Globalization, English language policy, and teacher agency: Focus on Asia

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This paper focuses on English teachers in Asia in the context of globalization, the global spread of English and the emergence of English as an "Asian language". It highlights the dilemmas facing these teachers in meeting the growing social demands of English proficiency in a technology-influenced, managerial and neoliberal education environment with limited expertise, skills and policy support. We locate the paper in language policy and planning (LPP) within which the concept of micro-level agency provides a critical lens. We draw on insights from several Asian countries including Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, Pakistan and Vietnam. We argue that while English teachers are found to exercise their agency to meet changing demands of English proficiency, this agency can be seen as the result of what we call "policy dumping" at the macro-level—i.e. education policymakers not paying due attention to the requirements of policy implementation but dumping down policies to educational institutions and English teachers for their implementation. We conclude the paper by suggesting implications for English language policies in Asian countries that respond to globalization and the dominant discourses of English in a globalized world.

Keywords: English and globalization, English in Asia, Teachers of English as a second language, Teacher agency, policy dumping, Language-in-education planning

INTRODUCTION

English over the past few decades has emerged as a lingua franca for Asia. If it is the *official* language of the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN), it is the *de facto* language of communication for the whole of Asia (Kirkpatrick, 2007, 2011a, 2011b, 2012a, 2012b). Regardless of whether Asia can claim the ownership of English (Bolton, 2008, Kachru, 1998, McArthur, 2003), it is a fact that when an Indian communicates with a Malaysian, or a Korean, or a Chinese for whatever purposes, the default means of the communication is English.

Against this dominance of English for communication across the region and the world at large, Asian nations' English language policy responses to globalization and to the discourses of English as a global language have resulted in two major education reforms: 1) introducing English earlier in the curriculum; and 2) adopting English as a medium of

higher education (Hamid, Nguyen & Baldauf, 2013, Hu & McKay, 2012, Kirkpatrick, 2011a, Tollefson & Tsui, 2004, Tsui & Tollefson, 2007). Both reforms have brought English teachers into the spotlight, particularly those from the public sector education, requiring them to perform, often beyond their means, to deliver social and policy expectations and account for how well they do what they do.

Traditionally, teachers in Asia have been viewed as authorities of knowledge and role models, commanding social respect (e.g., Nguyen, 2009; Sullivan, 2000). In return, teachers are expected to contribute to building the future of their students with sincerity, devotion and some degree of selflessness (Alhamdan et al, 2014). While these traditional social expectations of teachers and teacher roles are still relevant in many Asian contexts (Nguyen, 2009), educational and socio-political realities of the contemporary world have brought a new set of expectations of teachers, particularly in regards to teaching English as an additional language. For instance, while English teachers in the past prepared students mainly for examination, they are now expected to equip them with communicative resources needed for their functioning as global citizens. In particular, education policymakers expect that English teachers work towards transforming schoolchildren into active agents who will effectively participate in a globalized economy and contribute to national economic development. For this, English teachers are supposed to possess advanced levels of English proficiency and pedagogical knowledge, particularly in the principles and practices of communicative language teaching (CLT), which has attained the status of a global pedagogy, and to keep up-to-date with educational technologies to be able to work with children who are increasingly becoming digital natives. Education authorities believe that teacher ability to perform these roles requires monitoring through government mechanisms and media surveillance in a corporatized system of education (Cohen, 2010). Furthermore, teacher accountability needs to be ensured by examining student performance on designated tests of local and global standards and comparing school performance both intra-nationally (e.g. Australia's National Assessment Program for Literacy and Numeracy, NAPLAN) and inter-nationally (e.g. Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development's Program for International Student Assessment, PISA). Student performance can also be linked to teacher remuneration. In Bangladesh, for example, the Government is considering linking non-government school teachers' monthly payment order (MPO) to quality of education and pass rates of institutions on national school-leaving examinations (Byron, 2015).

