Introduction: Dialogues about the Local and the Global in education

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Education in most parts of Oceania draws heavily on Western concepts, practices and theories. This is certainly the case in the island nations and territories of the Pacific and in the delivery of education to the Indigenous peoples of New Zealand and Australia. Even in recent years, education reform agendas have reflected Western values and models at management, curriculum and pedagogic levels. The colonial inheritance lives on in the Pacific, especially through the provision of advanced training in English-speaking countries and in development assistance programs that assume the primacy of Western values and practices in education.

Regrettably, reform agendas have not always met with success (Puamau & Teasdale, 2007). We, therefore, need to reflect on the role of local cultures in the implementation of reforms and reconsider their congruity with the socio-economic and political landscapes of Oceania. Chen's (2010), *Asia as method*, reminds us of the danger of uncritical adoption of theories, such as those from the West. He argues that establishing dialogue between Western and Local theories leads to a deeper understanding, moving us beyond a simple Local/Global binary divide. We need to expand our perspectives, engage with complexity, and seek approaches to research that are grounded in the Local yet embedded in the Global, thus achieving, at least to some extent, the internationalist localism that Chen advocates.

This issue of the journal is based on an OCIES-sponsored program for Early Career Researchers (ECRs). The program has established an academic alliance of ECRs to explore educational issues in Oceania and Asia through the lens of local knowledges, wisdoms and theories, helping us to de-centre ourselves from an obsession with the West and Western epistemologies. Philip Chan and Hongzhi Zhang are the conveners, and Bob Teasdale and Zane Ma Rhea have acted as mentors of the program.

In early 2017, we received a fellowship and network grant of A$5,000 from the Oceania Comparative and International Education Society (OCIES) for this initiative, under the title: *ECR Connect: Examining Oceania education issues in international and comparative perspective*. The program sought to establish an ECR network in OCIES and to encourage publication in the OCIES journal. We organised a symposium in the Faculty of Education, Monash University, on 26 June 2017. Bob Teasdale presented a background paper to guide discussions. Six papers then were presented by ECRs from different nations in Oceania. Presenters received immediate peer feedback to help strengthen the quality of their papers. Two symposiums were organised at the 2017 OCIES annual conference in Noumea, New Caledonia. Again, presenters received valuable suggestions

for their papers. The final manuscripts of these papers now have been peer-reviewed and are presented in this special issue of the journal.

The issue contains nine papers by emerging scholars from Australia, China, Hong Kong, New Zealand, Taiwan, and the Pacific. In the opening paper*, Researching and theorising the Local in education: Perspectives from Oceania and Asia*, Zhang, Chan, and Teasdale explore the role of local knowledges and wisdoms in educational research. They draw on Chen's idea of "internationalist localism" to explore relationships between local wisdom and traditional cultures in Oceania and Asia, and Western theories of education. The authors provide examples from Oceania, Asia, and Australia. The paper seeks to provide a theoretical underpinning for this special issue.

The second paper is by Donella Cobb: *Placing the spotlight on Open Educational Resources: Global phenomenon or cultural guise?* She posits that Open Educational Resources are considered an alternative platform to achieving cost-effective teacher education in low-income countries. However, when she examined the Open Education Resources for English Language Teachers (ORELT) teacher education modules, she discovered that they actually support the socialisation of teachers into Western culture, values and beliefs. Her paper challenges the assumption that Open Educational Resources are a socially neutral pedagogic platform and raises questions about the educational and cultural implications for local contexts.

Tuia, a Samoan academic, has explored: *The impact of Samoa's pre-service teacher education system on student teachers learning*, arguing that the influence of New Zealand and Australia has dominated the administration of policy assistance in postcolonial Samoa. He believes that pre-service teachers are faced with a dilemma when trying to fit into the current training system. The paper draws on interview data to illustrate how the teacher education curriculum lacks relevance to the Samoan context. The paper concludes that, in Samoa, local educational needs must be addressed, and the teacher education system should be more inclusive of local values and knowledge.

Paulsen's paper: *Relationships, relationality, and schooling: Opportunities and challenges for Pacific Islander learners in Melbourne's western suburbs*, traces the living experiences of a group of Pacific Islander (PI) learners in Melbourne between 2012 and 2015. The paper examines the ways that PI learners engage and interact with various players within their hosted home and school environment, and how these relationships affect their academic achievements. The paper argues that complex relationship customs and relationality patterns can lead to both positive and negative impacts on learning for some PI learners.

In their paper*, Understanding the Local in Indigenous Taiwan*, Nesterova and Jackson question the idea of the Local, given that Indigenous people do not necessarily all hold similar views about local Indigeneity and its place in the educational development in Taiwan. They analyse the case from the historical context of Indigenous people to contemporary views and perspectives on Indigeneity, Indigenous development and education. The paper concludes by considering the implications of these understandings for Taiwan's development and education.

Trinh explores education in Vietnam. Her paper, *Local dimensions under the impacts of imperialism, colonialism, and neo-liberalism of globalisation: Insights from the Vietnamese education system*, reviews relevant literature on Vietnamese education reforms and internationalization policies. In particular, she explores the role of the Local,

finding that it was characterized by responses such as adaptation, appropriation, creativity, nationalism, and patriotism in the imperial and colonial times. From thematic analysis of documented literature and relevant policies, the local dimensions of the Vietnamese education system were identified as diverse and varying.

Fa'avae's paper, *Complex times and needs for locals: Strengthening (local) education systems through education research and development in Oceania*, posits that the Local is a consistent concern linked to colonization in the Pacific. He reports indigenous academics contributing to decolonization discourse linked to disrupting Western research ideals and practice. The author highlights the role of his institute in a regional university focused on privileging local and Indigenous knowledges as strengths, and working together with regional and international agencies to support and strengthen local education systems in Oceania. This paper argues that there is an existing and increasing local body of work and expertise seeking to disrupt the out-dated colonial systems; this work is mobilizing Indigenous knowledge and research in the moana.

Chan's paper, *Cross-border education for pupils of kindergartens and schools: The case of Hong Kong*, reports a unique case of young children migrating between two cultures, two languages and two regions (China and Hong Kong) each day. The paper explores equality issues faced by these 28,000 students who cross the border to attend public schools in Hong Kong. Chen evaluates the results of various stakeholders working together to solve some important issues, for example, dedicated school zones, immigration clearance services, setting up Hong Kong classes in Chinese schools, and language, communication, and cultural support. The paper argues that the battle to overcome inequality continues.

The final contribution, *Acknowledging the legitimacy of local practices: A study of communication challenges between Chinese and Australian university students*, by God and Zhang, reports how Chinese international students understand and deal with difficulties in communication with host students at an Australian university in relation to different English practices. Their findings show that Chinese students tend to consider their own practices as less legitimate than those of the Australians. Since intercultural communication is a process of negotiating shared meanings based on each other's Local, linguistically and culturally, without acknowledgment of the legitimacy of their own local practices, Chinese students may find it difficult to utilize language and cultural resources to communicate with their Australian peers.

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Researching and theorizing the local in education: Perspectives from Oceania and Asia

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This paper explores the role of local knowledges and wisdoms in educational research and theorizing, drawing examples from Oceania and Asia. It draws on Chen's idea of "internationalist localism" as a lens to explore relationships between local wisdom and traditional cultures in Oceania and Asia, and Western theories of education. Examples are drawn from the island nations of Oceania (including Papua New Guinea), Asia (including Indonesia, Vietnam, and Bangladesh) as well as Australia (including Indigenous Australian settings). In each of these examples, researchers grounded their studies in local wisdoms and traditions, albeit embedding them in broader global contexts, thus achieving, at least to some extent, the internationalist localism advocated by Chen.

Keywords: Asia as method; local knowledge; wisdom; internationalist localism; global theories of education

INTRODUCTION

Educational researchers typically draw on Western ways of thinking and knowing regardless of cultural context. Their research and theorizing are grounded in Western concepts and perspectives on the assumption that the epistemologies and ontologies that underlie Western intellectual traditions have greater validity. While this is appropriate in mainstream settings, such an approach undervalues local intellectual traditions, knowledges and wisdoms, and is not necessarily suitable for local circumstances. However, if we turn to local knowledge to interpret local educational issues in Oceania and Asia, challenges may arise for us. For instance, the so-called "local knowledge" may not be recognized as part of any wider intellectual canon and is often not regarded as acceptable knowledge for educational research. Many scholars in Oceania and Asia have faced dilemmas around these issues of knowledge and location, of universalism and relativism, and much else.

Almost every nation state has a deep core of values about justice and civilized behaviour that is grounded in its ontologies and enshrined in its legal frameworks. At least some of these values are "local", with unique characteristics shaped by the nation's particular history, geography, and religious traditions. Values are transmitted to each succeeding generation by parents, the extended family, and the local community, and by the school

system, formally via civics and citizenship education but more powerfully through curriculum context and process. As an aside here, we do need to recognize issues related to cultural relativism and to moral or ethical relativism. There are limits to the Local. We need to acknowledge that the ontologies and epistemologies of some groups are incompatible with those of the wider society and that defining these limits is extremely fraught. The most obvious examples here are the belief systems of extremist religious and terrorist groups.

In researching the Local, we also need to avoid an oppositional approach, where the local and Global are perceived as antagonistic. Some post-colonial scholars awkwardly trap themselves in such a position, especially those who view "the West as the Other" (Zhang, Chan, & Kenway 2015). To interpret "the question of the West", Chen (2010) provides "an alternative discursive strategy [that] points the west as bits and fragments that intervene in local social formations in a systematic, but never totalizing way" (p. 233). He further employs the notion of "internationalist localism" to help us deal with the problem of the West:

> Internationalist localism acknowledges the existence of the nation-state as a product of history but analytically keeps a critical distance from it. The operating site is local, but at the same time internationalist localism actively transgresses nation-states' boundaries. (Chen, 2010, p. 233)

It is common sense that concepts and theories arising from different cultural backgrounds (Western or non-Western) need to be Localized to interpret each issue in its specific political, economic, historical, and cultural context. The idea of internationalist localism provides a lens to re-identify the relationship between local wisdom and traditional cultures in Oceania and Asia, and Western theories. In order to root the localized Western theories into local soil and, eventually, become one of the compositions of local culture, it is necessary for the localization of Western theories to adapt to local culture and historical traditions (Zhang et al., 2015).

This paper explores the role of the Local in educational research and theorizing, drawing examples from Oceania and Asia as well as Australia. We define the Local as that which is encapsulated in the ontologies (i.e., the explanations of reality or existence; the belief systems; the wisdoms) and the epistemologies (i.e., the ways of knowing, thinking and understanding) of particular groups of people. It is these that form the deep values of the group, and that find expression in its language. The Local, in this sense, can be as broad as the nation state, or as small as the nuclear family, or even the individual.

PERSPECTIVES FROM OCEANIA

The PRIDE Project

Across the island nations of Oceania, including Papua New Guinea (PNG), the role of the Local in education was extensively theorized by the team implementing the PRIDE Project (Pacific Regional Initiatives for the Delivery of Basic Education), based at the University of the South Pacific. The project was established in 2004 by the Ministers of Education of 15 Pacific countries and funded jointly by the European Union and New Zealand Aid. PRIDE was an education reform project, its role being to help develop new national strategic plans for education in each country, and to support their implementation. The Ministers expressed two clear goals: they needed their children to grow up strong in their own local culture and in their cultural identity. They also needed

their children to succeed in the world beyond their shores. In other words, they wanted students to grow up with a deep sense of their local values and identities yet with the skills to walk tall in a global world. They sought the best of both the Local and the Global.

The PRIDE team spent a lot of time conceptualizing this, using as a starting point the *Delors Report*, a visionary document, which was almost ahead of its time and still relevant today. In his preface to the report, Delors (1996) identified and discussed seven tensions that he believed characterize most education policy, planning, and learning environments. He revisited these and added further insights in a later, 2002, paper. Among the tensions he identified were those between the Local and the Global. In exploring Delors's ideas, the team came up with the concept of functional or positive tension, using the analogy of guitar strings which need to be kept in a constant state of tension to achieve the desired outcome of pleasing music. Likewise, educators have the constant challenge of achieving a positive or functional balance between the tensions confronting them as they theorize, plan, and deliver education (Puamau & Teasdale, 2007; Teasdale, Tokai, & Puamau, 2005). From a research and planning perspective, this idea of creative or functional tension between the global and the local has a number of implications:

- A top-down approach simply will not work; we need a genuine bottom-up, participatory processes.
- Local languages are fundamentally important because the deep values and wisdoms of the groups are embedded within them and are expressed through them.
- We need to take a more holistic and lifelong approach to learning with more attention to curriculum context and process.
- Returning to the discourse of Delors (1996), we need to give more attention to: "Learning to Be" and "Learning to Live Together"; to self-knowledge and self-understanding; and to the social and the spiritual.

Papua New Guinea

It is especially challenging for "outsiders" to research local cultures. One of the most effective ways of doing so is by using Participatory Action Research (PAR) (Kemmis, McTaggart, & Nixon, 2014). Yasuko Nagai's (2000) study of the development of vernacular elementary schools in PNG provides an excellent example. Working with the Maiwala people, a small language group living on the eastern tip of mainland PNG, Nagai gave ownership and control of the research and its outcomes to the participants. The basic features of her research included:

- The participants, or subjects, became co-owners and co-researchers;
- They participated in identifying the research problems and designing the study;
- They helped to gather and analyse the data within their own time-frames;
- They had a key role in acting on the outcomes of the research; and
- They shared authorship of publications (see, for example, Nagai & Lister, 2003).

As Nagai (2000) explains, she developed PAR as a fully collaborative process that used research as a tool for joint problem solving and positive social change:

> Using PAR, western approaches have been syncretised with the whole-of-life processes of a local village community in PNG . . . (this) collaborative research project helped the people themselves to solve problems they were confronting in

> establishing their own vernacular school. Symmetrical relationships were established between an expatriate researcher and local people, and between western and local knowledge systems. Through this experiential process an alternative approach has been developed that empowers local people to become researchers and to draw upon their own traditions of knowledge acquisition and analysis. (pp. 92–93)

Those who research and theorize the Local from inside their own culture are in a much more privileged position. As "insiders", they have access to local languages, and to local ways of thinking, knowing, and understanding, thereby enabling them to develop research processes that are deeply grounded in their own culture of primary identity. Teasdale (personal communication), for example, recalls a PhD student from PNG who made an in-depth review of the oral literature of his particular language group. As part of this process, he returned to his village and carried out a series of in-depth interviews with the elders, seeking to explore their wisdom and knowledge about culture and learning.

For his thesis, the student wrote this chapter in his own language. This allowed him to explore the epistemologies and ontologies of his group in greater depth and with greater finesse. He then interpreted and analysed the chapter in English, placing it alongside a more "conventional" chapter that reviewed Global literature relevant to his research. The process of syncretizing the two literature reviews, and providing a coherent theoretical foundation for his research was challenging but achievable. It also enabled the student to develop a methodology built on both the Local and the Global and to carry out research in local villages under the guidance of his elders.

