

Education for multilingualism and multi-literacy: Linking basic education to life-long learning in minority language communities

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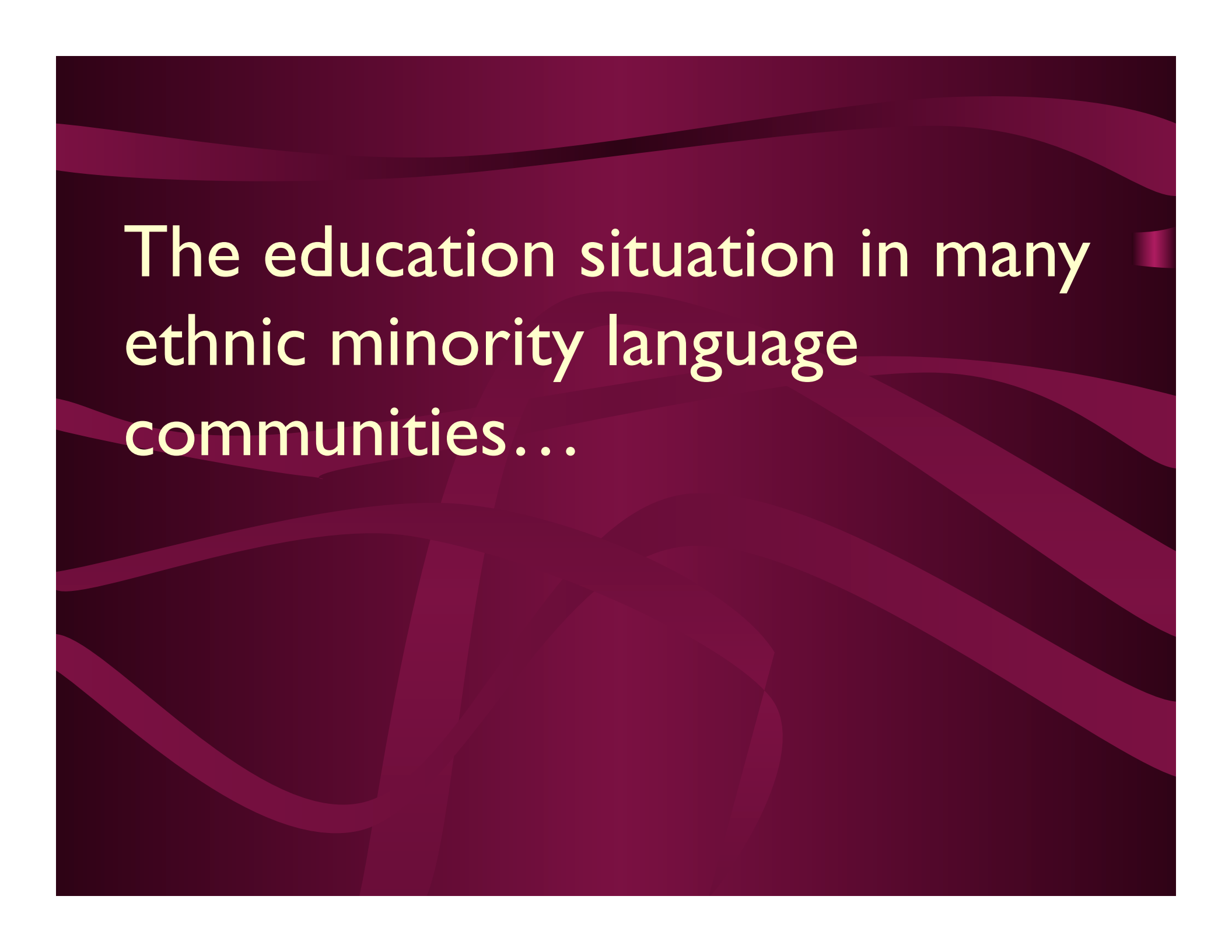
Plenary presentation

*Conference on Language Development, Language
Revitalization and Multilingual Education in Asia*

Bangkok, Thailand. 6-8 November 2003

Five focus areas:

- Situation
- Needs
- Challenges
- Strategies
- Resources



The education situation in many ethnic minority language communities...