In this paper we discuss teacher responses to and strategies for dealing with these growing social pressures, drawing on evidence from a number of Asian countries. We argue that although exercising agency appears to be an important aspect of this response, the self-exertion can be seen as a default choice for teachers given that macro-level policy actors have transferred the onus of policy implementation to schools and teachers without providing for on-going teacher learning and professional support.

We organize the paper in the following ways. First, we discuss English language policies in a number of Asian countries, which have arguably responded to globalization. We then examine the extent to which various Asian polities have developed qualified English teachers to enact these policies. This examination creates the space for introducing teacher agency in the context of language policy implementation and providing examples of teachers' agentive actions from classroom practices in the next two sections. We engage in a critical reflection of teacher agency before suggesting implications of our analysis at the end.

GLOBALIZATION, ENGLISH, AND ASIA

If globalization is understood as the interconnectedness of peoples, societies and nations on a global scale, the role of English as a global language can hardly be overemphasized in this process of global interdependence. Just as globalization has influenced all aspects of contemporary life (Appadurai, 1996), English has influenced many aspects of life, directly or indirectly, in many parts of the world. English is the dominant language of communication, technology, academia, capitalism and entertainment (Crystal, 1997). Whether English is the driver of globalization or vice versa may be unclear, but it is clear that the relationship between them is symbiotic and mutually beneficial: if English provides the linguistic and communicative infrastructure to globalization, the latter promotes the cause of English by making the language imperative for participation in globalized networks, markets and resources. It is the marriage of English and globalization, whether arranged (see Phillipson, 1992) or co-incidental (Crystal, 1997), and the merger of the underlying discourses of the two (see Coleman, 2011, Crystal, 1997, Graddol, 1997, 2006, Hamid, 2010, Kachru, 1982, Pennycook, 2000, 2011) that drive individuals, groups and societies towards more English. These discourses of English and globalization can be seen as the driver of English-in-education policies in Asia.

For instance, Malaysia's national ambition for English, as stipulated in its national blueprint called Vision 2020 which aims to prepare the nation to become an industrialized nation by 2020 (Malakolunthu & Rengasamy, 2012), is noteworhty. Like its more successful neighbour, Singapore, internationalization of higher education is seen as a crucial means for Malaysia's success in a globalized world. It is expected that internationalization will benefit the nation in two ways. First, this will enable Malaysia to become an international hub of education which will attract international students and foreign currency. Second, internationalization will widen the scope of employability of local Malaysian graduates in a globalized job market. Based on this perceived role of English, Malaysia has already switched to English from Malay as the medium instruction for higher education. Malaysia had also experimented with English medium instruction policy at the primary and secondary school level for science and mathematics subjects. However, this was repealed in 2011 due to inefficient implementation, poor learning outcomes and, more crucially, political ramifications (Gill, 2012; Lee, 2014).

Although the valuation of English by Japanese authorities can be hard to gauge, the nation's engagement with English as a global language for internationalization purposes cannot be underestimated (Hashimoto, 2013). In a recent policy move, Prime Minister Abe indicated that TOEFL testing will be used "to raise the standard of English of his fellow countrymen" (Kin, 2013). It is suggested that the Japanese students will be required to take the test as a requirement for admission in tertiary institutions and graduation. The TOEFL strategy is part of a set of educational reforms for which the Mr Abe is prepared to put aside one trillion yen, although it is not clear how much of the amount will go into the TOEFL initiative.

In Vietnam, there was a growing realization by the 1990s that competence in foreign languages was a key factor in facilitating the open door policy (*Doi Moi*) and enhancing Vietnam's economic and political competitiveness in the age of globalization and internationalization. In a political move in September 2008, the Vietnamese Ministry of Education and Training (MOET) issued the "National Foreign Language 2020 Project" which emphasized foreign language education as a key driver in national development.