A second PhD student from PNG, Michael Mel (1995; 2000), a Mogei man from the Mount Hagen region, was likewise encouraged to research and theorize from within his own culture. He used the concept of *Mbu* as the underlying metaphor for his research. As he explains it, *Mbu* describes the inseparable relationship between the individual, on the one hand, and the thinking, feeling, knowing, understanding, remembering, creating, and living of the group. Using a local metaphor such as this proved to be a very powerful way to frame his research. Within his writing, Mel kept re-visiting and exploring its many dimensions. When it came to the structuring of his thesis, Mel reflected on his own Mogei processes of thinking, knowing, and understanding. Knowledge, in his culture, was embedded *in* stories, and analysed *through* stories. He, therefore, used story-telling to structure his writing, beginning with a story he had heard many times when sitting as a child with his grandfather and the older men of the village. He used the story as a kind of *leitmotif*, weaving it through his analysis to provide coherence. On the way through the thesis, he used other stories to clarify and explain his ideas. It was a subtle process, and one that provided a fascinating foundation for his research and theorizing.

In each of these examples from PNG, the researchers grounded their studies in local wisdoms and traditions, albeit embedding them in a broader global context, thus achieving, at least to some extent, the internationalist localism advocated by Chen (2010).

"Asia as method"

From an Asian perspective, Chen (2010) proposed the important concept of "Asia as method": the idea of an imaginary Asian anchoring point whereby societies in Asia can become each other's reference point so that the understanding of the self may be transformed and subjectivity rebuilt. On this basis, the diverse historical experiences and rich social practices of Asia may be mobilized to provide alternative horizons and perspectives. In their book, *Asia as Method in Education Studies*, Zhang et al. (2015)

provide a provocative and suggestive exploration of educational ideas imported from the West. They rethink and re-examine education studies in Asia beyond the Western eye. This book combines the diverse research of local scholars from various countries of Asia, offering examples of what it means to rethink and re-examine education in Asia beyond Western imperialist eyes and post-colonial politics of resentment.

In a case of task-based learning and reflective practice implementation in the Indonesian context, Kuswandona, Gandana, and Rohani (2015) problematize the adoption and adaptation of Western concepts in its education system. They stress that Indonesian education stakeholders are consistently faced with difficulties and challenges in understanding the Western education reform agenda and putting it into practice. Chen's key idea of "deimperalization" helps them raise awareness of the impacts of colonization and Western knowledge structure on Indonesia's education practices, and how his notions of multiculturalism and collectivism operate to shape Indonesia's current education arena. Vu and Le (2015) discussed the emergent language practices and values of young people in Vietnam after the end of the cold war and recent expression of globalization. They value Chen's idea of Asia as method but they place their emphasis not on deconstructing or denying the "West as method" but on referring to the West as an enriching body of knowledge while also drawing on other local points of reference to transform their subjectivities worldwide. Their cases are anchored in some aspects of Chen's work while carefully avoiding both a total reliance on the West as a primary point of reference and a joyous celebration of Asian wisdom.

Wu (2015) engaged one of Chen's key ideas—geo-colonial historical materialism—to discuss intricate trajectories of geographical space and historical and cultural context in relation to colonial and imperial consciousness. She provides examples from a New Zealand context to illustrate the dichotomy of the "West versus Others" to argue that Asia as method can promote dialogue within Asia, "the rest" and the "Third World". Such dialogue can enhance awareness of minority cultural knowledge and resources, the complexity and richness of which would then gain momentum and create currency to achieve genuine cultural responsiveness.

Roside, Siddique, Sarkar, Mojumder, and Begum (2015) examine the practice of applying Western-oriented educational research methods in Bangladesh. They argue that knowledge-generating tools that are useful in one country may not be completely suitable for another country. More specifically, they stress that a research approach originating from Western society may not be well suited to a Bangladeshi context. They not only argue that "Asia as Method" as a complement to Western-generated methods has potential to generate valid knowledge in an Asian context, they also use localized Western methodology as a point of reference when they conducted Asian research.

Each of these four cases provides a response to the dilemma of how to apply Western theories and methodologies to educational research in local Asian contexts. They disclose the base-entity in their countries, in which translating Western ideas and research methods must negotiate with the exotic cultural and local traditions (Zhang et al., 2015). Chen (2010) says:

> Each geographic space—be it village, city, region, country, or continent—has its own base-entity and local history with different depths, forms and shapes. The methodological questions are: How can these base-entities be analyzed in terms of their internal characteristics? How can we best identity and analyze the interactions between and among different based-entities? (p. 251)

AUSTRALIAN PERSPECTIVES

Within a nation state, the idea of the Local can be applied to specific communities or localities. Researching remote rural communities in Australia, for example, Roberts (2014a; 2014b) introduced the concepts of "localism" and "place-conscious education", suggesting that the school curriculum in small rural communities should be driven by residents' own local needs and values, defined in their own terms. Recent research on Kangaroo Island, South Australia (Teasdale & Teasdale, in press), for example, provides evidence that there are distinctive local values and mores, and that these are supported by the school. There was one common theme to all interviews with grandparents, parents and young people themselves: the perceived social and cultural benefits of Island life. In particular, they referred to:

- The interdependence and mutual support that characterize social relationships;
- The sense of security, belonging, and personal well-being that children derive from extended family and friendship networks;
- The greater resilience and maturity that children acquire from living in remote settings; and
- The opportunity for children to learn to live in a more environmentally responsible way.

Interviews with teachers confirmed that these values are being reinforced by the local school, especially through curriculum context and process, thereby supporting Roberts' concepts of "Localism" and "place-based education". Yet, the school continues to fulfil the requirements of the national curriculum and to produce students who proceed successfully to employment and/or higher education.

Indigenous Australian contexts

Within Australia, the most significant cultural groups are the Indigenous Australians who have occupied the continent for over 60,000 years. Their ontologies and epistemologies are fundamentally different to those of the wider Australian society. In fact, the depth of cultural difference between non-Indigenous and Indigenous Australians is probably as fundamental as one would find anywhere in the world between two cultural groups. This poses immense challenges for Indigenous Australians and for those who work alongside them as educators. Probably the single greatest challenge in Australian education today is the provision of effective education for remote Indigenous peoples. In a wide-ranging reflection on his work with Indigenous Australian groups over the past 50 years, Teasdale (2017) summarized some basic principles for researching and theorizing education in remote Indigenous Australian settings:

- There needs to be the deepest respect and support for local cultures and languages. The extended family plays an essential role in ensuring that children grow up with a strong sense of their own cultural identity, and of the belief systems and epistemologies that underlie it. This should be the foundation for the delivery of education, especially in the early years.
- Policies of bilingual education and vernacular literacy are needed in remote Indigenous schools. There was some excellent work done by researchers and teachers during the 1980s and early 1990s. It was well supported by Government funding. Some genuine success stories were starting to emerge. But Government policy was reversed, led by the Northern Territory

Government, and most programs were discontinued. We need to re-visit the earlier work, re-conceptualize bilingual education and vernacular literacy in light of recent international research findings, and develop new research projects and programs.

- For remote schools to succeed, the local community needs to feel a sense of ownership and control. We cannot just drop teachers, buildings, and curriculums into remote communities and force children to attend school. During the 1980s, there was Government support for Aboriginal controlled schools, and a support network for those that were established. An evaluation of the impact of capital grants funding on learning outcomes at over 400 remote Indigenous schools (Teasdale, 1994) had one overwhelming finding: the schools that were succeeding were those with a strong sense of community ownership and control, where the community was directly involved in the day-to-day delivery of education.
- Educators need to work closely with local communities to develop models of schooling that are deeply grounded in the Local yet prepare students to engage with the Global. Harris's (1990) ground-breaking theorizing in the 1980s with his work on Aboriginal learning styles and two-way learning, provides an early example of what can be achieved.

Osborne (2013), working with Anangu in central Australia, has developed the idea of a "Red Dirt Curriculum" based on co-constructed knowledge. His research (Osborne & Guenther, 2013) concludes that Anangu have a strong desire for schooling that is grounded first and foremost in the land and their deep spiritual connections with it, yet also provides opportunities for their children to grow up with the skills to live in the world beyond the desert. Some highly significant theorizing has also been undertaken by Yolngu at Yirrkala, starting in the late 1980s, around the concept of "two-way schooling", or "both-ways learning". It is still the basis for education there and in the associated homeland schools. It is one of the few remote settings in Australia where there is a coherent policy and where bilingual education is thriving. The first Yolngu principal at Yirrkala school, a man of great intellect and charisma, summarized his beliefs only weeks before his passing in 2013:

> I want to talk about strength, either in English or in the Yolngu Matha speaking domain. We learnt from our elders that language is sacred. Yolngu kids think in their own language which can then inform them about English, about its meanings and its values. I consider Yolngu children in Yolngu schools to be as clever as anyone else in the wide world, and I don't want that cleverness left outside the classroom door. Not for my kids or my grandkids. They should have equal rights, the same rights as any kids in the world, whether they are Chinese, or Balanda, the equal right to learn in their own language (cited by Stockley, 2013, p. 1).

Douglas Morgan is an Indigenous Australian philosopher who has written extensively on the delivery of health and education services to Indigenous Australians (Morgan & Slade, 1998; Slade & Morgan, 2000). Using philosophical analysis as his primary methodology Morgan draws on both Indigenous Australian and Western approaches to philosophy. The theoretical structure of Morgan's (1999) PhD thesis was especially fascinating. Typically, PhD theses are linear. There is a series of chapters that proceed in logical sequence, each chapter dealing with a separate theme or issue, thereby leading to a conclusion. Morgan, however, took a holistic approach, best represented by an Archimedean spiral. Each chapter visited every theme. And each chapter drew the themes together a little more,

until conclusions eventually were reached. Morgan likened it to the decision-making processes used by Indigenous Australians, where a group will talk around and around an issue, ensuring everyone has their say, until unanimity is reached, however long that takes.

Another Indigenous Australian, Lorraine Miller, has used a reflective research process that draws on her exceptional talent as a visual artist. Miller (2009) has a Yolngu heritage, and close links with family in Eastern Arnhem Land. In seeking to research and theorize the education of her people, she found difficulty in using the written word to express her deeper cultural values, wisdoms, and beliefs. She, therefore, painted what she wanted to express using oils on canvas. While painting, she recorded a spoken narrative of what she was expressing. The paintings and the transcribed narrative formed the basis of an MA thesis. It was a powerful and original piece of work, exploring the interface of culture and education in Yolngu settings.

These examples from Indigenous Australian educational settings have one theme in common: the rights of Indigenous Australians, whether in their first year of school or the final year of a PhD, to learning experiences that are grounded in their own local knowledges and wisdoms, yet also embedded in a broader global context that prepares them to live successfully as international citizens.

CONCLUSION

This paper points to the fact that different Locals offer diversified inspirations for the research imagination, which need to be taken into account in the dominant discourse of Western-centralism of education studies (Chen, 2010). For example, largely Local-led studies in the broader Asia and Oceania regions (Australia included) have provided different possibilities for scholars in these contexts to "overcome the limits imposed and shaped by Western academic discourse" (Zhang et al., 2015, p. 33). The paper affirms the benefits of dialogue about *how* to shift away from Western perspectives towards a greater focus on "internationalist localism" in educational research about Asia and Oceania. We believe that this provides a useful ontological and epistemological starting point for deployment by researchers in similar circumstances.

To study the Local is not simply to research and theorize education in a limited geographical space, such as Asia and Oceania. This article moves beyond an obsession with the West and, instead, to studies of education in Asia and Oceania that acknowledge the complex links between history, geography, and knowledge in and about education. In other words, it offers educators from Asia and Oceania the opportunity to study education from local perspectives, fully acknowledging the manner in which local education systems, policies, and practices have differentially mediated Western knowledge in relation to their own specific evolving cultures, contexts, and politics.

Our review also has helped us to move beyond the simple local/global binary divide. It has required an expansion of perspectives. It has meant engaging with complexity. We tried to see ourselves in ways that did not involve the "imperialist eye" or national or cultural identity restraints. In this way, we have identified a surprising diversity of approaches to research that are grounded in local epistemologies and ontologies, yet also are embedded in the global, thus achieving, at least to some extent, the internationalist localism advocated by Chen (2010).

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Placing the spotlight on Open Educational Resources: Global phenomenon or cultural guise?

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The quest to enhance the quality of teaching in low-income countries has encouraged international aid agencies to look for alternative platforms to provide teacher education. Open Educational Resources have attracted the attention of the international community because of their ability to provide accessible and cost-effective teacher education programs across diverse cultural contexts. Yet, despite increasing support, little consideration has been given to whose knowledge, values, and cultural norms are legitimized within these open education platforms. This paper responds to such concerns by drawing on Bernstein's (2000) notion of regulative discourse to examine the Open Education Resources for English Language Teachers (ORELT) teacher education modules. Findings reveal that regulative discourse is strongly framed within these ORELT modules, which supports the socialization of teachers and their students into Western culture, values, and beliefs. This paper challenges the assumption that Open Educational Resources are a socially neutral pedagogical platform and raises questions about the educational and cultural implications for local contexts.

Keywords: Open Educational Resources; Bernstein; open education; educational development

INTRODUCTION

Enhancing the quality of teaching in low-income countries has been a longstanding and complex challenge for the international development community. Pedagogy sits at the heart of this vexing global policy issue. There has been ongoing concern about the prevalence of teacher-centred practices in many low-income countries (UNESCO, 2005, 2014; World Bank, 2003). Despite persistent efforts to facilitate pedagogical change (UNESCO, 2005; World Bank, 2003), there has been little evidence of sustained, widespread success (UNESCO, 2014; Vavrus, Thomas, & Bartlett, 2011). Large class sizes, lack of resources, lack of time, assessment practices and language barriers, and even teachers themselves have been criticized for hindering pedagogic renewal (UNESCO, 2005, 2014; World Bank, 2003, 2018). The introduction of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) has placed increased focus on enhancing the quality of teaching through pedagogic change. SDG 4 aims to "ensure inclusive and quality education for all and promote lifelong learning" (United Nations, 2017, n.p). For this reason, the international development community has begun to look for alternatives ways to facilitate pedagogical change.

Open Educational Resources (OERs) have provided one answer to this quality crisis. Butcher (2015) describes OERs as:

> [A]ny educational resources (including curriculum maps, course material, textbooks, streaming videos, multimedia applications, podcasts, and any other materials that have been designed for use in teaching and learning) that are openly available for use by educators and students, without an accompanying need to pay royalties or licence fees. (p. 5)

Put simply, OERs are learning resources designed for educators that can be accessed online for free. OERs include teaching resources as well as self-directed teacher training programs. The introduction of the SDGs has recast the focus on educational quality beyond basic education to include secondary and higher education (United Nations 2016; UNESCO, 2016). Advocates claim that OERs are well positioned to address this focus by extending their reach to teachers, tertiary students, secondary students, and more recently, even primary school students (Kanwar, 2015; UNESCO, 2016). For this reason, OER are presented as an answer to achieve SDG 4 (UNESCO, 2016).

