elaine Silver and Wendy D. Bokhorst-Heng

### Part II Transitions

2 Transmission and Development of Literacy Values and Practices: An Ethnographic Study of a Malay Family in Singapore ......................... 23  
   Mukhlis Abu Bakar

3 ‘I Believe, Therefore I Practice’: Teachers’ Beliefs on Literacy Acquisition and Their Classroom Practices ........................................ 39  
   Norhaida Aman

4 Commentary on ‘Transitions’.......................................................... 57  
   Bob Perry

### Part III Competencies

5 A Reading Profile of Singapore Primary 1 Students and Implications for Reading Pedagogy .............................................. 65  
   Chitra Shegar and Christopher S. Ward

6 Morphological Awareness and Reading Development in Bilingual English-Chinese Children in Singapore .......................... 83  
   Baoqi Sun and Xiao Lan Curdt-Christiansen

7 Taking Stock of the Effects of Strategies-Based Instruction on Writing in Chinese and English in Singapore Primary Classrooms ................................................................. 103  
   Lawrence Jun Zhang, Vahid Aryadoust, and Donglan Zhang
8 Commentary on ‘Competencies’ ........................................................... 127
   Andy Kirkpatrick

Part IV Practices
9 Student Engagement in Reading ........................................................... 135
   Viniti Vaish

10 Distinctiveness and Uniformity: Teaching Language
   in Singapore Primary Grades 1 and 2................................................. 153
   Rita Elaine Silver, Xiao Lan Curdt-Christiansen, Roksana
   Bibi Binte Abdullah, Seetha Lakshmi, and Yanning Yang

11 Culture Representation in Teachers’ Talk: A Functional
   Analysis of Singapore’s Chinese Classroom Discourse ..................... 181
   Yanning Yang

12 Morphological Teaching and Singaporean
   Children’s English Word Learning .................................................... 199
   Dongbo Zhang and Li Li

13 Commentary on ‘Practices’ ............................................................... 219
   Andy Hancock

Part V Reforms
14 Use and Impact of Spoken Tamil in the Early
   Tamil Classrooms .......................................................................... 229
   Seetha Lakshmi

15 Inculcation of Malay Values and Culture in Language
   Pedagogy in Singapore................................................................ 247
   Roksana Bibi Binte Abdullah

16 Coding and Comparing Pedagogic Features of
   Teaching Practices: What Happens in Chinese
   Language Classes in Singapore’s Primary Schools? ........................ 271
   Shouhui Zhao and Guowen Shang

17 Teaching Chinese to English-Speaking Bilinguals .......................... 291
   Yeng Seng Goh and Seok Lai Lim

18 Commentary on ‘Reforms’ ............................................................... 305
   David Cassels Johnson

Part VI Conclusion
19 Final Words: A Reflective Synthesis.................................................. 313
   Wendy D. Bokhorst-Heng and Rita Elaine Silver

Index ........................................................................................................ 321
Contributors

Roksana Bibi Binte Abdullah  Asian Languages and Cultures, National Institute of Education, Singapore, Singapore

Mukhlis Abu Bakar  Asian Languages and Cultures, National Institute of Education, Singapore, Singapore

Norhaida Aman  English Language and Literature, National Institute of Education, Singapore, Singapore

Vahid Aryadoust  Centre for English Language Communication, National University of Singapore, Singapore, Singapore

Wendy D. Bokhorst-Heng  Department of Education, Crandall University, Moncton, NB, Canada

Xiao Lan Curdt-Christiansen  Institute of Education, University of Reading, Reading, UK

Yeng Seng Goh  Asian Languages and Cultures, Office of Education Research (OER), National Institute of Education, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore, Singapore

Andy Hancock  Education, Teaching and Leadership, University of Edinburgh, Edinburgh, UK

David Cassels Johnson  Department of Teaching and Learning, College of Education, The University of Iowa, Iowa, IA, USA

Andy Kirkpatrick  School of Languages and Linguistics, Griffith University, Nathan, QLD, Australia

Li Li  Singapore Centre for Chinese Language, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore, Singapore

Seok Lai Lim  Asian Languages & Cultures, National Institute of Education, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore, Singapore
Seetha Lakshmi  Asian Languages and Cultures, National Institute of Education, Singapore, Singapore

Bob Perry  Research Institute for Professional Practice, Learning and Education/ School of Education, Charles Sturt University, Albury, Australia

Guowen Shang  School of International Studies, Zhejiang University, Hangzhou, Zhejiang, China

Chitra Shegar  Independent Scholar, Singapore, Singapore

Baoqi Sun  English Language and Literature, National Institute of Education, Singapore, Singapore

Rita Elaine Silver  English Language and Literature, National Institute of Education, Singapore, Singapore

Viniti Vaish  English Language and Literature Academic, National Institute of Singapore, Singapore, Singapore

Christopher S. Ward  English Language Institute of Singapore, Singapore, Singapore

Yanning Yang  School of Foreign Languages, East China Normal University, Shanghai, China

Dongbo Zhang  Department of Teacher Education, Michigan State University, East Lansing, MI, USA

Donglan Zhang  Faculty of Education and Social Work, University of Auckland, Auckland, New Zealand

Lawrence Jun Zhang  Faculty of Education and Social Work, University of Auckland, Auckland, New Zealand

Shouhui Zhao  University of Bergen, Bergen, Norway

Shanghai International Studies University, Shanghai, China
## Abbreviations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BA</td>
<td>Bilingual approach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CALLA</td>
<td>Cognitive academic language learning approach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CCE</td>
<td>Character and citizenship education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CLCPRC</td>
<td>Chinese Language Curriculum and Pedagogy eview Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CLIL</td>
<td>Content Language Integrated Learning Core modules</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CLT</td>
<td>Communicative language teaching</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CME</td>
<td>Civics and moral education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CUP</td>
<td>Common underlying proficiency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EL</td>
<td>English language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GCE</td>
<td>General Certificate in Education exam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IRE</td>
<td>Initiation-response-evaluation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IRF/E</td>
<td>Initiation-response-feedback/evaluation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LSP</td>
<td>Learning support programme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MLLPC</td>
<td>Malay Language and Literature Promotion Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MLCPRC</td>
<td>Malay Language Curriculum and Pedagogy Review Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MOE</td>
<td>Ministry of Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MT</td>
<td>mother tongue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OECD</td>
<td>Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PAP</td>
<td>People’s Action Party</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PCF</td>
<td>PAP Community Foundation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PERI</td>
<td>Primary Education Review and Implementation Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PIRLS</td>
<td>Progress in International Reading and Literacy Study</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PISA</td>
<td>Programme for International Student Assessment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PSLE</td>
<td>Primary School Leaving Exam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>REI</td>
<td>Reading Engagement Index</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SAP</td>
<td>Special Assistance Plan schools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SBI</td>
<td>Strategies-based instruction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SES</td>
<td>Socio-economic status</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SFL</td>
<td>Systemic functional linguistics</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Abbreviations

SGEM    Speak Good English Movement  
SST    Standard spoken Tamil  
STELLAR    Strategies for English Language Learning and Reading  
SWRT    Singapore Word Reading Test  
TLLM    Teach less learn more  
TSLN    Thinking Schools, Learning Nation  
UK    United Kingdom  
USA    United States of America