The project outlined goals, tasks and plans for implementing the teaching and learning of foreign languages within the education system. As part of this initiative, MOET aimed to ensure that by 2020 most Vietnamese youth who graduate from vocational schools, colleges and universities could use a foreign language (English, in practical terms) independently. This language planning goal has led to a number of changes in English language education, including increasing the teaching time devoted to English, changing textbooks, offering English as a medium of instruction programs, and training and retraining English language teachers.

The role of English in national development can be illustrated more clearly with reference to India. It is interesting that the Indian Vision 2020 documents—neither the general (Gupta, 2002) nor the educational one (Rajput, 2002) — explicitly discuss language questions in their emphasis on the "Indianization" of knowledge or on building a knowledge society in a globalizing world. This does not mean de-emphasizing the role of English in India, a key player in the Asian century. What this probably means is that policy makers do not intend to make the language the centre of ethno-political controversies like those experienced at the dawn of independence from British rule. Or, perhaps more plausibly, English is taken for granted as an Indian language, thereby foreclosing the need for further discussion. Indeed, it can be argued that India (and to some extent the Philippines) has already been reaping the benefits of English in a globalized world by establishing itself as the preferred destination of outsourcing and call centres (Bolton, 2008). Therefore, India's commitment to English can be seen as more pragmatic and outcome-oriented, which appears to be more discourse-driven for some other developing nations including Bangladesh (see Hamid, 2010).

Bangladesh is faced with the struggle of addressing the basic needs of a massive population, including food, health, sanitation and basic literacy. However, Bangladesh's commitment to English appears astounding, regardless of the practicality of investment in English (Bruthiaux, 2002). Fortunately for Bangladesh, the major language education reforms in the country have been facilitated by the regular flow of ELT aid (see Hamid, 2010). There have been a lot of English teaching and learning activities in recent years, some focusing exclusively on English whilst others being part of general education projects. Typically, the justification of these projects refers to the discourses of English and globalization and how English proficiency development can accelerate economic development of the nation. For instance, a 9-year English language project currently in operation is very explicit about Bangladesh's necessity of English in a globalized world:

> *English in Action will provide the communicative English to transform the lives of people in Bangladesh and make a major contribution to the economic development of the country [...] It will look to change the lives of up to 25 million people using new approaches to teaching and learning (Hamid, 2010, pp. 289-290).*

Similar discourses of English and national investment in English can be drawn from other Asian nations. There is a wider social perception across Asia that English is a must, the more and the earlier English is taught the better.

ENACTING MACRO-LEVEL POLICIES: ENGLISH TEACHERS IN FOCUS

The national policy discourses of English, as previously discussed, have called for policy development in a number of areas to translate the policies into action by educational institutions, teachers and students as well as parents and communities. Kaplan and Baldauf (1997, 2003, and 2005) have proposed a comprehensive framework that points out the areas where policy development as a first step to policy translation is required, including access policy, curriculum policy, materials and methods policy, resources policy, personnel policy, community policy and evaluation policy. Language teachers constitute a crucial segment of the personnel policy whose role is fundamental to the implementation of the policy for effecting language learning and language change in the expected direction.