There are a number of reasons why OERs are advocated as an effective solution to enhance the quality of teaching. Firstly, the widespread availability of mobile technologies make OERs a cost-effective alternative to face-to-face teacher education. Digital platforms limit reliance on physical and material infrastructure and this reduces the ongoing operational costs associated with face-to-face teacher training (OECD, 2007). Secondly, OERs can enhance access to education. As long as there is Internet access, OERs can provide teacher education programs for teachers in diverse geographic locations, including those in hard-to-reach and remote localities (UNESCO, 2016, 2017a, 2017b). Thirdly, OERs can be repurposed and adapted by teachers and teacher educators to suit the cultural and contextual needs of their students (OECD, 2007; UNESCO, 2016). Finally, the emphasis on facilitating pedagogical change in many low-income countries make OERs an attractive tool to enhance teacher quality (Murphy & Wolfenden, 2013).

Learner-centred education affords learners active control over the "what" and "how" of their learning (Schweisfurth, 2013) and OERs are considered a learning platform that can facilitate this pedagogical change (Kanwar, Kodhandaraman, & Umar, 2010; Murphy & Wolfenden, 2013). Advocates argue that OERs promote a learner-centred experience by requiring teachers to self-direct and self-manage their engagement with online resources rather than experiencing a one-way teacher-centred pedagogic exchange (Kanwar et al., 2010; Murphy & Wolfenden, 2013). This pedagogical experience is said to foster self-determination and provide a learner-centred experience that teachers can implement in their own teaching practice (Kanwar et al., 2010). OER are, therefore, positioned as a tool to enhance the quality of teaching by accelerating the implementation of learner-centred education in low-income countries. The widespread support for advancing OERs as a tool to facilitate teacher education (Butcher, 2015; Murphy & Wolfenden, 2013; UNESCO, 2016) includes an assumption that OERs are a neutral pedagogical platform capable of enhancing both learning and teaching (see Cobb, 2018). However, it is not clear how local knowledge, wisdoms, and intellectual traditions are reflected in this global pedagogical platform. Importantly, whose values, beliefs, and cultural identities are legitimated and advanced in OERs? Until now, such critical analysis of pedagogy within the open education context has been largely overlooked. In this paper, I respond to these questions by using Bernstein's notion of regulative discourse to analyse the social significance of pedagogy within a case study of an OER.

IDEOLOGICAL FUNCTION OF PEDAGOGY

To understand the social significance of pedagogy within OER firstly requires considering the social function of pedagogy. The idea that pedagogy fulfils a socializing function is well chronicled. For some time, academics have raised concern that pedagogy is a carrier of wider ideological agendas that serve the interests of dominant actors (Carter, 2010; Guthrie, 2011; Tabulawa, 2003, 2013). Bernstein (2000) exposed and challenged the value-neutral status of pedagogy and cautioned the need to pay particular attention to any changes in the pedagogical code to determine in whose interests these pedagogical changes serve. Because of this, academics have raised questions about the push from dominant global actors to accelerate the implementation of learner-centred pedagogy, particularly into low-income countries (Carter, 2010; Tabulawa, 2003, 2013). Learner-centred pedagogy has been marketed by international aid agencies as a panacea for education quality (Tabulawa, 2003), yet Tabulawa (2003, 2013) maintains that this focus has acted as a guise to hide the intent for learner-centred pedagogy to carry neo-colonial ideologies into low-income countries. This change in pedagogical code, he argues, has enabled Western values, beliefs, and knowledge to be transported into low-income countries through curricular and structural reforms.

Face-to-face pedagogical transmission is not the only way that ideological messages can be carried. Textbooks can transmit dominant ideological views and perspectives (Apple, 1993). Textbook authors can reproduce their own ideological perspectives by inadvertently writing their own ideological positioning into textbook content. For example, Woo and Simmons (2008, p. 294) concluded that their involvement as international textbook consultants in Afghanistan resulted in their own re-enactment of what they referred to as the "colonial unconscious". They observed that their efforts to avoid a neo-colonial stance faltered as they "invariably became implicated through the discourse and practices of the project" (Woo & Simmons, 2008, p. 294). This demonstrates how Western values, beliefs, and knowledge systems can be "written into" textbook material, despite conscious decisions to resist such practice.

In many ways, OERs are like an online textbook. OERs do not provide two-way pedagogic interaction like other online platforms, such as Moodle. Rather, OERs enable educators to access and download resources, educational materials, and professional development courses, many of which can be read and engaged with much like a textbook. It would, therefore, seem that Apple's (1993) concerns about the neutrality of textbooks could also apply to OERs. Indeed, Richter et al. (2013) raise concerns about curriculum content and teacher education material designed for a particular cultural, social, political, and historical context being transported into another through OERs. Given the current lack of quality control mechanisms in the field of OERs, Richter et al. (2013) argues that this has the potential to reproduce discriminatory ideologies.

Despite this argument, advocates maintain that one of the key features of OERs is that they can be repurposed by teachers to suit the needs of local contexts. However, there is growing evidence to suggest that repurposing OERs content is proving both challenging and problematic for teachers, particularly those in low-income countries. Kanwar et al. (2010) observe that adapting OERs has been significantly more challenging than originally anticipated. There have been pockets of success, such as the Teacher Education in Sub-Saharan Africa (TESSA) OER project (Murphy & Wolfenden, 2013); however, this project also proved to be a costly, challenging, and time-consuming process (Thakrar, Zinn, & Wolfenden, 2009). Some academics argue that teacher educators and teachers in

low-income countries may lack the technological skills and resources to repurpose resources (Bossu & Tynan, 2011; Richter & Ehlers, 2010) and some suggest that teachers' abilities to critique and adequately adapt resource content is also overestimated (Ritcher & McPherson, 2012). It is for this reason that Richter and McPherson (2012) challenge the flawed assumption that OERs can be adapted and modified by all users. So far, this literature review has demonstrated how the rapid rise of OERs has been justified to support pedagogical change and that there has been little consideration of the potential for pedagogy to become a carrier of ideology and bias within the open education context. Tyler (2001) suggests that there is an important need to critically analyse pedagogic transmission within digital spaces so that a deeper understanding of the production, reproduction, and transmission of bias can be gained. In order to do so, Tyler (2004) prompts us to examine the cultural and social centres of pedagogical reproduction within the digital environment. Bernstein's (2000) notion of regulative discourse provides a way to do this.

Bernstein (2000) maintains that there are rules that are embedded within pedagogic discourse which regulate and legitimate certain skills and create further rules to regulate social order. Bernstein (2000) refers to one of these rule systems as regulative discourse, which establishes moral discourse to "create[s] order, relations and identity" (p. 32). Regulative discourse establishes criteria that govern conduct, character, manner, and behaviour. It is through these hidden rules of social order that discriminatory ideologies can be transmitted through pedagogic discourse. This has the potential to legitimate ideologies by socializing them as "thinkable" and "acceptable" beliefs, behaviours, and patterns of thought. Tyler (2001) observes that there is unrealized potential for recasting Bernstein's pedagogic theory beyond face-to-face interactions to examine pedagogy in digital spaces. In light of growing concerns about the rapid and widespread emphasis on pedagogical change, Bernstein's notion of regulative discourse raises important questions about the social significance of pedagogy within the open education context. This research seeks to respond to this gap in research by examining regulative discourse in the global OER platform, and considering the implications for local culture and educational contexts.

METHODOLOGY

In this research, I draw on Bernstein's (2000) notion of regulative discourse to analyse the social significance of pedagogy within one case of OER: the Open Educational Resources for English Language Teachers (ORELT) modules (Commonwealth of Learning, 2014b). I position this research within critical realist ontology. Critical realism enables the structuring conditions that govern the social significance of pedagogy within an OER environment to be identified, exposed, and examined alongside the potential for human agency to respond to these wider structuring conditions (Bhaskar, 1989; Lopez & Potter, 2001). In the context of this research, critical realism offers a way to examine the wider structuring conditions that govern the relay of pedagogy within the OER context and considers the potential for educators to respond by either reproducing, resisting, or transforming these structuring conditions.

Introducing the case: Open Educational Resources for English Language Teaching

This research uses an instrumental case study design to examine one case of OER: the ORELT modules (Commonwealth of Learning, 2012a, 2012b; 2012c; 2012d; 2012e). An instrumental case study encourages a rigorous and thorough analysis of a particular

phenomenon (e.g., regulative discourse) within a bounded case (e.g., the ORELT modules). In this sense, the case plays a secondary role to the phenomenon of interest (Stake, 2005). The ORELT modules are an example of an OER, which are designed to assist English teachers in low-income countries to implement learner-centred approaches within their own teaching practice (Commonwealth of Learning, 2014a, 2014b). Because of this, they have a dual pedagogic purpose as both a resource for in-service and pre-service teachers to enhance the quality of their teaching, and as a scheme of work for teaching English to junior secondary school students. Consequently, the beneficiaries of such modules are threefold: teacher educators, teachers, and junior secondary school students. Each of the six ORELT modules consists of six units, with 36 units provided in total. These modules are freely available and accessible online and are intended to be adapted and modified by teachers (Commonwealth of Learning, 2014a).

Analysis

A two-stage approach to analysing the ORELT modules was taken to allow emerging patterns and themes to be identified. The first move involved a form of content analysis to determine the number of instances that moral discourse was evident within the ORELT modules. This enabled the intensity and frequency of moral discourse within the modules to be identified. Pre-determined categories based on Bernstein's (2000) description of moral discourse were used to code and quantify the number of instances of moral discourse within the data (Kellehear, 1993). Table 1 provides a definition of these categories, which include "values" and "beliefs", and also clearly defines what is included and excluded within each category (Mutch, 2013).

Table 1 Category Descriptors for 'Moral Discourse' within the ORELT Modules

Category	Definition	Inclusions	Exclusions
Values	'Values' refer to the development of a sense of right or wrong. In other words, it is an internal compass that guides one's actions or outcomes.	Activities that promote the identification of values. Activities that teach the enactment of pre-determined values.	Activities that promote the identification of thoughts and feelings.
Beliefs	A belief refers to the conviction that something is true; however, there is no verification that this conviction is truth or reality. In this context of this study, the teaching of beliefs refers to the teaching of a concept that is not verified as true.	Activities that teach students to believe that certain people or groups of people are superior to others (e.g., western culture, social class, gender, urban dwellers).	Activities that teach students about different countries or cultural groups.

The process of analysis involved examining each of the six ORELT modules and each of the six units contained within each ORELT module. In total, 36 units were analysed. The ORELT modules were uploaded into the *NVivo* data analysis software program where nodes (Bryman, 2012) were created for each of the two moral discourse categories (values and beliefs). Once these nodes had been established, each of the modules was analysed and systematically coded using the category descriptors from Table 1. This provided a numerical summary of each node. The second move used thematic analysis to identify wider structural themes within the data. Thematic analysis was useful for building on the

earlier content analysis to organize these data in rich and descriptive detail and enable broader themes to be identified (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Wider structuring conditions, such as neo-colonialism and neo-liberalism, were identified and categorized as themes. Nodes were created in *Nvivo* for each of these emerging themes and data were systematically analysed and coded. While the content and thematic analysis provided two distinct sets of data, the data were complementary in the sense that the first move provided information about the frequency and type of moral discourse, which was used to identify wider structuring themes.

FINDINGS

The findings from the content analysis revealed that moral discourse was evident throughout each of the ORELT modules. Table 2 demonstrates instances of moral discourse in the ORELT modules.

Table 2 Quantity of 'Moral Discourse' in the ORELT Modules

	Module 1	Module 2	Module 3	Module 4	Module 5	Module 6	Total
Total	15	8	5	6	18	18	70

What is interesting about these findings is that there are a number of teaching activities that explicitly promote the teaching of moral discourse. This suggests that criteria for social order are directly transmitted to students in low-income countries through the explicit and implicit teaching of values, beliefs, behaviour, conduct, and character. While it is not possible to provide examples of all these instances of moral discourse, I will refer to a small selection to illustrate how moral discourse is reinforced in the ORELT modules.

Values

The explicit teaching of values is evident throughout the modules with one unit dedicated to teaching values through literature (*Using literature to develop sensitivity to life's values*, Module 5, pp. 21–33). Throughout this unit, the teaching of values is clear, intentional, and explicit. In the introduction, the unit outlines the intent to use children's literature to expose students to real-life values such as "honesty, fair-play, patriotism, love, and bravery" (Commonwealth of Learning, 2012c, p. 21). Teachers are instructed to engage their students in activities that identify positive and negative values from a pre-determined list (see Figure 1), however there are activities that encourage students to identify values in their own local context.

This is followed by an assessment activity that asks teachers to assess their students on the demonstration of these "positive life values" (ORELT module 5, p. 26), shown in Figure 2. This assessment of values is important for two reasons. Firstly, it is one of few assessment activities in the 36 units. This suggests that assessing these values is deemed important. Secondly, evaluation provides a key to what counts as knowledge. These particular values, such as honesty, hard work, truthfulness, and purity, are, therefore, considered important knowledge to acquire. This raises questions about "why these values?" and "who decides that these values should be acquired across diverse cultural contexts?" These questions are central to this examination of values in the ORELT modules and will be revisited later in this paper.

Resource 1b: List of values to match poster

Resource 1b

Positive traits: *Honesty, loyalty, self-control, compassion, tolerance, firmness, respect, responsibility, bravery, kindness, sacrifice.*

Negative traits: *Treachery, cowardice, greed, lust, disobedience, pride, dishonesty, intolerance, cunning.*

Figure 1: Teaching values
 (ORELT Module 5, unit 2, p. 27)

Assessment

Assessment

- Which of the following positive life values were your students able to bring out as they worked through the activities in this unit? Mention the literary text, characters and events that brought out the following values:

  - Honesty
  - Hard work
  - Truthfulness
  - Purity

Figure 2: Assessment of values
(ORELT Module 5, unit 2, p. 26)

Beliefs

This analysis revealed a key underlying belief: that students should aspire towards Westernization. The findings show that Western norms are consistently yet subtly emphasized throughout the modules. This belief is not explicitly stated but is presented through demonstrated patterns of acceptable thought and behaviour. These beliefs are often embedded within accompanying multimedia video clips and are further reinforced through specific teaching activities. As Figures 3 shows, teaching activities draw on Western customs, traditions, and pastimes to reinforce acceptable ways of thinking, acting and behaving.

