



## **Bringing Non-Dominant Languages into Education Systems:**

**Change from Above, from Below, from the Side –  
or a Combination?**

*Bringing Non-Dominant Languages into Education Systems: Change from Above, from Below, from the Side – or a Combination?*

Text by *Kimmo Kosonen & Carol Benson*

Presented by  
**Kimmo Kosonen**  
Payap University/  
SIL International



COMPARATIVE AND INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION: A DIVERSITY OF VOICES

Language Issues in Comparative Education II  
Policy and Practice in Multilingual Education Based on Non-Dominant Languages

Carol Benson and Kimmo Kosonen (Eds.)

This second volume of *Language Issues in Comparative Education*, following the tradition of the first, introduces the state of the field, re-establishes core terminology and concepts, and situates the chapters in terms of their contributions to multilingual education based on non-dominant languages. The first group of chapters examines language-in-education policy change, applying an innovative framework to analyze diverse contexts including Mozambique, Estonia and the Philippines. The next group of chapters describes activities designed to implement multilingual education. Using examples from Chad, Ethiopia, Kenya and Nepal, they explore progress in teacher professional development and elaboration of materials for literacy and learning through non-dominant languages. Some highlight new areas of the field, attending to speakers of non-dominant languages other than the ones chosen for instruction, and to the urgent multilingual needs of refugee learners. The final group of chapters presents strategies for research and advocacy, illustrated with examples from DR Congo, Uganda and India. Taken together, these contributions form a cohesive body of work that takes stock of advances in multilingual education and moves the field forward.

The authors and editors share a common commitment to comparativism in their methods and analysis, and aim to contribute to a more inclusive and multilingual education for all.

Carol Benson, PhD (1994), is Associate Professor of International and Comparative Education at Teachers College, Columbia University. She researches policy development and innovation in multilingual education for speakers of non-dominant languages, with ongoing collaborative projects in Cambodia and Senegal.

Kimmo Kosonen, PhD (1998), is a Senior Consultant in multilingual education with SIL International and Specialist in language development at Payap University in Thailand. He has published on non-dominant languages, multilingual education, and language-in-education policy in Asia.

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***Focus of our research (and theoretical framework):***

Language-in-education **policy change**  
towards

sustainable *multilingual education* and/or

increased *use of non-dominant languages (NDL) in education*

## Three Levels of Actors and Actions

- Actors/action from above (e.g., high-level government entities)
- Actors/action from below (e.g., local communities & organisations)
- Actors/action from the side

(Kosonen & Benson, 2021)



## Actors from the side

Actors between the other levels, bringing technical skills and resources

- local academics, particularly linguists and educators,
- mid-level education officers,
- local and international staff of:
  - INGOs,
  - UN & other multilateral agencies,
  - donor-sponsored international development programmes & projects