The language planning literature has shown that teacher factors are often seen as responsible for student underachievement in English in many Asian countries (Kaplan, Baldauf & Kamwangamalu, 2011). Nunan's (2003) investigation of English teaching and learning in East Asia highlighted the issues of teacher supply and the inadequacy of teacher proficiency, skills and expertise. Inadequacy of teacher proficiency and professional capacity has affected English teaching and learning in Bangladesh (Hamid, 2010). Classroom observation, as reported and analyzed by Hamid and Honan (2012), shows that the dominant activities taking place in the primary classroom may not have a significant impact on students' proficiency development. More recent classroom research points to the co-existence of traditional and communicative teaching and learning practices arguably as a consequence of project intervention (Shresta, 2013). Nevertheless, it may not be asserted that the reported classroom practices would help achieve the project goals of English proficiency development in a significant way. In Malaysia, survey results show that two-thirds of the 70,000 Malaysian school English teachers (as well as students) are not proficient in English (*Straits Times*, 2012). Teacher English proficiency issues have affected medium of instruction policies at the university level as well, as evidenced by Ali (2013; Ali, Hamid & Moni, 2011). Similarly, Indonesia has struggled to equip English teachers with adequate levels of English proficiency and pedagogical skills (Dardjowidjojo, 2000, Kirkpatrick, 2007). The fact that there are still many English teachers who are not proficient enough to teach English subjects has been identified as one of the factors leading to students with poor English comprehension (Sunggingwati, 2009). Studies have suggested that the teachers in this context need further training in effective teaching methodologies (e.g., Lie, 2007, Renandya, 2004, Sunggingwati & Nguyen, 2013) and classroom language competence (Freeman, Katz, Garcia & Burns, 2015).

In Vietnam, there are increasing concerns about the quality of English language education. Studies indicate that the teaching of the language is fraught with many problems. For instance, after years of learning English, secondary school students do not acquire sufficient competence in English. Students seem to be structurally competent but communicatively incompetent (Le, 2007, Le & Barnard, 2009). In a study into how Vietnamese learners learn English, To (2007) found that Vietnamese learners tend to "learn by heart" (p.11). These findings support those from previous studies (Le, 2001; Pham, 2000, 2005) which claimed that Vietnamese learners of English do not seem to be provided with opportunities to communicate in English or to use English in meaningful contexts. Nguyen (2011), in her investigation of the implementation of a new language policy at a primary school in Vietnam, identified major challenges in enacting English promotion policy including teacher supply, training and professional development,

resourcing, teaching methods and materials. Several researchers (e.g., Duong, 2003, Nguyen, 2011, Nunan, 2003, Pham, 2001) have asserted that the poor quality of English language teaching is partly attributable to a lack of effective teacher training and teacher professional development.

POLICY METAMORPHOSIS: FROM PUBLIC TEXTS TO PERFORMATIVE ACTION AND THE ROLE OF AGENCY

The gap between English language policy ambitions (i.e., developing communicative competence) and the requirements of policy implementation (e.g., supporting teacher professional development) has called for the exercise of teacher agency at the local/micro level. Traditionally, language policy and planning (LPP) has been located in the macro context, recognizing the agency of political actors (Kaplan, 2011, Kaplan & Baldauf, 1997) in policy formulation. However, the past couple of decades have seen a diversification of LPP contexts, which are now located in transnational as well as sub-national spaces (Chua & Baldauf, 2011, Hamid & Baldauf, 2014). Therefore, although macro-level agency still remains crucial, the agency of actors at both narrower and wider contexts has started receiving important attention. In terms of LPP framing, we now have micro and meso together with macro contexts (Kaplan & Baldauf, 1997, 2003). Accordingly, individual agency, particularly at the micro-level— and the agency of teachers in particular—has started to receive important consideration (Baldauf, 2005, Menken & Garcia, 2010, Zhao, 2011, Zhao & Baldauf, 2012, Nguyen & Bui, 2016).

The recognition of agency at the local context is critical for the implementation of macro-level policies and policy goals. First, macro-level policy is, by definition, abstract and decontextualized which needs to be appropriated in a local context. Often the success of the policy depends on how it is interpreted, particularly by those who are involved in its implementation, and whether there are similarities between the different interpretations of policy intentions across sites and stakeholders. The dissemination of the policy may not ensure the adoption of its intended meanings and interpretations, as studies indicate that different actors assign different meanings and interpretations to the same policy (Ali, 2013, Zacharias, 2013). Second, even when there is a convergence of policy interpretations (Hamid et al, 2013), it cannot be taken as a given that teachers will embrace the policy whole-heartedly and work towards policy goals. They may resist the policy in a covert manner if policy intentions do not reflect their interests, beliefs and realities. For instance, Martin's (2005a, 2005b) ethnographic work in peripheral classrooms in Malaysia and Brunei shows that instead of taking the textbook knowledge for granted, teachers appropriate this knowledge to make it accessible to local students. This teacher mediation between policy represented by textbooks and students' realities on the ground may be characterized by accommodation, acceptance or resistance (Walford, 2001). Teachers may also work against policy intentions in circumstances where acting on the policy may not be easy due to various constraints. One familiar example can be drawn from CLT. Although national policies have adopted CLT widely, classroom research shows that what happens in the CLT classroom is different from common expectations (see Hamid & Honan, 2012).