As this example demonstrates, students are asked how often they do the following activities; however, they are not given the option to indicate "never". This activity may present significant challenges for students in low-income countries who may be unfamiliar with the cultural practices and norms that are referred to in this exercise. Furthermore, such an exercise also subtly reinforces appropriate cultural practices in the way that students are asked to choose from a limited selection of alternatives. These are two examples of many throughout the ORELT modules where Western values and ideals are presented as the established norm and the cultural benchmark. This signals a subtle yet persistent emphasis on the socialization of Western norms throughout the ORELT modules.

Resource 2: Working with everyday events

Resource 2

Worksheet

a Look at these activities. Which of these do you do regularly?
   i   swim
   ii   watch English movies
   iii eat Chinese food
   iv   listen to music
   v   wake up at 6:00 a.m.
   vi   take a bath with warm water
   vii wear Western outfits
   viii go for a walk

b Which of the above activities do you do?
   i   every day
   ii   once a week
   iii every evening
   iv   only at night
   v   sometimes

c Activities that are repeated very often are called **regular activities**.
   Share one of your regular activities with a partner. For example:
   I wear Western outfits once a week for my salsa class.

Figure 3: Teaching activities that promote Western 'everyday events'
(ORELT Module 6, unit 1, p. 13)

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

In this section, I use Bernstein's (2000) notion of regulative discourse to place the spotlight on the wider ideological themes that have emerged from this analysis. Firstly, the findings from this analysis reveal that Western beliefs and values are woven in throughout module content, which subtly normalizes and legitimizes Western cultural values and knowledge. This has significant implications for the construction of cultural identities, particularly at a time when there is a strong emphasis from within the global development community to promote an "appreciation of cultural diversity" (United Nations, 2017, n.p). While the scope of this research has not examined the process of module development, as Woo and Simmons (2008) acknowledge, it is possible for module authors to unintentionally write their own beliefs and values into module content. This demonstrates the ease with which OERs can inadvertently carry and transmit dominant beliefs and values, which may not reflect local cultural values, knowledges, aspirations, and identities.

The intent to accelerate OERs in low-income countries as a platform for educational delivery alerts us to the implications that this unregulated pedagogical space may present to local cultural practices (UNESCO, 2016). Zhang, Chang, and Teasdale (2018) remind us that almost every nation has a deep core of values about justice and civilized behaviour and that these values are transmitted through curriculum context and process. Yet, this study has provided an example of how this deep core of local values has the potential to be eroded through this globalized learning platform. Based on experiences from within the Oceania region, Zhang et al. (2018) argue that a "top-down" approach to educational initiatives in local contexts are unlikely to be successful. Rather, they assert that a bottom-up participatory approach is necessary to ensure that educational initiatives, such as enhancing the quality of teaching through pedagogical change, meet the needs, aspirations, and cultural wisdoms of local communities. Indeed, research points to the likelihood of educational success when curriculum content and pedagogical practices are

culturally located and are embedded within local knowledge and practice (Bishop & Berryman, 2006). Without doing so, OERs are at risk of becoming a standardized knowledge repository that fail to respond to the cultural, learning, and contextual needs of local education contexts.

At this point, it is worth remembering that one of the most salient features of OER is that they can be repurposed and contextualized. This striking feature of OER design has the potential to eliminate much cultural misalliance. However, despite this intent, the earlier review of literature addresses the significant challenges that teachers have in repurposing and contextualizing OER content (Kanwar et al., 2010; Richter et al., 2013; Ritcher & McPherson, 2012; Thakrar et al., 2009). Indeed, the ORELT modules examined in this study highlight the difficulties in repurposing module content, particularly when teaching activities are aligned to online video clips and professionally designed worksheets which could make it difficult for many teachers, particularly those in low-income countries, to repurpose. In addition, these modules have been designed for teachers who have had limited, if any, teacher education and training. Therefore, their ability to critique, adapt and repurpose materials to suit the needs of their local context has, as the literature suggests, been overestimated (Richter et al., 2013; Richter & Ehlers, 2010). What is clear from the literature is that adapting OERs to suit the learning needs of students is neither an easy nor straightforward process for teachers (Ritcher & McPherson, 2012). This challenges the assumption that OER content can and will be adapted and repurposed by teachers and highlights how OERs could become a decontextualized learning platform.

With this in mind, this analysis has also alerted us to the potential for pedagogy to fulfil a socializing function within the open education context. This highlights a second key finding from this study: that OERs are not a neutral pedagogical platform. As previously discussed, there has been growing awareness that pedagogy can fulfil an ideological function (Bernstein, 2000; Carter, 2010; Tabulawa, 2003, 2013b). By putting Bernstein's (2000) notion of regulative discourse "to work" (Robertson & Sorensen, 2017, p. 3), this study has revealed that the ORELT modules have the potential to add to the growing toolkit of educational platforms that inadvertently regulate, legitimate, normalize, and socialize Western ways of being, behaving, and becoming (Cobb & Couch, 2018). These findings challenge the assumption that pedagogy within the open education context is immune from reproducing discriminatory ideologies (Richter et al., 2013). Nguyen, Elliott, Ferlouw, and Pilot (2009, p. 109) refer to this as "educational neo-colonialism", where the dominance of Western paradigms shape and influence educational thinking in non-Western countries by rescripting the "mental universe of the colonised" (Thiongʾo, 1986, p. 16). Concern has previously been raised about neo-colonial practices being embedded within textbooks (Woo & Simmons, 2008); however, this research has identified the potential for open education to also carry neo-colonial ideologies. Taking this into account, what, then, does this mean for local forms of education and how might local teachers and educators best respond?

In order to respond to these questions, I return to critical realist ontology. Critical realism reminds us of the power of human agency to reproduce, resist, or transform structuring conditions that seek to limit, obfuscate, or remove choice from actors (Bhaskar, 1998; Lopez & Potter, 2001). Within current pedagogical debates, Tabulawa (2003) raised concerns about learner-centred pedagogy being a carrier for neo-colonial ideologies. However, his concerns rest on the belief that learner-centred pedagogy has been disguised as a form of Westernisation and imposed upon low-income countries through the guise of Western aid. However, in this paper, I argue that neo-colonial ideologies have not

"acted upon" the open education context through an exogenous process. Rather, I make the case that global actors, including teachers in local contexts, have the opportunity to respond strategically to the structuring conditions, such as neo-colonialism, that influence the open education context. This creates space for strategic action to either resist or transform the reproduction of neo-colonial ideologies (Jessop, 2005). For example, Western authors currently dominate the development and production of OERs, with English language being the most common medium of instruction (Richter et al., 2013); there is an opportunity for local educators to create and produce OERs that are based on local knowledges, languages, and cultural values, thereby transforming the structuring conditions that regulate Western dominance in this OERs space. In addition, teachers can respond strategically by resisting the implementation of non-contextualized OER material into their own teaching practice. In these ways, local educators can be agents of change by resisting and transforming the reproduction of neo-colonial ideologies. To this end, I bring an alternative perspective to Tabulawa's (2003) account of pedagogical neo-colonialism by acknowledging that human agency has the potential to disrupt the "top-down" imposition of neo-colonial socialization.

Bernstein's notion of regulative discourse has been invaluable for placing the spotlight on hidden moral discourse within the ORELT modules; however, one of the criticisms of applying Bernstein's pedagogic theories to analyse educational research is that it can reduce Bernstein's work to a prescriptive analytic frame that is removed from its' theoretical substance (Sriprakash, 2011). What is more, such analysis can present an overly structuralist account that fails to acknowledge the potential for human agency to transform, rather than reproduce discriminatory ideologies (Rochex, 2011; Sriprakash, 2011). In this paper, I have provided an example of how Bernstein's pedagogic theories can be used in a "non-deterministic" and "non-sociologistic" way (Rochex, 2011, p. 77) by positioning the analysis within the critical realist ontology. In this sense, I have demonstrated how human agency has the potential to respond to the neo-colonial influences within the OER context. Despite the unique ways in which Bernstein's pedagogic theories have been considered in this study, there are limitations. For example, this research has only investigated one case of OER. While the ORELT modules have provided a rich case to examine regulative discourse, it has limited the ability to generalize findings. For this reason, it is recommended that future research employs a multiple case study design (Stake, 2006) to provide a robust understanding of the social significance of pedagogy within multiple cases of OERs. A further limitation is that this study did not examine the implementation of OERs within classroom contexts. It is, therefore, recommended that future research examine teachers' experiences of repurposing and implementing OER.

To conclude, OER have been advocated as an answer to achieve an "inclusive and quality education for all" (United Nations, 2017, n.p) at all levels of education. In this paper, I sought to recast Bernstein's (2000) notion of regulative discourse to examine the social significance of pedagogy within the open education context. In doing so, I have demonstrated how Bernstein's pedagogic theory can place the spotlight on regulative discourse within OER, uncovering their hidden socializing function. This has raised important questions about the implications for local educational and cultural contexts and has raised awareness about the need to respond to this rapid acceleration of OER by ensuring that local knowledge, wisdom, and culture are represented in this digital space. It is through such processes that local educators can resist and transform the dominance of these Western-centric worldviews, such as those seen in the ORELT modules.

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The Impact of Samoan Pre-service Teacher Education on Student Learning

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Education in Samoa is strongly influenced by western theories of teaching and learning. Through the influence of missionaries in colonial times, and the subsequent impact of colonial policies, education has become a central site for contestation of identity. The transition to an independent state led Samoa to seek help in restructuring its pre-service teacher education. Subsequently the influence of New Zealand and Australia has dominated administrative and policy assistance. In postcolonial Samoa, the colonial influence still prevails, the result being that while many students enter teacher education, few have critical perspectives on educational issues. A superficial understanding compounded with limited English language competencies makes it difficult to acquire new wisdom and theories. Openness to accepting changes in teaching styles that incorporate both western and indigenous perspectives could contribute to teacher development. This paper draws on talanoa *and* nofo *methodologies to study twenty pre-service teachers. It highlights the dilemmas facing them in attempting to fit into the system and finding what they learn to be irrelevant to their teaching responsibilities. The study further draws on interviews with an executive from the Ministry of Education, Sports and Culture to illustrate how the curriculum lacks relevance in the Samoan context, contributing to an inappropriate pre-service teacher training program. The paper concludes that Samoan local educational needs must be addressed to ensure the teacher education system is inclusive of local values and knowledge.*

Keywords: pre-service teacher education; Samoa; talanoa *and* nofo
methodologies; *local knowledge and wisdom*

INTRODUCTION

The Samoan Ministry of Education, Sports and Culture (MESC, 2006, p. 11) describes education as a lifelong process that provides meaningful social and cultural ideas and methods to assist with individuals' living situations. Similarly, its *Education for All Report* (MESC, 2015a, p.8) emphasises the importance of "improving the quality of education for all", which is a major educational strategy for the development of Samoa. Most nations like Samoa focus on ways of developing education quality through effective teacher preparation programs (Nuangchalem & Prachagool, 2010, p. 1), assuming that stable and successful pre-service teacher education will ensure improvements in teaching and learning in schools.

In reviewing the effectiveness of education in Samoa, the MESC (2015a, p.49) reports that "… the quality of teaching, inadequate teaching resources and minimal support for teachers, may be causal factors for unsatisfactory students results in schools". (Luamanu, 2017, p.1), reviewing the PILNA (Pacific Islands Literacy and Numeracy Assessment) and PaBER (Pacific Benchmarking for Education Results), has reported "low performance in students' assessment" due to the "low competence level of teachers". The MESC response to the report is a renewed commitment to enhance the quality of teaching in Samoa. In so doing, its new corporate plan looks at Education for Sustainable Development through teacher professional development (MESC, 2015a). The MESC initiative aims to have teachers upgrade their certificate and diploma qualifications to a Bachelor of Education (BEd) or Master of Education (MEd).

This paper interrogates Samoa's preservice teacher education system by investigating the effectiveness of training programs in the Faculty of Education of the National University of Samoa (NUS). Student teachers and an executive member from the MESC were asked for their opinion of training programs and their relevance to teaching in schools. The research also considers the ability levels of preservice teachers entering the system, examines the goals of the teacher education program, assesses whether these goals are valid and appropriate, and seeks to identify any mismatch between goals and program delivery.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE PROBLEM

Recently, the NUS Faculty of Education realigned the courses in its Bachelor of Education program from 32 to 24, with the goal of accommodating both pre-service and in-service teachers, the latter having returned for higher qualifications. Pre-service programs have undergone major changes in recent years, with transitions from certificate to diploma, and then to degree level, with a four-year Bachelor of Education. The latter was interrupted in 2016, after only two years, by a sudden decision to change to a three-year degree for primary trainees, and to phase out the secondary program. Students pursuing secondary teaching then had to complete degrees in their major field of teaching in the faculty of their choice before completing a one-year teaching diploma at the Faculty of Education. These changes have contributed to a number of problems, such as the failure to incorporate the Samoan cultural context into the program, notwithstanding MESC (2015a, p.58) advocating through its EFA goals an improvement in the development of more "local and relevant resources" in schools.

Concurrently, Tuia (2013) in his study of student teachers at the NUS Faculty of Education has reported that some of the teacher participants and former students have raised concerns regarding their "…unfamiliarity with … education courses" (Tuia, 2013, p. 42), which may have created difficulties for some "…to achieve satisfactory results" (Tuia, 2013, p. 126). The concern mainly rests on their teaching capabilities after graduation. This correlates with the Samoa Education Sector Program (SESP, 2015, p. 37) report on teacher education that there are "problems in aligning pre-service teacher training to the new curriculum".

These problems in the preparation of student teachers are challenging. The Samoa Education Sector Plan (2013, p. 25) has indicated "high expectations in terms of quality benchmarks and professional standards" for teachers in Samoa. That is, student teachers are expected to acquire appropriate skills and knowledge of teaching and learning methodologies to successfully implement the curriculum. Consequently, the courses in the NUS programs continue to utilise western ideas and methods, with very little local context in all courses. This is due to the educational materials that lecturers use for their courses, which are mainly textbooks from western countries. In addition, most of these lecturers were educated in New Zealand and Australia, and have given little consideration to the relevance of local knowledge and wisdom in education.

The incorporation of Samoan indigenous knowledge and wisdom in teacher education programs could broaden western ideas so that students are able to understand education from both indigenous and global perspectives. Nabobo-Baba (2013, p. 85) has argued that graduates should be "… sensitised to indigenous knowledges, philosophies, values and ideas of education", which should always be the focus of education in the region. Instead, more indigenous students fail the system, while more global educational changes continue to flood education systems in Oceania. As observed by Teaero (1999, p. 32), "… formal education, of which teacher education is a part, is really a foreign import into Oceania". This explains educational difficulties encountered by some pre-service teachers, due to their misconceptions of foreign systems. Ah Chong, Sooaemalelagi, & Tuia (2008), concluded that many of the school principals involved in their research showed disappointment with new teachers' classroom behaviour and cultural performance in their schools. Similarly, Tuia (2013, p. 100) noted: "… some principals claimed that some new teachers disrespected senior staff members, disobeyed school rules and regulations, had poor dress codes, did not attend to their classes or arrived late to school". Tuia (2013) noted that these are unacceptable behaviours, both in schools and in Samoan culture generally.

