

# **Springer Education Innovation Book Series**

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Wing On LEE

David Wei Loong HUNG

Laik Woon TEH

## **Executive Editor**

Dennis KWEK

# Aims and Scope – Springer Education Innovation Book Series

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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.

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More information about this series at <http://www.springer.com/series/10092>

Rita Elaine Silver • Wendy D. Bokhorst-Heng  
Editors

# Quadrilingual Education in Singapore

Pedagogical Innovation in Language  
Education

 Springer

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## 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<sup>1</sup> 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.

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<sup>1</sup> 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.

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# Abbreviations

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

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