The metamorphosis of policy from the macro to the micro context is aptly captured in Lo Bianco's (2010) conceptualizations of policy in different sites (e.g. macro, meso and micro) as "public texts", "public discourses" (or debates) and "performative action". In his

understanding, macro policies are textual artifacts which are statements of goals or intentions (Kaplan, 2011, Kaplan & Baldauf, 1997). These texts are often subjected to public scrutiny in different forums (e.g., print and electronic media) and thus become public discourses. Language policies as public texts, regardless of whether these are exposed to public debates, are not deployed as is by teachers at the local context; rather, these texts have to be transformed into performative action. As Lo Bianco (2010) explains:

> *Public texts are therefore decided instances of LP [language policy], public discourses are ongoing debates about language problems, and performances are the ongoing modeling of language forms desired and valued by speakers or writers. Performative action can reinforce or violate LP distilled in public texts or LP as suggested in prevailing discourses (p. 162).*

Lo Bianco (2010) recognizes the "relative autonomy" of the site of performative action which can either reinforce or violate macro policy intentions:

> *...language teaching becomes more than simply teachers enacting or implementing in a functional way decisions taken by curriculum authorities or education ministries. Classroom language use becomes a site, not completely autonomous and divorced from ministry or official requirements, but sufficiently separated and distinctive to count as a factor in shaping how language develops and changes (p. 156).*

Thus, teacher agency is directly linked to the policy process, which can "perform" policy in agentic ways to produce or hinder policy outcomes.

TEACHER AGENCY AND ENGLISH TEACHERS' AGENTIVE ACTIONS

The concept of agency—particularly the agency of individual actors—is increasingly becoming important in LPP (Menken & Garcia, 2010, Zhao, 2011, Zhao & Baldauf, 2012). However, the field has not adequately defined agency (see Johnson & Johnson, 2015) or embraced its complexity as understood from its various conceptualizations in social and behavioural sciences (e.g. Ahearn, 2001; Emirbayer & Mische, 1998). Agency in the sense of contextually mediated capacity to act freely (Ahearn, 2001) seems to have been given preference in empirical work, although often without providing an explicit definition.

Lin's (1999) classroom research in Hong Kong in different socio-economic contexts is a case in point. The ethnographic work illustrates how teacher agency and effort can make a difference in learning experiences and outcomes of those students whose social realities and dispositions put them at a disadvantage at school.

> *The students in Classroom D came from a disadvantaged socioeconomic background, as their counterparts in Classrooms B and C did. Like their counterparts' habitus, their habitus did not equip them with the right kind of attitudes and interest or skills and confidence in learning English. However, there were signs of their habitus being transformed through the creative, discursive agency and efforts of their teacher (Lin, 1999, p. 409).*

The author highlighted the incompatibility of cultural resources and habitus of students from disadvantaged backgrounds with the curricular expectations. She pointed that it is through the teacher's mediational work that the students' engagement in learning was ensured. The study illustrates how social expectations of English can be met by teacher agency in transforming public texts (English curriculum) into performative action (agency work) in the micro context.

