

# *Towards a Coherent Foreign Language Policy in China: Lessons from Hong Kong<sup>1</sup>*

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*This article introduces a rapidly expanding fashion in China that is covertly supported by the government to embrace English-medium instruction (known locally as “bilingual education”) as a potential quick fix to the existing “costly and inefficient” approaches to English language instruction. It is argued that the education authorities and the public are not well informed of the possible problems that may result from a massive shift in the medium of instruction. Next, the medium of instruction struggle in Hong Kong is analyzed as a failed experiment in order to put Mainland China’s endeavor into perspective. It is then suggested that a state-level review of the “bilingual education” fashion is urgently needed, and that before a clear set of directives are available from the Ministry of Education, local education authorities should closely monitor the classrooms and encourage empirical experimentation rather than blind implementation. The analysis should be relevant to other developing countries, especially Asian countries, who are struggling with the status and the role of English in their respective school curricula.*