Principals also have queried teacher education and the effectiveness of pre-service training. Their concern coincides with apprehensions about the types of student teachers currently being trained. Most lack English academic writing, reading and speaking skills, especially in English. Recent research conducted by the Pacific Island Literacy and Numeracy Assessment) (Luamanu, 2017), a regional organisation responsible for education improvement in the region, noted educational problems in Samoa. Their report, published in the *Samoan Observer* in May 2017, pointed to the educational weakness of teachers with poor English in speaking and writing (Luamanu, 2017, p. 1). In addition, a follow-up letter to the editor by a former educator, also published in the *Samoan Observer*, clearly put the blame on teachers and principals with poor English in speaking and writing. Such claims correspond to the Samoa Education Sector Plan July 2013 – June 2018 (2013, p. 24), which reported that "… the quality of school leavers entering the Faculty of Education at NUS to train as teachers is also a concern … teaching for many is not their career of choice but of necessity". Clearly the Samoan government should have measures in place to evaluate the qualifications, knowledge, skills, interests and experiences of those entering the teaching profession, and rigorous selection procedures based on this evaluation.

CURRENT PRE-SERVICE TEACHER EDUCATION INITIATIVES IN SAMOA

The Samoan Ministry of Education, Sports and Culture Strategic Policies and Plan, July 2006 – June 2015 (MESC, 2006, p. 25) put forward a teaching service vision for "… sustainable, creative and on-going teacher education programs (pre and in service) that produce good quality and committed teachers". While some aspects of the plan have been achieved, others still need attention, especially in relation to the quality of the teacher education intake, and the quality of training programs and resources. Similarly, the National Teacher Development Framework emphasises that improvements are needed in teacher quality, commitment, motivation and morale, as well as in professional skills" (MESC, 2015a, pp. 13-14).

The MESC Education Statistical Digest (2016, p. 59) reports that there is "… a lack of professional knowledge, practice and delivery" thereby contributing "… to the low level of skills and practice of students enrolled at the NUS Faculty of Education". Although Samoa's education policy contains adequate teacher education policies to guide teaching and learning in the classroom the quality of future teachers is severely tested. The MESC (2016, p. 59), in its Educational Statistical Digest, advocated the importance of monitoring teachers through its *Teachers Intervention Support Program* to ensure improvements in teacher capacity-building as well as promoting professional development, the ultimate goal being to strengthen "… the teaching skills, content knowledge … and planning" of new recruits.

METHODOLOGY

The present study utilised a Samoan qualitative research methodology of *talanoa* and *nofo*, which draws its elements from the social and cultural aspects of Samoan culture. *Talanoa* is perceived as a conversation. It has a deep connotation in the Samoan language in relation to research. *Nofo* is known as sitting in Samoan, and has a significant cultural relationship to *talanoa*, as both represent Samoan cultural protocols in doing research in Samoan cultural contexts. Fua (2009, p. 57), a researcher of Tongan heritage, referred *to nofo* as to "reside or to stay". In Samoa, *nofo* represents Samoan cultural values of behaviour accorded to others (*ava fatafata*), mutual respect (*va fealoai*), respect (*faaaloalo*), and reciprocity (*feavatai/ fetausiai*) (Tuia, 2013, p. 23). As is the nature of Samoan people, they usually invite unknown passers-by to *nofo* and rest without considering the consequences. During these *nofo* sessions, the unknown and their new families *talanoa*, beginning to know more about each other.

Talanoa can be referred to as conversation, a talk, an exchange of ideas or thinking, whether formal or informal and is often carried out face-to-face (Vaioleti 2006, p. 23). Doing *talanoa* in an indigenous cultural and social manner thus provides people with the freedom to dialogue without fear of using indigenous language. *Nofo* in this cultural situation is significant in doing research in the Samoan context. One does not always engage with others in *talanoa* by standing; it all depends on the age and the status of the person in one's family, village and church. In addition, if *matais* (chiefs) are involved, then conducting *talanoa* and *nofo* should be culturally appropriate, sitting with folded legs, and conversing using cultural language. This process reinforces cultural values of behaviour

accorded to others *(ava fatafata),* mutual respect *(va fealoai)*, respect *(faaaloalo),* and reciprocity *(feavatai/fetausiai)* (Tuia, 2013, p. 23). Unlike *talanoa* in the general sense, having a group of friends or two people conversing is not necessarily being seated in dialogue, but this can be done by standing or just sitting without folding legs. This was the kind of dialogue that the researcher and participants had at the time of data collection. Students had the freedom to move and talk amongst one another, while at the same time, respecting the presence of the researcher. The incorporation of cultural aspects of *talanoa* and *nofo* in research from the Samoan context relies on the people that are involved in the research. For instance, in this study, the researcher permitted the participants to act and move freely. They were not subjected to the Samoan cultural protocols because of the researcher's presence. There were twenty student teacher participants, and one executive from the Ministry of Education. Data collection was conducted through the utilisation of student participants in a focus group discussion, while the MESC executive was interviewed.

The data collected was guided by the work of Sarantakos (1998) and Neuman (1994, cited in Sarantakos, 1998). Sarantakos' (1998) method of analysis is a cyclical process with three stages: reduction of data, data organisation and interpretation of data. In addition, Neuman's (1994) typology method of analysis examines and evaluates the relevance and effectiveness of the interpretation of data after extraction and the final formulation of the main research themes. Subsequently, themes are generated from the data, which emerge from participants' opinions and views. These are carefully, scrutinised, organised and classified into appropriate themes that best represented the aim and focus of the research.

PARTICIPANTS' VIEWS ON SAMOAN PRE-SERVICE TEACHER EDUCATION

Students' responses to the research through the utilisation of *talanoa* and *nofo* (focus group discussions) unveiled some critical aspects of education that were a major hurdle to most students striving to complete their studies. The NUS Faculty of Education was largely unaware of these. Three themes emerged from the data: (i) relevance of the preservice education program; (ii) a desire for courses to be contextualised, and representative of Samoan culture, rather than based solely on ideas, theories and examples from other countries; (iii) use of English language should be relevant for second-language speakers, and should be clearly understood and provide examples for comprehension.

Responses to the first theme were based on the relevance of the program to participants, some reporting positively on lecturers; e.g., "I like the Critical Thinking course, because it helps to make me think extensively and comprehend more about the different aspects of what I am teaching in Secondary schools" (Student 13); and: "The program is OK for me, because I get to learn some new things that I was unaware of" (Student 7). Similarly, students 14, 15 and 17 supported the program, explaining that the way they were taught to acquire knowledge and skills from their pedagogy courses was very clear and comprehensive, unlike students 16 and 19 who indicated their discontent with the program because they did not get along with some lecturers. For instance, student 16 reported: "My lecturer in my other course never pay any attention to me, and also never give us a second chance to re-do our failed essay". Student 19 said: "Some lecturers talk too fast and it is

very hard to catch up with them". This showed that not all students found the program relevant to their studies because of problems with lecturers.

Responses to theme two indicated that some students were frustrated by difficulties encountered in the courses that they were studying. According to student 4, "Many of the readings that I use for one of my education course is so hard to understand". Student 11 indicated that: "Most examples used by lecturers to introduce or clarify an idea of the topic is alien to me". Views presented under theme two were consistent with those in theme 3. Participants complained about the courses they studied, and learning outcomes were perceived as unclear. In addition, it seemed some of these students have difficulties understanding their reading materials and have problems communicating in English with their lecturers. According to student 10: "I have problems understanding my lecturer most of the time whenever he speaks in English," and student 3: "I don't understand most of what I am learning in my other course, which is Critical Thinking, because my lecturer uses very big English words". Student 9 adds, "I don't know how this course relates to what I am teaching in primary school, because it is all about people from other countries". Similarly, student 5 said, "Ethics and values is a difficult course, and most of what I am learning in this course is very similar to ethics and values that my parents taught and I really don't know why I am doing this course". Moreover, these same students agreed that the content of these courses should be more relevant to their practice in primary schools.

As stated earlier, the perceived irrelevance of the program was based on the lack of integration of local cultural contexts with global ideas and perspectives. Students found that most of what they were learning derived from western knowledge, which was viewed as less significant to Samoa. However, the MESC executive stressed the importance of the program in the training of student teachers to acquire appropriate knowledge and skills of teaching and learning. In fact, concern about irrelevance expressed by students was something that the MESC executive had learned from the principals and senior teachers from various schools in Samoa: "Some principals and senior teachers have informed MESC that most of the new teachers recruited have problems in classroom teaching, behaviour, and understanding teaching materials". It was the same concern raised by principals, when asked of their perceptions of new teachers in their schools. Most senior teachers and principals blamed the program for not training student teachers properly. However, the MESC executive claimed: "There is an improvement with many new teachers coming into the field with regards to classroom performance and behaviour towards quality teaching and learning. (This) has contributed to the development of better education at school level". He also expressed the view that those who deliver the content knowledge of the program should have more cultural knowledge and ideas, rather than relying on western ideas and methods to deliver lectures.

In summary, the research has revealed that the main frustration over the pre-service teacher education system is not about the system itself, nor just about student teachers, but that both the system and the students have failed one another. On one hand, the program leans heavily on western theories rather than drawing on local examples, so that learners can connect local social, cultural and educational ideas to global ones. On the other hand, local

student teachers should make time and effort to consolidate their learning in order to achieve their goals.

Nabobo-Baba (2013, p. 85) explains that in order for the new ideas UNESCO has proposed to be more effective, implementation of courses in preservice teacher education programs should focus on the importance of regional cultures, languages and wisdoms. Thaman (2012, p. 1), argued that the Pacific region "… ought to be more culturally democratic, taking more serious consideration of the ways in which Pacific people think, learn and communicate with one another". Samoans should become critically aware by comparing and contrasting their cultural values and beliefs with those of the outside world. Although current pre-service teacher education programs around the Oceania region are organised by indigenous educators, their objectives and methods are derived largely from western theories and methodologies. It is the responsibility of local educators to ensure that programs are appropriate and relevant to local student learning, both in and out of the classroom.

Student teachers should also be more vigilant and assiduous throughout their time at NUS to gain greater knowledge and skills to assist with teaching. As Thaman (1995, p. 1) argued, "… it is an urgent need for the Pacific region to take on board culturally-inclusive and culturally-sensitive educational practices and to contextualise our teaching and learning in the Pacific", rather than relying solely on western teaching and learning theories and practices. Contextualising our current teaching and learning by drawing on indigenous cultural values and beliefs will provide student teachers with a clearer educational vision, and help them achieve a balance between western theories and Samoan cultural practices.

CONCLUSION

The Samoan education system, while improving, also contains unsuccessful objectives and goals due to poor quality teacher education. The current preservice teacher education system as reported by MESC (2015a) and UNESCO (2011) may be relevant to a former colonised nation, but inappropriate to the current social, cultural, educational and economical needs and interests of Samoa. There is a need to incorporate more local knowledge and wisdom into teaching and learning, and a need for educational examples and ideas to be contextualised to capture hybrid Samoan cultural values, beliefs and ideas as a way of making learning more flexible for students.

As argued throughout this paper, a pre-service education program that incorporates appropriate educational ideas and values, and addresses contemporary needs, will eventually produce better results for all. It is crucial that MESC and the NUS Faculty of Education work collaboratively to ensure that pre-service teacher education programs are aligned with the school curriculum, strengthen English language competencies, and help students apply what they have learned to their teaching. Currently the program has fallen short of ensuring all students fulfil their potential. By not enhancing student performance the nation is adversely affected. Student teachers have not ultimately satisfied the criteria that enable them to become effective as teachers. It is vital that the Samoa pre-service teacher education program be more inclusive of local values and knowledge, thereby contributing to more successful outcomes.

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Relationships, relationality and schooling: Opportunities and challenges for Pacific Islander learners in Melbourne's western suburbs

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Many Pacific Islanders (PI) living in Australia have a high regard for education and have high expectations of the capacity of the school system to provide the learning experiences needed for their children to achieve successful educational outcomes. However, there are some challenges to achieving these expectations. Socio-cultural, financial, and physical factors, such as limited in-home supports for study time, space or schedules, have been consistently reported as common barriers to providing a supportive learning environment within the homes of young PI learners. This paper examines notions of relationships and relationality as experienced by a group of PI learners from Polynesia and Melanesia, as they lived and studied in a region of Melbourne from 2012 to 2015. It follows these learners' experiences as they navigate and negotiate the different spaces, structures, and systems found within their home and school environments. In particular, the study examined ways that PI learners engage and interact with various players within these two important spaces (home and school) and how these relationships affect school achievements and outcomes. The paper argues that complex relationship customs and relationality patterns can lead to both positive and negative impacts on learning for some PI learners.

Keywords: Pacific Islander learners; home and school influences; relationships and relationality

INTRODUCTION

The home and the school are spaces in which children and young people spend most of their time in the first 18 years of their lives. Within these spaces, they engage with many different actors and stakeholders, most of whom have a significant influence on their everyday lives and well into their futures (Bourne, 2008; Buckroth & Parkin, 2010; Sapin, 2013). These two primary spaces enable young people to interact with others and develop important, short- and long-term life relationships. Within these spaces, too, young people may experience positive and negative influences that can affect their personal lives, school and social experiences, including the relationships formed with others (Arnott, 2002; Lareau, 2003). The cultures and experiences acquired within and from these spaces can have ongoing, short-term or long-term influences on the life and schooling trajectories and pathways of learners (Abrams, 2010, Brofenbrenner, 1996). Using Pierre Bourdieu's (1977) notions of cultural capital, habitus, and space as a theoretical framework, this paper explores relationships and relationality patterns of a small group of Pacific Islander (PI) learners from Melbourne's western region within their home and school environments in order to understand the influences on school engagement, achievement, and pathways

LITERATURE REVIEW

As is the case with many migrants, PIs move to countries like Australia and New Zealand in search of improved access to better employment, health, and educational opportunities for themselves and their families (Chenoweth, 2014; Kearney & Glen, 2017; Ravulo, 2015). PI migration to Australia has increased substantially in the last 40 years. PI migrants have used various entry conditions to work and live temporarily or permanently in Australia (Pryke, 2014; Woolford, 2009). PI Polynesians, especially Samoans, Cook Islanders, and Tongans, have been the majority migration scene (Ravulo, 2015), followed by Melanesians and Micronesians. The peoples who originate from these three Pacific ethnic regions are all referred as Pacific peoples of Oceania despite the existence of distinct differences in culture, customs, language and physical appearances among and even within the various countries.

Despite differences, there are also commonalities among PIs as a collective group: their beliefs in principles of obligation, reciprocity, greater good, and strong family; and community ties and Christianity and spiritual connections to ancestors, the land and the ocean. Nevertheless, they are by no means a homogenous group, with individual countries, nationalities, and ethnicities having diverse and varied cultures, languages, belief patterns, behaviours, and physical characteristics.