For many minority language learners...

- Lack of access to education in general
- High attrition rates for those who do get into school
- Alienation from heritage language and culture; from parents and home community
- Lack of knowledge and skills for employment

For many ethnic minority communities...

- Loss of ethnic identity
- Demoralization
- Higher rates of alcoholism, crime, suicide

For many nations...

- (Potential for) ethnic strife
- Underutilization of human resources
- Loss of indigenous wisdom and knowledge
- Loss of linguistic and cultural diversity



Need for policy and program
change...

- New language policies
- New development models
- New education programs...

...that promote multi-lingualism and multi-literacy by

- Helping learners build a strong educational foundation in the language they know best,
- Providing them with a good bridge to the second (and third, etc.) language and
- Encouraging and enabling them to use both / all their languages to continue learning

4 types of MLE programs that support multilingualism and multi-language literacy

For children:

- ML bridging to LWC; continue in both
- LWC bridging to ML; continue in both

For young people and adults:

- ML bridging to LWC; continue in both
- LWC bridging to ML; continue in both

4 stages of MLE programs

Stage 1

Build oral fluency in L1 (for children)

Begin literacy in L1

Use L1 as MOI

Stage 2

Build oral and written fluency in L1

Begin learning oral L2

Continue using L1 as MOI

Stage 3

Continue L1 literacy

Bridge to literacy in L2

Use both languages as MOI

Add additional languages

Stage 4

Use both / all languages in continuing education

Non-Formal

- Reading clubs
- Tutoring/distance education
- Community learning centers / libraries
- Vocational training