Similarly, Martin's (2005a, 2005b) ethnographic research in rural classrooms in Malaysia and Brunei demonstrates the critical role of teachers and their agency. The curriculum for English and English-medium content subjects produced by central education authorities is brought to the local classroom in the form of textbooks (public texts). However, the world of the textbook is different from the students' realities on the ground, making it difficult for them to engage with the textbook knowledge. Teacher agency is called for which mediates between the textbook knowledge and the local givens. Through "safe" practices, teachers appropriate textbook knowledge in the interest of their students.

Likewise, in the context of Vietnam, teachers' agency is argued to be imperative for pedagogical transformations. Within the context of Vietnam where educational reforms were implemented without adequate preparation, it is critically important to foreground teachers as policy actors with agency (Bui, 2013, Phyak & Bui, 2014, Nguyen & Bui, 2016). Teachers in these studies are reported to be engaged in exploring multilingualism as cultural and linguistic resources for students' learning. They are motivated and guided to incorporate minority languages in class to maximize students' linguistic repertoires. Through working collaboratively with teachers, the scholars (Bui, 2013, Phyak & Bui, 2014) acknowledge that they simultaneously support and respond to "students' voices through applying more linguistically and culturally responsive pedagogical approaches" (Phyak & Bui, 2014, p.14) which are based on students' English abilities and needs. It can be seen that appreciating teacher agency crucially helps them interrogate and negotiate their beliefs, roles, and agencies based on their teaching experiences. It affirms that teachers could teach differently when responding to students' needs while reinterpreting and appropriating education policies. This example emphasizes the importance of teacher agency in responding to language policies that are unresponsive to linguistic and cultural diversity.

Teacher agency emerges in English-medium classrooms in Indonesia, as reported by Zacharias (2013). In order to create an elite cohort of Indonesian citizens who would navigate successfully in a globalized economy, the government introduced the so-called International Standard Schools (ISS) where English as a medium of instruction gradually replaces Bahasa Indonesia. However, being educated in Bahasa Indonesia and not having the opportunity to develop high levels of proficiency in English, the content teachers were placed in a situation where they struggled to teach in the foreign language. Pressed by the policy dictates and having limited choices, the teachers in the research site exerted themselves in innovative ways to manage English-medium teaching. For instance, Zacharias (2013) quoted a computer science teacher who bought a Samsung X2 phone and "made a personal technology leap":

> *When I teach, I open google translate in my desktop. So whatever I want to say to the students, I type it into the google translate. I like google translate because it also includes the pronunciation. So, it helps me. Especially when the electricity is down and I cannot use my desktop.*

> *That's why I buy this phone. Too expensive for me, actually. So I can just type the phrase/word I wanna say in Indonesian and then, I can see and listen how to say it. For example 'pindah ke atas'[let's move upstairs]. But the problem is when there is a connection problem, then I use Indonesian (Mr Eko, 2 April 2012) (p. 101)*

Zacharias (2013) interpreted the use of technology by this teacher in the following way:

> *Here, I found Mr E's buying Samsung X2, a phone that is way above his pay grade, as an act in activating his agency in surviving the EMI policy. It helps him to navigate his teaching around the expectation to use English as well as local constraints (occasional power blackouts) (p. 101).*

As the researcher interprets, the teacher illustrates his agency by taking an agentic action (i.e., buying an expensive device for educational use). While the action is inspired, ironically, by an unsupportive policy (EMI), the teacher is also driven by the interests of his students to ensure their learning in the EMI class.

Ali's (2013) research illustrates teacher agency in higher education in Malaysia where the introduction of English-medium instruction in response to globalization has created challenges for teachers and students due to low levels of English proficiency (Ali, Hamid & Moni, 2011). Although the policy itself was interpreted in different ways by different teachers, there was a general consensus that content teachers were not responsible for explicit teaching of English, for which they had neither the time nor the expertise. Nevertheless, some teachers made extra efforts and covered language in their content teaching in the interests of students. The agentive engagement of one teacher was particularly remarkable who perceived the struggles of the students in learning content through English, in which they had limited proficiency, from the experience of one of his own children who also had had limited English but had been set to study medicine. Viewing the students as his own children, he provided English language support so that learning became meaningful to them.