While acknowledging these many differences, this paper seeks specifically to investigate the educational experiences of a collective group of PIs located in a region of Melbourne at a particular period. The study is premised on the understanding that PIs essentially share more commonalities than differences in terms of their historical past, migration experiences to Australia, and social and cultural values, beliefs, customs and perspectives. These commonalities affect their patterns of settlement and engagement in the communities within which they settle in their adopted country. Additionally, the small numbers of students from each PI nation attending school in the research area dictated that a collective approach be taken. Among the group, participants self-identified with other PIs as 'Islander' whether they were from Polynesia, Melanesia, or Micronesia. From the outset, the study's purpose was to follow this collective group of PI students, not to explore cultural differences but to seek patterns in their behaviours and relationships at school and how these impacted on their learning experiences and outcomes.

How well their children adjust to the demands of a new educational system and whether they are able to cope with the new roles and responsibilities that allow them to take full advantage of their schooling opportunities are important questions for many migrant families. Because of their own educational experiences, however, some parents may have insufficient information about a school's requirements of them and their children, and thus form unrealistic expectations or misunderstandings about schooling, which are further compounded by language and cultural barriers (McNaughton, Lai & Hsiao, 2012: Pakoa, 2005; Singh & Sinclair, 2001). Such differences in expectations from parents and the school staff may cause problems, particularly for migrant learners and parents who are unfamiliar with the new school systems and who need time and support to build appropriate "cultural capital" to assist their children. (Anae, Anderson, Benserman, & Coxon, 2002; Connell, 2005; McLaughlin & Hickling-Hudson, 2005). Without time and support to fully familiarise with these new requirements, many PI parents become dissatisfied, frustrated and, consequently, isolate themselves from the school (Anae et al, 2002; Bok, 2010; Chang, Park, Singh, & Sung, 2009; Youdell, 2012), leading to ever-

decreasing levels of engagement and understanding about their roles and responsibilities towards their children's education (Anae et al, 2002, Siope, 2005).

The home-school connection

A "home-school connection" (Otero, 2011) is a collaborative partnership in which parents (at home) and teachers (at school) act as key agents for facilitating, providing and supporting the learning of children. This important partnership exists to ensure that teachers, parents, and other supportive adults can provide safe and positive contexts to improve learner motivation and achievement (Otero, 2011). Numerous studies have consistently attributed better student achievement, retention, and pathways to active parental and teacher involvement from the early ages of schooling up to the middle years of adolescence (Connell, 2003; Chang, Park, Singh & Sung, 2009; Daniel, 2015).

Past studies with PI learners (Fairbairn-Dunlop & Makisi, 2003; Nakhid 2005) found many PI parents regarded school as a foreign entity over which they had limited responsibility and knowledge, where "teachers were the experts and specialists" (Fairbairn-Dunlop & Makisi, 2003; Nuthall, 2007) and PI parents took on a passive role (Loto, Hodgetts, Chamberlain, Nikor, Karapu & Barnett, 2006) in their children's schooling and learning experiences. Furthermore, Hawk and Hill's (1998) studies with Māori and Pasifika students found them to be active gatekeepers, especially in keeping the worlds of school and home separate thus further reinforcing a perception of the home as a distinct and separate space from which academic learning occurs.

The tension between many family's aspirations for their children and the lived realities of children's lives in schools can create a sense of disjunction that may result in fragmentation of these children's lives (Siope, 2006). Many Pasifika children do feel the pressure to live up to their parents' unrealistic expectations of them but they also know that their parents do not feel confident/safe/comfortable in attending schools, and play this card in keeping the two lives of school and home separated as far as possible (Hill & Hawk, 1998; Loto et al, 2006). This finding is consistent with that of other studies (Epstein, 2011; Goyette & Lareau, 2014) that perceive the home-school connection is mostly a workable concept for middle-class families whose culture and organisation at home closely matches with the Western modern-day classroom.

Bourdieu's (1977) theoretical construct of capital provides a useful framework for interrogating and theorizing about various relationships and relationalities experienced by research participants in this study. This theoretical stance states that certain groups in society are enabled or limited in their opportunities and abilities to achieve various goals or outcomes because of inherent structural inequalities that exist in the systems within which they operate. Bourdieu posits that an individual's social place and position (habitus) within a given society (or field) is determined by their access to various forms of capital (Bourdieu,1977) and a person's level of access to social, economic, cultural, or symbolic capital affects their ongoing position, experience, and activity within that system or setting. Bourdieu's constructs of cultural capital and cultural reproduction are particularly relevant in the discussion regarding culture and the ways that certain cultural norms may be privileged over others.

Pacific notions of relationality (Fairbairn-Dunlop, 2003; Samu, 2007; Sanga, 2011; Thaman, 2008) also provide useful theoretical and socio-cultural frames of analysis to explain the nature, form, and consequences of some relationships common to PI learners. These relationships and relationality patterns are based on Pacific values, such as the

nurturing of safe and harmonious spaces for communication and cultural exchange, striving towards a common goal, having a strong connection to culture, respect for elders, maintaining traditional practices, such as speaking the language, knowing family roots, being truthful to one's heritage, and having a belief in higher spiritual powers (Thaman, 2008). All these cultural norms, as well as physical markers, such as age, gender, and social status, have important bearings on the types and forms of relationships that PI form with others within and outside of the home. As such these constructs are important markers for understanding relationships of PI between and among themselves or with other individuals or groups in various spaces.

Communication and relationships

Developing and maintaining physical and emotional relationships between parents and children is an important social expectation within all families. In a study of Samoan communities, Ochs (1988) and Gershon (2007) found typical village settings provided few opportunities for parents and children to interact, with children mostly cared for by age-similar others such as older siblings. Ochs' study (1988) found many parents communicated with children mostly through instructions or commands, with few opportunities for children to engage in lengthy conversation. These limited opportunities for communication and dialogue between parents and children were said to encourage distant relationships between them (Campbell & Sherington 2007).

When transferred to a classroom context, this context can shape the learning patterns and communication behaviours of PI children, where they are observed as mostly passive learners with low confidence in communication, experiencing difficulties questioning what they are told or challenging contrary ideas out of respect for teachers (Nakhid, 2005). At school, this inexperience in communicating with elders may lead to students struggling to adapt to learning approaches and social relationships (Mafi, 2005; Pakoa, 2005; Scull & Cuthill, 2008; Siope, 2010). The question, then, is whether this important cultural attribute of respect for elders also reinforces social and emotional isolation of young people from family elders, and whether this results in difficulties for young people forging meaningful and lasting relationships with their elders, including teachers in the school.

Some indigenous authors (Nabobo, 2012; Sanga, 2011; Thaman, 2008) have argued that these cultural behaviors, which are practised daily at home, are important for nurturing Pacific principles of harmonious relationality and upkeep of cooperative effort to reach consensus results. Here, we observe an example of conflicting situations where that which is nurtured as good and appropriate behavior at home is viewed differently at school where a PI learner might be seen to be displaying "reserved, passive or uninterested" behaviour by teachers or peers.

The importance of upholding harmonious living in PI homes also mean that young people obtain limited experiences or practice in discursive and interactive forms of communication. When translated to the classroom context, PI learners may have difficulties communicating in assertive language that questions or critiques the views of others (Gershon, 2007; Ochs,1998). The corollary of this practice is the development of a communicative framework where interactions are either positive and compliant, or extremely rude and aggressive when there is disagreement. Because of limited practice in articulating views of disagreement in civil ways, some young PI might "act out" or become confrontational towards others (Lareau, 2003). At school, such behavior may be

perceived as rude and aggressive, leading a young PI to engage in difficult confrontations with peers or teachers at school.

Engaging with peers

A common complaint among PI parents is that children often start to disengage from schooling when they reach adolescence. Some parents assert that their children start to develop risky relationships with peers when they reach the middle and senior years of secondary schooling. The risk is mostly associated with the interference or disruption to children's goals for education (Connell, 1983). Given that the secondary school is a site "where aspirations are either developed or diminished" (Kearney & Donaghy 2008, p. 8), these concerns are, to some extent, justified and may also extend to young PI peoples' perceptions about universities being unfamiliar, foreign, and out-of-reach spaces (Kearney & Donaghy, 2008). The danger with such views is that these young people, when they themselves become parents, use their own jaded experiences of schooling to inform the decisions they make for their own children's education, thus perpetuating a damaging cycle of low aspirations and motivation to pursue further and higher education.

There are many Pasifika children who do wish to live up to their parents' expectations of them to get ahead in school, but this means denying their own cultural identity in order to amass the "cultural capital" of the monocultural classroom and school structure (Bishop & Berryman, 2006). Alternatively, Pasifika students that do excel academically are put in a dilemma of whether to continue on this path and fall prey to the tall poppy syndrome, thereby opting to play down any academic abilities or potential so as to fit in with their peers (Siope, 2006). But the flipside to this argument is the view that many PI parents lack the cultural capital required to assist their children to reach the levels expected, and some have limited understanding of what schooling requires (McNaughton, Lai & Hsiao (2012). This is true for many new migrating families who may be constrained by communication issues to confidently navigate and adapt to a new school system.

The existing literature shows that relationships with key stakeholders at home and school affect a learner's experiences, performance and achievement at school (Otero, 2011). Yet, little attention has focussed on how the "lived in" experiences and home situations of PI affect their adjustment, engagement, and achievement in school; a space they are not culturally familiar with. Examining these PI notions of relationality and the ways they might affect the nature of relationships formed at school and with teachers, and the possible consequences of these relationships on schooling is therefore imperative.

This study looks specifically at PI learners' engagement and interactions with various players within the home and school spaces, with a view to explain how these relationships and relationality patterns can affect school performance and achievement. Through this interrogation, it seeks to assist parents, teachers and school personnel of PI learners to understand better how relationships and relationality affect the school experiences, participation and outcomes of some PI learners.

METHODOLOGY

This longitudinal qualitative case study, undertaken as part of the author's doctoral research, involved working alongside 14 PI learners and their families and teachers over a four-year period from 2012 to 2015 to gather information about the learners' educational experiences and school trajectories at secondary and post-secondary stages

of schooling. Over the study period, eight learners completed senior secondary schooling and transitioned to university, Technical and Further Education (TAFE), or employment. The other six participants continued into senior post compulsory stage of schooling (Year 11 and 12) after the research period ended.

Information for the study was gathered primarily through conducting 78 semi-structured interviews with the 14 learner participants, 22 parents and guardians, and 12 staff members from the participants' schools. All 14 learners—five boys and eight girls—lived and studied in Melbourne's western suburbs, a common settlement area for migrants and refugees, well-known for its cultural and linguistic diversity as well as high levels of unemployment, and social and economic disadvantage, poor housing, low levels of access to social, health, and economic services, and generally lower than average outcomes in health and education (Growing Melbourne's West, 2004).

Twelve of the 14 learners self-identified as Polynesians from Tonga, Samoa, Tuvalu, and Niue, whose parents had step-migrated to Australia through New Zealand between 1995 and 2005. The other two participants were Melanesians who migrated directly from Papua New Guinea between 2000 and 2005. Parents and guardians were aged between 35 and 60, with educational backgrounds ranging from tertiary level qualifications to trade certificates. About half of the parents were employed in jobs that were relevant to their previous training while the other half were engaged in semi-skilled trades or secretarial related employment. Two sets of parents had no formal qualifications and three of them were unemployed while one was engaged in casual factory work.

Most of the data collected were qualitative in nature, comprising stories of experiences as shared by a small group of participants over a period of time. These stories and narratives form the evidence base for this paper and also account for the case study approach and constant comparative analysis used to formulate the study's main findings and themes (Andrews, Squire, & Tamboukou, 2008; Miles & Huberman, 1994). The emphasis on personal stories and narratives within the research called for strict protocols on preserving confidentiality of the information received, which was supported by the Victoria University Ethics Committee.

This study involved working with a small group of PI learners living in the western region of Melbourne from 2012 to 2015 and therefore the study findings and learnings are specific to the group and their families and teachers. Nevertheless, the study seeks to highlight the importance of understanding relationships and relationality as key determinants in supporting or challenging PI schooling experiences, achievements and outcomes.

FINDINGS

Home relationships

The claim that parents and their children, according to cultural expectation, are not closely connected with each other (Ochs, 1998) was unsupported in this study, which found the relationships between parents and their children, in the majority of families interviewed, to be physically close and connected. This was true for both boys and girls where close physical connections with parents were clearly evident in the ways they interacted with each other during the interviews, in which parents sat together close to their children and everyone interacted openly and comfortably with each other. Except in one family, which

comprised a single parent father and his son and nephew and where gender may have affected the closeness of the relationship, there was little evidence to show that the relationships between parents and their children were disconnected. Furthermore, claims that traditional monocultural ways of living among PI families provided unclear avenues and opportunities for communication and interaction between and amongst PI families (Och 1998; Gershon, 2004) proved unsubstantiated in this study. In most instances, parents and children participated willingly in the interviews in each other's presence, suggesting a level of reasonable comfort and openness within that space.

In this study, parents showed a familiarity with their children's learning interests and goals by accurately naming their future goals and best subjects at school, which matched closely their children's responses; for example, two parents, in the absence of their children, correctly shared their children's careers goal which matched that of their children. But, although most parents interacted easily and comfortably with their children and were aware of their schooling goals, it remained unclear whether these interactions extended beyond that space; in some families, a few learners withheld important information about schooling from their parents, especially when and if the information was sensitive or personal. For instance, one participant dropped Mathematics as a subject in Year 10, knowing that her parents disapproved of this action. Her willingness to share this information with others, such as similar-aged relatives and the interviewer but not her parents demonstrate that this learner carefully managed the flow of communication and information, including being selective of the audiences with whom information is shared with.

Developing and maintaining meaningful and effective communication and interactions with school personnel has been highlighted as an ongoing concern for families in PI homes (Ravulo, 2015). This study's data suggests that this is an ongoing challenge for many PI parents as they navigate a new school system and try to develop the skills and confidence needed to deal more effectively with schools. Some parents confirmed that they experienced anxiety when asked to come to their child's school and were sometimes reluctant to communicate with school personnel saying: "*Sometimes I do not know what to say when teachers ask me questions about my child because of my English and also I am shy to speak with them*". Another parent shared that the school was an important place that he had no business entering such a '*formal and unfamiliar*' space. These anxieties were sometimes compounded by low confidence to interact with school staff or communicate in English, resulting in low overall "cultural capital" in entering, engaging and achieving within the school space.

