

The Road Not Taken: A Review of the Policy of Teaching Mathematics and Science in English in Malaysia

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ABSTRACT

By now, the issue of the PPSMI would have become stale news, academically at least. However, despite the firm denouncement and retracting of the PPSMI from the Malaysian education system, there are still a significant number of voices that have been crying out for the continuation and reinstatement of the policy. Hence, the authors feel that a thorough review of the causal factors leading up the implementation and annulment of the policy would not be amiss for the sake of all those who have a stake in this issue; parents & children, teachers & administrators, as well as policy makers. The discussion is firmly grounded in the philosophical underpinnings of educational policy making and attempts to tie up, in an objective and structured manner, the disparate strands of contentious controversies that have all but submerged the merits of this well-intentioned policy. Due to the socio-political ramifications of this policy, the PPSMI, through no fault of its own, mutated from being an educational policy aimed at providing a strong linguistic base for Malaysian children to master science and mathematics, into a battleground for ethno-linguistic supremacy. In this paper, the authors have attempted to unravel the conundrum that has become the PPSMI and emphasize the need to look at this policy in the light of its merits and ultimate value to the nation as it embraces scientific and technological innovation as its economic mainstay in its endeavor to become a global powerhouse.

Keywords: education policy, Malaysia, teaching, learning, pedagogy