Teacher agency can also be observed in the context of teacher learning and professional development. As previously discussed, the introduction of early English or English as a medium of instruction in Asian countries has not seen commensurate policy initiatives for teacher professional development (Hamid, 2010, Nunan, 2003). The inadequacy of teacher learning and skill enhancement has left English teachers in a precarious situation in dealing with the mounting pressures from stakeholders including policymakers, employers, students, parents and the media. For instance, it is argued that Vietnamese university graduates' poor performance in an Intel recruitment in 2008, in which only seven per cent of the 2000 information technology students met the required standards of the English language, might have triggered a massive overhaul of the English language teaching and learning in the country by launching the 2020 project, as previously discussed. While the government initiative taken in response to globalization to create opportunities for Vietnam in a globalized economy is laudable, it is unclear whether the policy will succeed in creating an army of qualified English teachers to cater for the English learning population country (Le, 2012, Le & Do, 2012, Nguyen, 2011). Under these circumstances,

English teachers in some countries are found to exercise their agency in enhancing their professional skills on their own, not relying on government-provided teacher learning opportunities. For instance, Shahab (2013) explores, through a narrative inquiry, a group of English teachers' self-initiated learning activities in Pakistan where government provisions for teacher skill enhancement are minimal, if not non-existent. She interviewed 15 secondary level teachers—five from each of the three streams of education including public-sector general education, religious (madrasa) education and privately funded English-medium education—to understand their self-initiated activities for improving English proficiency, content knowledge and pedagogical skills. Although the study shows that teacher engagement with learning activities was mediated by institutional support (for instance, the private sector English-medium institutions provided more encouragement to their teachers than the two other sectors), teacher initiation of the learning itself is noteworthy.

Similarly, Nguyen (2008) explored "self-directed learning" of a group of English teachers teaching at the tertiary level in Vietnam. The motivation behind such learning was the inadequacy of pre-service and in-service training opportunities for English teachers in the country. Although the study does not divide the kinds of professional development activities (e.g., workshops and action research) that the teachers were engaged in into government-provided and self-initiated categories, the teacher interview data showed that self-direction, which underlies teacher agency, was an important characteristic of teacher activities for professional development.

AGENCY OR POLICY DUMPING?

In the examples of English teachers' agency work discussed above, we can see the inadequacy of macro-level policies and the lack of support for teachers that would equip them linguistically and pedagogically for developing students' proficiency in English. The absence of teacher support and learning means that teachers are required to exercise their agency for the benefit of their students. While it is rightly argued that macro-level policies need to recognize the agency of teachers in the micro context (Ali, 2013, Menken & Garcia, 2010, Zacharias, 2013), the background of teacher agency as described in this paper raises the question of whether teacher agency involves free choice for teachers or whether it is the predictable consequence of the avoidance of responsibility by policy actors at the macro level. This is not suggesting that teachers do not have a choice. Indeed, teachers who are found to be exercising their agency could also have given lip service to the policy (see Zacharias, 2013, for example) as "passive technicians" (Kumaravadivelu, 2003), without reflecting on policy outcomes for their students. However, the teachers, as referred to in this paper, probably considered themselves "transformative intellectuals" and acted in the interests of their students, even while dealing with policies that apparently did not make sense, or for which they had not been fully equipped from a pedagogical or resource point of view (Kaplan & Baldauf, 2003). In other words, although ambitious English language policies have been initiated at the macro level in the wake of globalization, the pre-requisites of policy implementation (as described in Kaplan & Baldauf's 2003 policy development framework) are not fully addressed for reasons related to resource constraints or a lack of political will. This creates a case of policy (goals) without planning (action) (Kaplan & Baldauf, 1997), as described by Pearson (2014) with regard to language-in-education policy implementation in Rwanda. Under these circumstances, the onus of policy implementation is transferred to the meso and micro

contexts. It is through their agency that English teachers "deliver themselves up to policy" (Ball, 2009, p. 87).