In contrast, the majority of parents in this study regarded the school as an integral part of their child's life and of their own through their child: "We want our children to be successful as the community looks down on us if our children do not do well at school". They all shared one common purpose: that their children do well at school, attend TAFE or university if they wished, find a good job and live fulfilling lives. Not all parents, though, were familiar enough with the school system to make informed decisions that effectively supported their children's educational needs. While all the learners showed themselves to be well disposed to school and had career goals that depended on educational success with apparent strong familial support, there was a lack of confidence displayed by some families in managing some aspects of the school system. This lack of confidence increased and was most noticeable when the children reached senior secondary school years. This low confidence affected the relationships with school staff and the ability with which assistance or guidance on school matters, such as student

progress, career choices, and pathway options, could be sought. Where parental relationships and communication with schools declined or weakened, a few learners assumed these responsibilities themselves with varying consequences in terms of educational achievement and subsequent choice of post school options.

In four of the 12 study families, there was clear indication of active and strong support from families in terms of homework supervision and active communication with schools. The consistent factor in these families was that the parents themselves were physically present at home, monitoring homework completion with one or both parents sufficiently equipped to provide academic assistance. Some parents in the study admitted to needing more skills and confidence to effectively respond to school's expectations of them at the senior secondary level of schooling, saying: "*I have to educate myself so I know how to help my children better*". A clear finding from this study was the strong relationship between parental educational background and improved in-home support for learning. Concurring with Anae et al. (2002), this study found that the better educated parents devoted more time, assistance, and support to their children while those engaged in shift or casual work were often absent from home during homework time but also unlikely to possess the skills and confidence to assist their children academically.

School engagement

School staff agreed there were general declines in interest and engagement from PI students at the senior level of schooling and attributed these declines to individuals developing interests outside of school such as starting paid work, peer influences, social relationships and increased family responsibilities at home. Home responsibilities tended to increase as young people reached adolescence and became physically able to assist with more household chores or get a part-time job. However, adolescence also happens to be a time when conflicting pressures from both the home and the school can cause young people to make choices and decisions that are counterproductive to their schooling goals. It is also a time when young people acquire a heightened sense of self-awareness about their strengths and capabilities, and whether or not they fit with parental or personal expectations from education. This conflict or tension was quite strongly evidenced in this study, shown by conflicting pressure to put school goals behind family needs. Consistent with this view, some of the learners in this study became less certain about their own goals and educational position as they moved towards higher levels of secondary schooling. One parent expressed this disappointment, saying: "My son was doing so well until he got to Year 10 then suddenly lost interest". Parents themselves could also take responsibility as some were not always aware of the higher demands on time, commitment and support required at these higher levels of schooling when issues of cultural capital and habitus, in Bourdieu's terms, become critical benchmarks of performance and achievement. It could be argued that, at this stage of schooling, some of these PI learners sense a clearer picture of their schooling position and make decisions about their pathways that are inconsistent with earlier aspirations.

Contrary to the belief that young PI experience difficulties developing effective and meaningful connections with adults outside the home, this study found these learners were active and willing participants in classroom tasks in most contexts. School staff confirmed that the building of relationships with PI young people was critical in order to improve their engagement and participation in class. One teacher expressed this behaviour as: "PI students will do work for you if you have a good and trusting relationship with them". At school, most PI had a reputation of being quiet, polite, and

well-engaged in practical subjects and related extra-curricular activities like physical education, drama, and music, in which a few excelled. At school, they willingly and actively took up leadership and volunteering roles which they were familiar with at home. They generally enjoyed positive relationships with most teachers and other students and were respectful of others and of each other. Teachers also noted that PI engagement at school improved if and when the school offered subjects or extra-curricular activities that appealed to them such as rugby and music lessons. These findings evidence the importance of teachers acknowledging students and building positive and trustful relationships through encouragement of learners' cultural capital within the school environment.

Connell's (2003) study of western Sydney schools showed that low income families were mostly content with their children completing Year 12, having completed lower levels of secondary schooling themselves. This study, however, found that the PI parents involved in this research were keen for their children to succeed in education. Of all the parents interviewed, only one expressed a desire for their child to leave school early and to find employment. But, while parents were mostly supportive of their children's schooling and prepared to support them at all costs, this "support" was not always clearly reflected in their schooling choices, resulting in some learners exercising more control over their pathways than parents acknowledged. More often than not, this situation occurred in homes where parents still held on strongly to traditional views about successful schooling, placing emphasis on academic results and a preference for children to directly pathway to university or TAFE from secondary school. It was clear from this study that encouraging children to follow their interests brought forth happier educational outcomes for the learner and the family in the longer term.

Gender played a role in mediating ways in which young people approached communication in school settings, with young PI females more engaged at school and males being quiet and reserved. In the case of some young men, however, the need for cultural accommodation was arguably less intense. Families saw opportunities for boys in the trades and in manual work and had the perception that boys did not need school to the extent that girls do. This shows a change in the attitudes of young women to schooling and a desire to fit in and adopt more active patterns of engagement and communication with other adults and peers within a school environment.

Peer influences

Many young PI have friendships that are formed within their families or communities. Because of this very strong social capital within known and existing networks, PI young people have little reason to step outside of their cultural and social circles to find friends. Many of the PI young people in this study formed the most meaningful relationships with similarly aged family members with whom they interacted regularly, either at home, church, or public spaces, and even at school. The special bonds with which young PI had with similar-aged family members, especially cousins, provided a strong social network for these young people which tended to form from a very young age (Ochs,1998).

At school, young PI identified closely with other PI and formed lunch time, sports, music, and worship groups among themselves. Young PI were proud of who they were among their peers and were comfortable presenting to others what they stood for as a distinct group. But, while schools provided a safe social space in which PI young people could interact and socialize with other each other and with other non-PI, it was obvious also

that PI learners experienced some challenges in the academic learning requirements of the school for which they had lower cultural capital and, therefore, more challenges in their school performances.

DISCUSSION

The home-school (dis)connection

The apparent disconnections between the home and the school in terms of cultural organization, schooling expectations and academic responsibilities of learners and parents were quite obvious from this study. Families and learners with more familiarity and past successful experiences with the school system have higher cultural capital which allows them to engage more actively and successfully with the school. These opportunities further strengthen their communication and relationships with schools, thus yielding better school experiences and results for their children, concurring with Bourdieu's concept of reproduction.

Young peoples' ties to family, culture and tradition, for example, have lasting effects on their relationships within the school space, including their relationships with teachers and peers as well as their schooling experiences, aspirations, and outcomes. The emphasis on maintaining safe and harmonious relationships with others provided opportunities for some PI to thrive within the school or classroom space and to lift engagement in some aspects of the school such as developing positive relationships with teachers and school personnel, other PI, and non-PI peers. Where the school offered opportunities for PI learners to exercise cultural capital, such as in volunteering in school tasks or fundraising activities, these learners were engaged and felt included.

Parental unfamiliarity with a new school space largely determined the types and forms of relationships and relationalities developed within the school space. While most PI parents placed a high level of importance on the physical aspects of schooling, such as encouraging children to attend school regularly, wear correct uniform, provide necessary resources for learning, these proved insufficient for an overall successful engagement at school. Learners also needed to be academically strong to meet the academic requirements of the school. In homes that had lower "cultural capital" in terms of modern-day classroom learning approaches and support systems, there were less effective strategies for adapting to a new and unfamiliar school environment. It was obvious that more time, effort, and support is required by these learners and families to prepare effectively for schooling, concurring with Bourdieu's notion of "cultural and social capital".

Some parents admitted to not having all the knowledge and information about the requirements and expectations regarding support for their children from school staff, particularly at the senior levels of schooling, and they were uncertain about their rights to inquire or intervene on behalf of their children on important school matters. They were less adept at providing academic assistance in areas such as study skills, time management, writing in specific genres, critical inquiry, or critiquing knowledge and passing tests and exams; all skills that draw on cultural capital that is not learned or emphasised at home, and which sometimes contradicts Pacific 'lived in' approaches of communication or behaviour. In contrast, the everyday skills encouraged at home, such as volunteering and contributing to the "common good", helping and caring for others, and collective action, were not explicitly valued in the classroom or school setting more

generally. These cultural norms, viewed as important traits for community cohesion and inclusion, were not seen as valuable aspects of schooling, although these PI learners were consistently praised by teachers for their willingness to volunteer time and effort towards social programs at school.

Despite some concerns that educational pursuits and success might contribute to culture loss, there was generally an acceptance that this was a risk worth taking, especially for successful settlement in an urban environment such as Melbourne. In these homes, there were more structures and systems for encouraging free interactions between parents and their children. Such adaptive changes were encouraged in homes where parents had experienced more positive educational pursuits themselves and achieved success in schooling. Parental understanding of the value of education and their own successful experience of education proved to be a key driver for facilitating transformation in the attitudes and approaches of parents towards schooling. The more parents were willing to change to fit into the schools' accepted patterns of engagement, the more success their children were likely to experience and achieve, evidencing the influences of "cultural capital" in navigating the home and school spaces. The obvious irony of the situation is that compliance and conformity to school expected patterns of behaviour become prioritized as a pre-requisite for success in education. The consequence is that those who are able to increase this cultural capital are able to reproduce it (Bourdieu, 1977) and extend the capital to other sectors, such as social and economic capital.

Some PI did not have the necessary language skills or confidence to adapt effectively to school requirements because of the differences in communication styles practised at home. While at home, young people were encouraged to listen, obey, and take instructions, at school, they were expected to voice opinions and question ideas. These cultural differences in home and school approaches to communication and problem solving resulted in challenges with utilizing the abstract and more complex language and communication demands at senior levels of schooling. Language literacy, however, is only one aspect of cultural capital that affects young PI in the classroom. The quiet and reserved and, sometimes, relaxed attitudes of PI learners, encouraged by the home insistence on maintaining a harmonious and safe space for interaction and collaboration, may be incorrectly interpreted as PI learners being uninterested, unmotivated, and bored at school.

Teacher relationships

In today's classrooms, critical and inquiry approaches to learning are emphasized, as opposed to role modelling, observation, practice, repetition, and application (Sanga, 2011; Thaman, 2008), which are common learning strategies used in PI homes. The skills and qualities regularly practised at home by young PI, such as volunteering, helping, and caring—putting in collective effort for equitable rewards, were regarded as less valuable within the school or classroom space, which puts emphasis on individualized learning, competition, and testing of knowledge and skills in unfamiliar academic content, and language and instruction methods (McLaughlin & Hickling-Hudson, 2005; Reid, 2015). These differences in the methods of learning and priorities also contribute to the low-level school achievement, outcomes, and pathways of PI (Ainley, Frigo, Marks, McCormack, McMillan, Meiers & Zammit, 2002). Inevitably, this means that PI learners start school from a different point than their other peers (Abrahms, 2010; Farrugia, 2012) and are disadvantaged at school from the beginning.

Differences in the perception of school visits also contributed to nurturing weak relationships between parents and schools. While schools attributed the lack of parental communication and school visits to "a lack of interest" in the child and learning, parents themselves perceived visiting or communicating with school, particularly when everything is going well, almost as an intrusion into a space where they did not feel they fully belonged. Parents who had less familiarity and little experience of education themselves were the most vulnerable, resulting in a reluctance to approach schools for advice, assistance, or support. This finding supports Onikama, Koki & Hammond (1998), and Fairbairn–Dunlop & Makisi (2003) that Pacific parents preferred to keep a physical and cultural distance between themselves and the schools, viewing the school as a revered space that they were not comfortable in, which then added to their sense of isolation and inadequacy, making them less confident to advocate for their children's needs and increasing their marginality from the school.

CONCLUSIONS

The PI parents and learners involved in this study showed a continuing commitment towards schooling and made conscious and deliberate efforts to provide the physical, socio-cultural and emotional supports needed within the home to support children at school. Some parents even made social and cultural adjustments within the home to prepare and support children better at school. However, some of these supports were found to be insufficient to support children adequately at school because of inflexibilities around cultural accommodation between the two worlds of home and school.

Providing parents with the skills and knowledge to confidently navigate the education system is critical towards providing the appropriate levels of support at home, including homework assistance and monitoring. Additionally, providing better support structures within the home in terms of study time and supervision as well as minimizing home and other responsibilities is needed at the senior levels of schooling to cater for the higher levels of concentration and focus needed at this critical time.

Some shifts in perception and attitudes towards educational success need to occur so that young people can be encouraged to pursue their interests whether these are academic or vocationally oriented. An important lesson for school authorities is to work more closely with these families and communities to ensure that there is better communication and information flow between these two important spaces, using culturally appropriate and convenient communication methods.

This paper has touched on a very small aspect of relationality and relationships among PI learners. There is much more to be learned in this area, including providing in-school activities and structures for improving PI learner engagement at school through improved relationships with peers, teachers, and other important stakeholders at school.

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Understanding the "Local" in Indigenous Taiwan

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The study reported on in this paper aims to understand, challenge, and deconstruct what the "Local" means for the development of Indigenous education in Taiwan. More precisely, it will question the idea of the Local in this context, as Indigenous people do not necessarily all hold similar views about Local Indigeneity and its place in educational development in Taiwan. As research shows, Indigenous people's views are influenced by intersecting factors, such as class, gender, rural and urban location, education, and profession. While some Indigenous people may identify Local as the identity and interests of their Indigenous community or as their family, others may seek allegiance, construction of identity, and learning with and from the transnational Indigenous movement.

The paper starts with a philosophical overview of what is Local and what is Indigenous. It then analyses the Taiwan case from the historical context of Indigenous people to contemporary views and perspectives on indigeneity, Indigenous development, and education. Indigenous perspectives on development and education are presented based on primary research conducted with Indigenous people in eastern and western parts of Taiwan, including data from in-depth interviews, informal discussions, and observations. The paper concludes by considering the implications of these understandings for Taiwan's development and education, and for what is meant by the Local Indigenous and its influence on education in this case.

Keywords: indigeneity; Indigenous education; Indigenous knowledge; language policy; Taiwan

INTRODUCTION

Localization as decentralization of education, from the government to small-scale, is an emerging trend in research and educational governance (see Zajda, 2007). Political and economic views see localization as a better practice to a top-down approach, because it can bring about greater efficiency, transparency, and accountability (Barber, 2013, 2017). From a philosophical and cultural perspective, localization has positive implications for cultural and identity recognition for the benefit of non-dominant and culturally-different communities (Taylor, 1992) whose education is then built on their own cultural references and contextual relevancy.

Over the past three decades, localization discourse in Taiwan has aimed to reorient the system historically established under colonialism and martial law and develop a new national identity. This discourse has framed Taiwan as a unified homogenous entity, a

fusion of Indigenous, Han Chinese, and Global that has mixed and formed over centuries. However, in pursuit of this identity, sight was lost of the concerns, needs, and knowledge(s) of Taiwan's Indigenous people. Localization discourse has overlooked the need for cultural recognition and for de-centralization of educational authority for Taiwan's Indigenous people.