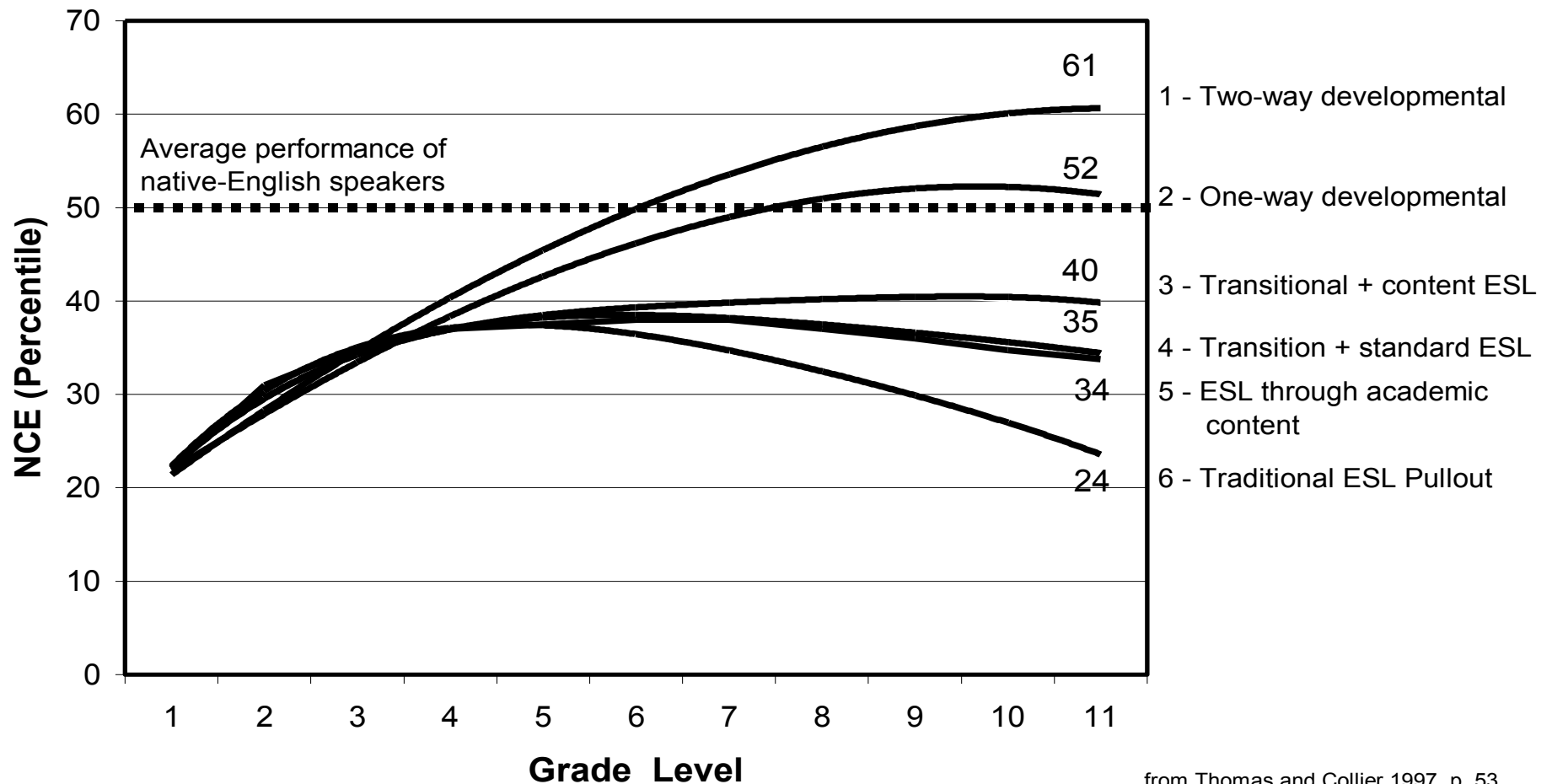
Formal

- Primary
- Secondary
- Tertiary

Evidence from the research that supports the slow bridging process

Bilingual Programs - Comparison of Achievement on Standardized Tests

Final NCE



from Thomas and Collier 1997, p. 53



The challenges to MLE in multiple language situations...

- Dominance of majority language(s) and culture(s)
- Fear, by some, of “promoting” ethnic diversity
- Fear that learning in the ML will mean less time and less success in learning the LWC

- Lack of writing systems
- Multiple scripts
- Lack of professional ML teachers
- Lack of ML instructional materials
- Lack of ML graded reading materials
- Lack of a plan for integrating MLE with continuing education programs
- Lack of funding

Can MLE be achieved in multi-lingual contexts?

MLE programs are being established, and sustained, in countries around the world.

Some strategies for meeting the challenges...

- Language and education policies that affirm and support MLE / support from the powerful
- Research that provides accurate information about the local and national language situation and about the educational goals and needs identified by the ML communities

- A decentralized education system that provides minority language communities with basic guidelines and support but encourages them to take leadership in planning and implementing the ML component of their programs
- A literature production process that provides relevant and appropriate (and inexpensive) graded reading materials in the minority languages and in the LWC

- Cooperation among stakeholders: government agencies, NGOs, universities, donors, businesses, ethnic minority communities and the

Potential resources for developing
successful and sustainable LD and MLE
programs...

Ethnic minority communities as a resource for

- Preliminary research
- Mobilization at local and district levels
- Adapting curriculum frameworks to local context
- Teaching, supervising classes
- Training and mentoring
- Writing, illustrating, editing, translating, distributing and evaluating reading materials

Government as a resource for

- Mobilization at state, national and international levels
- Supportive political climate; supportive policies
- Curriculum guidelines
- Training
- Funding, as part of the regular budget

NGOs as a resource for

- Training at local, state, national levels: researchers, teachers, supervisors writers, artists, editors, trainers
- Linguistic support for orthography development
- Assisting with curriculum development
- Mobilization
- Resource linking

Universities as a resource for

- Collecting, storing, disseminating information about languages
- Linguistic support for orthography development
- Assisting with needs assessment, other preliminary research; training researchers
- Assisting with evaluating programs; training evaluators

Can it be done?

*Why not ask the people who
are doing it?*