Teacher agency resulting from the absence of planning at the macro-level policy has been substantiated by Hamid (2010) with reference to Bangladesh. English language teaching programs and educational reforms in this country have been significantly influenced by donor-funded English language projects. In the late 1990s one such project called English Language Teaching Improvement Project (ELTIP) was jointly funded by Government of Bangladesh and the British Department for International Development (DfID) which introduced CLT in the country (Hamid, 2010, Hamid & Baldauf, 2008, Hunter, 2009). When the first phase of the project came to an end in 2002 and the DFID did not want to fund the project in the second phase, the Government of Bangladesh was in a dilemma: It did not want to discontinue the good work that the project had done but, at the same time, it was unable to manage external funding. Ultimately, the government decided to finance the project from internal resources. The seven education boards and the National Curriculum and Textbook Board (NCTB) were dictated to pump money into the project, even though these institutions did not have a revenue-generating capacity. Despite the uncertainty of funding, project staff, including teacher trainers, continued their work without receiving salaries for months. This policy transfer from the macro level to meso and micro levels can be called "policy dumping" in which traditional policy actors take credit for policy initiation, but the onus of implementation is left with those at the lower strata of the policy hierarchy. We would argue that the examples of teacher agency that we have discussed in this paper reflect the role of teachers as transformative intellectuals who are committed to policy action despite the contextual constraints and the inadequacy of professional and social support. However, what we call agency can also be seen as a result of policy dumping—the macro-level actors not taking full responsibility for policy implementation and inviting teacher agency to fill the gap by self-exertion.

CONCLUSIONS

This paper has examined the implications of the globalization of English and the growing use of English in Asian societies for English teachers' professional development and practice. We have examined how globalization has led education policymakers in Asian countries to subscribe to the dominant discourses of English for internationalization of higher education, participation in a globalized economy and national economic development. Consequently, Asian educational policy response to globalization has resulted in introducing more English either at an earlier stage of the curriculum or making it a medium of instruction or both. As we have argued in the paper, the policy reforms have exerted tremendous pressure on English language teachers who are expected to live up to social and policy expectations often with little or limited pedagogical training and support. While English teachers in many Asian classrooms are found to exercise their agency to meet policy demands, their agency can also be seen as a case of self-exertion in the absence adequate professional and pedagogical support. We would argue that this emerging agency is the result of policy dumping at the macro-level—i.e., educational policymakers not paying due attention to the requirements of policy implementation but dumping policies to educational institutions and teachers for their implementation. Thus, the teacher agency that we have reported in the article drawing on works from a number of education contexts in Asia is interesting because agency is not exactly an exercise of

freewill; rather, teachers are, in a way, forced to exert themselves if they wanted to help students to meet policy goals.

While it is encouraging to see innovative teaching practices as a result of teachers exercising their agency, it also needs to be emphasized that the implementation of policies should not be contingent on teacher agency in the sense of self-exertion. Although some teachers may be willing to follow this path to meet the needs of students viewing themselves as transformative intellectuals, not all teachers will necessarily take this direction in their teaching practice. In fact, it is also common to see teachers either resisting policies or subverting policy intentions, as reported by Ali (2013) and Zacharias (2013). Therefore, policymakers need to pay attention to the requirements of policy implementation, particularly with reference to personnel policy including teacher training and ongoing professional development in the light of changing expectations of English teachers and teacher roles. As we have highlighted in the article, if English language policies have produced only modest outcomes in many of the Asian societies, it is largely due to teachers and teacher education and professional development issues. Therefore, English language policies should be informed not just by what societies needed, from the linguistic point of view, to meet the challenges of globalization but also whether policies can be translated into action taking into account various requirements including teachers, teacher skill development and expertise.

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