

VESP View

VANUATU EDUCATION SUPPORT PROGRAM

July 2017

Issue 1: Yusum fulap lanwis blong lan

(Developing a multilingual language approach in education for Vanuatu)



With 113 vernacular languages, one national and two official languages, Bislama, English and French, Vanuatu has the world's highest concentration of different languages per head of population (270,400).

The following language profiles in two year 1 classes illustrate this complexity.



Class A language profile:
33 students

L1 (Mother tongue): 12 languages: Tanna, Ifira, Nguna, Tongoa, Ambae, Paama, Tongariki, Banks, Ambrym, Pentecost, Futuna, Epi

L2 (2nd language): Bislama x 33 sts

L3 (3rd language): English x 3 sts



Class B language profile:
25 students

L1: 3 languages: Nakanamanga x 23 sts; Namakura x 1 sts; Bislama x 1 sts

A challenge and an opportunity

Vanuatu's National Language Policy 2015 supports the use of all the languages of Vanuatu in education. Developing a multilingual approach that suits the complex linguistic profile of classes and that is practical and feasible for Vanuatu is both a challenge and an opportunity.

This initiative supported by VESP has started by focusing on years 1–3 and will gradually extend to years 4–6.

Years 1–3

'Ademap lanwis sloslo' – a dual language model

The dual language model emerging for years 1–3 introduces English or French from year 1 term 2 along with the mother tongue and slowly increases the time allocated to English or French over the three years. This is described as the Ademap Lanwis Sloslo model.

Years 4–6

'Yusum fulap lanwis blong lan' – a multilingual model

From year 4 onwards, students experience a multilingual model incorporating vernaculars, Bislama, English and French. A recent 'think-tank' coined the term 'Yusum fulap lanwis blong lan', and started to examine the role of these languages from years 1–6; when and how they are used and for what purpose;

the language and content teaching approach, and the kind of support materials and training needed. This is very early days and a great deal more follow-up work is required.

This new dual language + multilingual approach for years 1-6 is being developed through collaborative classroom research, supported by international and other local research.

Using classroom research to design the approach

Collaboration across agencies

This initiative is coordinated by the Curriculum Development Unit (CDU), working in collaboration with key stakeholders – schools, teachers, students, Vanuatu Institute of Teacher Education (VITE) and the School Improvement Unit of the Ministry.

International research

Bilingual + multilingual education



Contrastive Analysis

Vernaculars, Bislama, English and French



Curriculum Analysis

Language + literacy across subjects



Collaborative classroom research to pilot + identify:



Good teaching practices



Teacher PD needs



New approach, lessons and resources



Minimum conditions to learn L2

Learning from other countries

We have learnt a great deal from the successes and failures of other countries including:

- Students need 5–7 years of learning a language such as English / French before they can learn subjects through this language.
- Using vernaculars as languages of learning and teaching from the beginning has been more successful than abrupt, early transitions. This improves learning outcomes and builds a stronger foundation to facilitate the transfer of learning to English or French.

Vanuatu has to develop its own approach, while carefully considering the capacity of teachers, the MoET and the community.

Progress so far

Piloting the approach, key lessons, resources for years 1–3

The piloting process entails the CDU / VITE team observing key lessons, sharing feedback afterwards and discussing the implications for the evolving approach, the resources and teacher training.



In the photo above, the year 2 teacher is using a dual language approach (Bislama and French), to review a lesson already taught in Bislama. The resource is a public notice 'No sakem doti olbaot'. After revising the notice in Bislama, students then discuss it in French, write up key words and create their own French version of the notice. In follow-up lessons, students create other simple notices in French.

Valuable feedback from this pilot lesson enabled the team to:

- revise the design of this notice
- clarify the best expressions to use for year 2 students, eg: 'Ne jetez pas de saletés partout'
- clarify how Bislama and French are best used, given the language profile of this particular class
- identify the support teachers need to effectively use such a dual language approach.

Publications

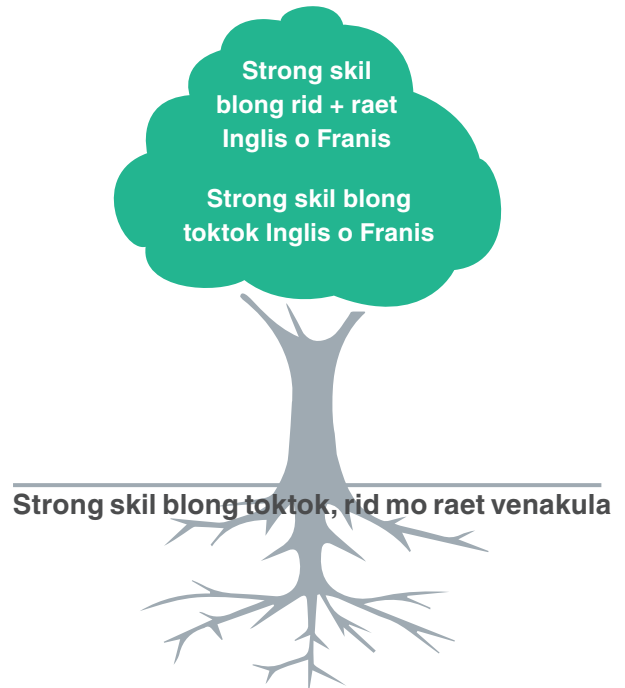
- *'Begin to learn English' and 'Commencer à apprendre le français'*. These incorporate good language teaching practices observed in year 1 classrooms and focus on students' oral communication skills and vocabulary across subjects.
- *'Contrastive analysis of Vernaculars and Bislama with English and French: An aid for language teachers in Vanuatu'*.

Assessment

New assessment tools are also being trialled in the classroom for inclusion in the Class-based Assessment Manual.

Ademap Lanwis advocacy

Advocacy is crucial to ensure that the evolving approach has widespread stakeholder support. To this end, an initial Ademap Lanwis advocacy package has been developed and trialled by delivery to provincial trainers and SIOs. The session explains very simply the 'Ademap Lanwis sloslo' model starting in year 1, and how Vernaculars, Bislama, English or French are interconnected. This relationship is illustrated in the tree diagram used in this advocacy session.



Challenges

It is a tremendous challenge to develop a dual language / multilingual approach for Vanuatu that works in the classroom, that produces good student outcomes, that is practical and feasible and that has stakeholder support. The classroom observation and piloting process has been extremely effective and valuable for all concerned. Schools and teachers have been very co-operative and appreciative of the practical assistance they are receiving. Ministry staff are very motivated and are already seeing the benefits of this process: how their respective roles intersect and contribute towards achieving the same end goal of improved learning outcomes for students.

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