

Chair Professors

Public Lecture Series

9 October 2009 (Friday)

4:30 – 6:00 p.m.

D1-LP-03, The Hong Kong Institute of Education (Tai Po Campus)

(Tea reception after the lecture)

Learning English and other languages in multilingual settings:

Myths and Principles

More than one billion people now use English as a second or additional language, largely to communicate with other second language users with whom they do not share a cultural and linguistic background. While some may debate whether English is really as important for all as is claimed, the widespread demand for English is here for the foreseeable future. Without exception, Ministries of Education throughout East and Southeast Asia have decided that English is a vital skill that must be learned by their citizens from as early an age as possible, if their respective countries are to modernize and to be able to participate in today's globalised world.

In this seminar I want to discuss the teaching and learning of English by these multilingual users, and consider the challenges that the desire to learn English places on the learner and the curriculum. My context will be on schools in the Asian region and my focus will be on the relationship between English and local languages in the school curriculum. Is, for example, the relationship between English and local languages complementary or competitive? In this context I shall also consider the recent fine-tuning debate about EMI in Hong Kong schools and propose an alternative.

This seminar will consider ways in which English might be taught which would help maintain and nurture the child's mother tongue as a basis for the acquisition of multilingualism on the one hand, and allow the child to develop an understanding of English as a pluricentric language on the other. This will require arguing that three well-accepted beliefs about the learning of languages are, in fact, myths. Three new principles will be proposed to replace the three myths, principles which would more easily allow the teaching and learning of English alongside local languages.



Professor Andy Kirkpatrick joined HKIEd in January 2006. He is **Chair Professor of English** and the Director of the Research Centre into Language Education and Acquisition in Multilingual Societies.

Prior to joining the Institute, Professor Kirkpatrick had been Professor of Language Education at Curtin University for ten years. He has also worked at the Institutes of Education of Singapore and Rangoon, at the Australian National University, and been a visiting scholar at Beijing University, the Beijing University of Aeronautics and Astronautics, Cambridge University, The University of Malaya and Oxford Brookes University.

Professor Kirkpatrick holds a BA from the University of Leeds, a Postgraduate Diploma in Chinese Literature from Fudan University, Shanghai, an MA from York University, UK, and a PhD from the Australian National University.

His major areas of research interest are in the development of World Englishes and the inter-relationship and roles of English and local languages, particularly in Asia. He is also internationally known for his work on Chinese rhetoric. He is on the editorial board of eleven international journals.

He is currently working on a number of projects including editing the Handbook of World Englishes for Routledge, and preparing English as a Lingua franca in ASEAN. The Multilingual Model, for Hong Kong University Press, Chinese Academic Writing Styles: An Introduction for Teachers of Writing for Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC) / Parlor Press, and Chinese Rhetoric and Persuasion for Klincksieck.

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