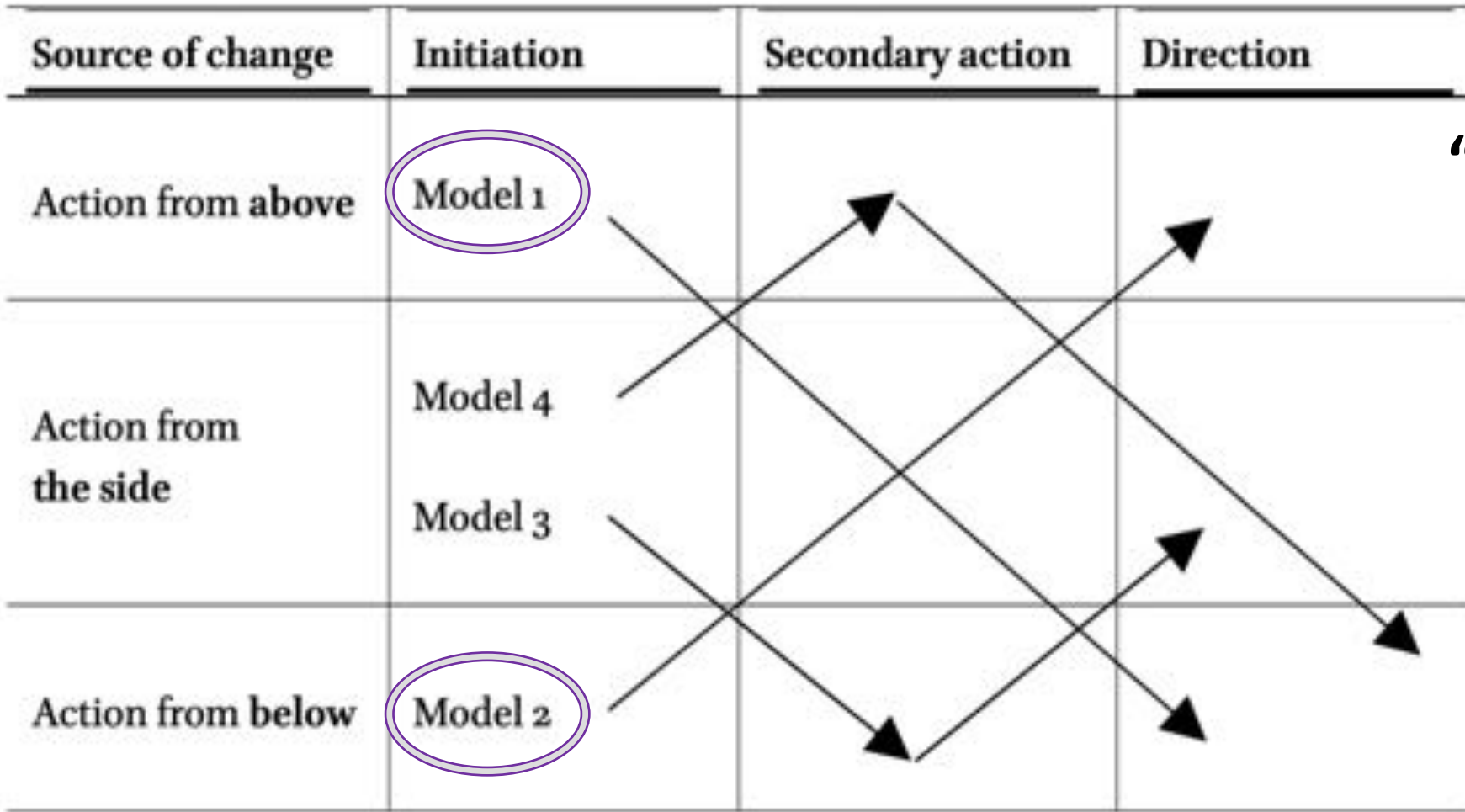
(Kosonen & Benson, 2021)

# Actions from the side

- pilot programmes or experiments,
- “language”/linguistic development, such as orthographies
- curriculum and materials production and elaboration,
- technical assistance and funding coordination,
- general support to NDL community and school management committees

(Kosonen & Benson, 2021)

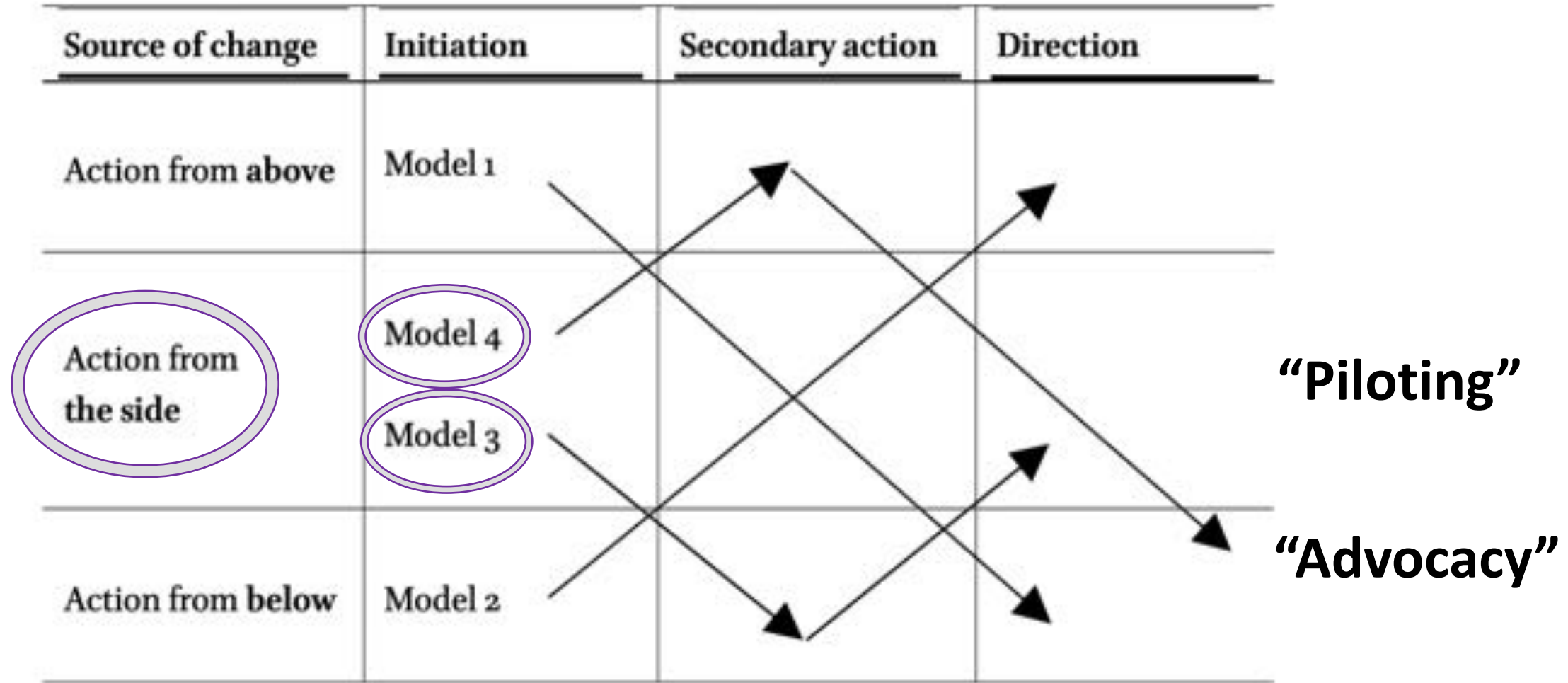
# Policy change trajectories (Kosonen & Benson, 2021)



**“Bottom-up”  
change**

**“Top-down”  
change**

# Policy change trajectories (Kosonen & Benson, 2021)





# Policy change trajectories

(Kosonen & Benson, 2021)

Source of change	Initiation	Secondary action	Direction
Action from above			
Action from the side	Model 3		
Action from below			

Model 3

“Piloting”

## Model 3: Change from the side with below to above (“piloting”)

<i>Initial phase:</i>	<i>Intermediate phases:</i>	<i>Possible future direction:</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Side actors</b> initiate small-scale pilot activities using NDLs.</li> <li>- Early on, they partner with <b>NDL communities</b> for linguistic and community support.</li> <li>- Written policies may or may not exist, but the use of NDLs is <b>not</b> prohibited.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Side actors continue piloting MLE for some time.</li> <li>- As activities expand, new NDL communities join.</li> <li>- Pressure from the side and demand from below leads <b>actors from above</b> to adopt supportive policies and allocate more resources.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Side actors continue as major implementers.</li> <li>- Actors from the side and below may become integrated.</li> <li>- Actors from above may eventually accept more leading roles in bringing NDLs into education.</li> <li>- Existing policies may be strengthened. (Kosonen &amp; Benson, 2021)</li> </ul>

# Policy change trajectories

(Kosonen & Benson, 2021)

Source of change	Initiation	Secondary	Direction
Action from above			
Action from the side	Model 4		
Action from below			

“Advocacy”

## Model 4: Change from the side to above, and then to below (“advocacy”)

### *Initial phase:*

- **Side actors** advocate for MLE with **policymakers** based on access/quality arguments.
- Written policies may support only dominant languages in education.
- Side actors initiate small-scale **pilot activities** using NDLs.

### *Intermediate phases:*

- Side actors continue piloting MLE for some time.
- Advocacy continues focused on policymakers, gradually gaining support.
- Effectiveness convinces more **grassroots actors** to become engaged, and more **actors from above** to become more supportive.

### *Possible future direction:*

- Side actors continue as major implementers.
- Actors from the side and above may become integrated.
- New NDL communities may be included based on government framework/guidelines.
- Existing policies may be strengthened.

(Kosonen & Benson, 2021)



A vibrant sunset scene with a bright sun low on the horizon, casting a warm orange and yellow glow across a sky filled with wispy clouds. Below the horizon, the silhouettes of rolling mountains are visible against the darker sky.

ขอบคุณครับ

Kiitos!

Thank you!

# Kosonen & Person – prepublication draft available

Kosonen, Kimmo & Person, Kirk R.  
(forthcoming)

**What strategies can be used to assist language-in-education policymakers to promote policies that support the use of non-dominant languages in education?**

In Trudell, B. and Dekker, D. *Good Answers to Tough Questions in Multilingual Education*, volume 2. Dallas: SIL International.