In 1992, Taiwan's Indigenous peoples were recognized as a distinct group—called *yuan-chu minzu* in Chinese, or "the people who lived here first." Since then, 16 groups (2.3% of the total population) have been officially recognized by the Government and provided their own legal authorizations and powers. A number of laws and policies have been issued since to respond to the needs of these Indigenous groups, now viewed as the most marginalized and vulnerable economically, politically, and socially. These include the *Indigenous Peoples Basic Law* (2005) and *Education Act for Indigenous Peoples* (1998). In 2016, President Tsai officially apologized for the subjugation and assimilation of Indigenous people and its oppressive legacy of colonial and authoritarian policies in their communities.

Yet, an ongoing challenge in these efforts relates to Indigenous education. So far, education for Indigenous people has not effectively addressed the issues of low socio-economic status, economic instability, poor health, and risked loss of cultures, languages, and knowledge systems (Caster, 2016; Chi, 2012; Chou, 2005; Vinding & Mikkelsen, 2016). Indigenous children and youth still find it challenging to adjust to mainstream education that is built around the cultural heritage of the Han Chinese majority at the expense of Indigenous minority's traditions, knowledge, and cultural references. This omission has led to lack of motivation to study, low academic achievement, high drop-out rates, strained relations with non-Indigenous teachers and peers, and erosion of self-concept and self-esteem (Cheng, 2004; Human Rights Council, 2013; Pawan, 2004, 2009; Yen, 2009).

Grounding education in the Local—local ownership, languages, knowledges, and contexts, for local benefit—can ameliorate inequalities in educational experiences and outcomes. But whose conceptions of the Local should be used to redefine and reform education? Can multiple understandings of the Local co-exist efficiently? What the Local is in relation to education in Taiwan is not straightforward. Yet, it is important to consider as Indigenous people aim to revive their communities and reform education to meet their needs. This article explores what is meant by the Local and its implications for education in Indigenous contexts in Taiwan. The paper starts with a philosophical overview of what is Local and what is Indigenous. It then analyses the Taiwan case from the historical context of Indigenous people to contemporary views and perspectives, before presenting Indigenous perspectives on development and education based on primary research with Indigenous people in eastern and western Taiwan; including data from in-depth interviews, informal discussions, and observations. The paper concludes by considering the implications of these understandings for what is meant by Local Indigenous and its influence on education in this case.

Understanding the Local and the Indigenous

Local oversight of the structuring and development of education is often seen as an efficient way to ensure education is empowering to the communities it serves. The use of a local language as the medium of teaching also helps ensure that education is effective in early years and can later help children learn and study in a second language. Mother

tongue education can also help students increase their sense of respect and dignity for themselves and their communities, and transmit cultural heritage (see Bagga-Gupta, 2010; Hornberger, 2009; Kamwangamalu, 2016; Papapavlou & Pavlou, 2005). Local language policy can thus empower minority linguistic groups such as Indigenous people.

Understanding the Local for the Indigenous, however, is more political than it is for groups who simply seek decentralization or local language/mother tongue education. The concept of "Indigenous" is often misunderstood as simply referring to people who, over a long period of time, have lived in a certain territory and developed a group identity attached to that territory. The people who are recognized as Indigenous, however, lay claims to a different definition of Indigenous and the powers and rights attached thereto. They assert that their lives, identities, and cultures are linked to their ancestral lands that they are presently prevented from controlling because of domination and oppression by the jurisdiction of nation states. Indigenous claims to self-determination and ownership of land, territories, and resources, as well as cultural and collective rights, are unique in nature. This is a demand for a unique identity rooted in the Local, and protection from the era of colonization characterized by slavery/cheap labour, physical and cultural genocides, dismissal of Indigenous knowledge systems and viewpoints, and racism against Indigenous people. Such subjugation and oppression led to destitution, low socio-economic and political status, academic underachievement, substance abuse, prostitution, and other issues Indigenous people presently experience across the world, including in Taiwan.

One of the core paths to re-build Indigenous communities and cultures and address structural disadvantage at a national level has been by focusing on the Local dimension of people's lives and returning to Indigenous identity. This cannot be done through modern education, however. First, education in its present form is oriented towards the promotion of dominant knowledge and perpetuation of the status quo at the expense of what the indigene has to offer or needs to recover from. Second, there is no recognition and clear understanding of who Indigenous people are and of their knowledge, language, and worldviews in modern education, as people identified because Indigenous are treated as relics of another age to be integrated into settler communities (Mika, 2017).

Ownership and self-determination of education in smaller units—localized Indigenous communities or families attached to a particular Indigenous area—is considered by Indigenous people as a way to revival and healing. This call to Localization and Indigenization in education is the call to focus on the foundations for Indigenous socialization and interaction in an Indigenous society built on common local language, culture, needs, and interests of allegiance to the Indigenous world. These allegiances and interests can be different from and, at times, in opposition to the sphere of the dominant, non-Indigenous group. The work of Paulo Freire (1972) is relevant to understanding the relationship between the Indigenous Local and non-Indigenous National/dominant. In *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Freire discusses how the interests of common people differed from those of the government that intended to maintain the status quo. In the same vein, the local interests of Indigenous people can be seen as being at odds with the national interests of the state. In terms of education, Freire considered that teachers were transmitters of knowledge that did not benefit local people.

Freire's solution to break the status quo was to develop a pedagogy that would focus on the needs, lives, experiences, and problems of people. One challenge here, however, is the essentialism of the Indigene or the Local in relation to education. Viewing Indigenous

people as one group with a common goal and needs prevents one from recognizing that Indigenous people are a diverse group with differing perspectives, experiences, and needs. As Carl Mika (2017) notes,

> As to the term *Indigenous*, there are anecdotal accounts of Maori expressing their discomfort when it arises in various settings. It may well be that the term is the most extensive leveller of them all, given its almost phenomenal ability to glide over highly varied landscapes and their inhabitants—to gloss globally over difference. (p. 10)

Although Indigenous people have common characteristics, experiences, and needs compared to the groups that colonized them, their standpoints vary. To better understand the situation of Indigenous people in Taiwan, the context of Taiwan and the cases of diverse Indigenous people there is now described in more detail.

The case of Taiwan

Taiwan is a multi-cultural and multi-lingual country hosting such groups as the Han Chinese, which can be further divided into Hoklo, Hakka, and mainland Chinese, and Indigenous peoples, who are currently divided into 16 recognized groups, with ten groups in the process of gaining recognition. The Han Chinese comprise over 95% of the population and the Indigenous people comprise 2.3%. The remainder of the population are recent immigrants from across the world. The official language and language of tuition in Taiwan is Mandarin, which uses traditional script. There are also two groups of national languages, the Hakka and Formosan languages, including around 42 Indigenous languages, and two regional languages, Hokkien and Matsu.

Indigenous people in Taiwan belong to the Austronesian family that is distinct linguistically, racially, and culturally from the Han Chinese. These Austronesian people inhabited the island for thousands of years, according to archeological accounts, until the first colonial power (the Portuguese) established a settlement in 1624. Other European colonial powers followed (the Spanish and the Dutch), together with settlers from the mainland of China (during the Zheng and Qing periods), the Japanese empire, and the Chinese Nationalist Party, whose imposed martial law ended 1987.

The centuries of colonization (1624–1945) and decades of Nationalist rule (1949-1987), saw military subjugation of Indigenous people, forceful removal of these groups from their ancestral lands, and assimilationist policies. The policies, especially those aiming at integration through education, expected Indigenous people to abandon their cultures, languages, traditional institutions, and knowledge bases, and internalize the dominant ideology, lifestyle, ideas of progress, and development (e.g., *Five Year Plan to Subdue the Barbarians* designed by Japan in 1910). The result was devaluation of Indigenous cultures, languages, knowledge, traditional structures and spaces, and dismissal of Indigenous identity and history.

Since the early 1990s democratic changes in legislation and policies have allowed re-evaluation of the education Indigenous people received and enabled studies on the causes of their academic disadvantage. Cultural deficiency was claimed to prevent Indigenous children from adapting to the learning environment and adjusting to educational expectations of the schools (Lee & Chen, 2014; Chen, 2015). To correct such problematic experiences, education policies re-oriented to a multicultural path. Multiculturalism has since aimed to provide equal access to quality institutions and equal educational outcomes

to lift Indigenous people from the socio-economic and political bottom of the society. This education has focused on preservation of Indigenous cultures (Wang, 2004, 2014) to create a friendlier environment for Indigenous children to acquire social and cultural capital and skills to achieve success in mainstream society. This focus on culture, however, has disregarded the needs of Indigenous communities by ignoring the prejudice of teachers and peers, who are mostly Han Chinese (Yen, 2009); focusing on developing Chinese identity in Indigenous students through language and curriculum (Huang, 2007); and providing inadequate resources and unqualified teachers (Chou, 2005) in Indigenous schools.

Inclusion of Indigenous students into mainstream education has presented them with synthetic, culturally-insensitive, and contextually-irrelevant curriculum, pedagogy, and knowledge. In addition to mono-cultural content of teaching and learning, institutional structures remain largely resistant to change, and education continues to emphasize textual literacy and standardized curriculum, testing, and competition (Fenelon & LeBeau, 2006). Taiwan's institutions are built on the customs, thinking, and justice conceptions of the Taiwanese people of Han Chinese origin, and Indigenous peoples hold limited rights (including the control of their education) within this framework (Chi, 2012). As a result, Indigenous knowledge and cultures are devalued, measured by non-Indigenous concepts of economic production and consumption prioritized in the current system. Indigenous difference from the mainstream is still seen as a deficit, not a potential richness (Taddei, 2013).

As a response to the failure of the mainstream education system to accommodate Indigenous identity(ies), culture(s), language(s), and needs, some Indigenous groups have been working on re-establishing their own education spaces that are rooted in Indigenous mythology, traditions, and languages. This space is hoped to help revive what was lost and engineer an academic structure that could benefit Indigenous students. Yet, as the next section shows, while Taiwan's Indigenous people identify collectively as Indigenous, they do not necessarily see development of their communities and the society at large in the same way. Divergence in standpoints are evident between and within Indigenous groups, in historical trajectories, socio-economic status, educational level, perceptions, and local (collective and individual) responses to community and national development.

Let us consider a few examples. The Amis Indigenous group is the largest Indigenous group in Taiwan, with 177,000 people (Hsieh & Wu, 2015). Amis people have historically inhabited the eastern part of Taiwan that, for a considerable amount of time, was not affected by colonization. The contact with the dominant Other was relatively recent and less harmful. Amis is currently one of, if not the most, advanced and powerful Indigenous groups in the country. They were recognized in 1992 when the *Constitution of Taiwan* was amended and, since then, its members have worked to re-establish themselves politically and economically, spread their language and culture through formal and informal education, and challenge state education for its cultural irrelevance.

On the opposite side of the spectrum is the Saaroa Indigenous group that was recognized in 2014. The group has 393 members as of 2017 and inhabits the southern part of Taiwan. The Saaroa's territory and population were drastically reduced in the centuries of incursion from colonial powers and neighbouring Indigenous groups (Zeitoun & Teng, 2014). The incursion also led to a negative impact on the language, culture, and traditional structures. As the group was recognized relatively recently, it has not been able to benefit

to a similar extent from government assistance as have other Indigenous groups. Unlike the Amis, the Saaroa has not attempted to develop their own education or influence state education, perhaps because of the urgency to address other matters and establish their own legitimacy in the country among other Indigenous groups. As a result, the group is more assimilated and faces more challenges and limitations in its development.

Other groups have had different degrees of success or failure in facing non-Indigenous influence, negotiating conditions of engagement and communication, recovering from subjugation and assimilation, and re-claiming space. The outcome of such engagement and influence in relation to the dominant Other (i.e., Japanese and Chinese) now translates into how each group sees its place in the society and in the development of education. But along with collective interests, there are individual differences in understanding the significance of the Local and Indigenous in education within groups as well. These differences are often a result of individual social and cultural capital determined by education and family's standing (class), residency (urban vs rural), and gender. This Indigenous education movement in Taiwan, its views of Localization, and its internal diversity is explored in more detail in the following sections.

METHODOLOGY

Twenty-three Indigenous contributors participated in a study exploring education provided to Indigenous people in Taiwan, and its limitations, challenges, and ways forward for sustainable development of Indigenous peoples. The participants included Indigenous professors, government officials and policy makers, activists, and educators (teachers, curriculum developers, and school principals) who have been working for Indigenous communities in various locations in Taiwan. The participants occupy rather privileged positions in comparison with the majority of Taiwan's Indigenous population. They come from urban, middle class backgrounds, have had opportunities to successfully progress academically in Taiwan and study in English-speaking countries. Because of their educational backgrounds and fluency in English, they are able to represent Taiwan's Indigenous people in international academic and professional circles and in the transnational Indigenous movement. To complement the understanding provided, informal discussions with the same participants and with ordinary Indigenous people at local community and family events were also included.

The data were collected in August 2016, August 2017, and April-May 2018 in cities across Taiwan (i.e., Taichung, Taitung, Hualien). Each participant participated in in-depth semi-structured interviews lasting a few hours. The interview protocol was developed with the help of two interpreters from Indigenous communities, who also assisted with recruiting the participants. The criteria for participant selection included substantial work in Indigenous affairs for the benefit of Indigenous communities (at least 15 years), leadership in their respective communities and on projects related to Indigenous rights and development, and experience with government institutions. Content analysis informed by postcolonial and decolonial theories was used to understand their viewpoints.

FINDINGS

Scope of Localization

Although the participants acknowledged the need for society-wide Localization, for them, Localization essentially meant oversight and development of education for Indigenous people by Indigenous people. All the participants, therefore, proposed that to develop an education model that could benefit and empower Indigenous communities, efforts should be localized in the hands of Indigenous communities and smaller units, namely families. Localization for these contributors meant that, geographically, schools should be located in the communities they serve, local circumstances of communities are accommodated, and knowledge, teaching strategies, and teaching material are based on local wisdom. The first reason for Localization is Indigenous peoples' belief that they are connected to the land they come from and this connection shapes their historical experiences, culture, and values as well as how a group behaves, operates, and makes decisions. The other reason is that learning to understand themselves and their history from their own perspectives and cultural values and principles can help Indigenous people re-build identities, self-esteem, and self-respect. Geographical localization of Indigenous schools would also allow two factors of Indigenous education to be fulfilled: Indigenous elders could be in the classroom to pass down wisdom, and learning could happen in the community, outdoor and indoor for further exploration and connection with the environment. It would also address the needs and wants of those Indigenous students who are reluctant to leave their families and communities for mainstream schools in other areas, preferring to stay in the areas that are connected to their ancestors.

Participants expressed that Localization can be reflected in the curriculum, text books, and pedagogical approaches. These should be culturally appropriate, emphasize multi-generational involvement of parents and elders and their wisdom, and focus on the environment around students and their own experiences. Epistemologically and pedagogically, it should reflect Indigenous peoples' beliefs, values, and cultural and linguistic richness. Significant aspects of knowledge- and meaning-production in the classroom should be interwoven with their physical environment. Thus, Indigenous students can internalize the social behaviour of their communities, acquire financial skills, manage relations with family members, maintain good health, master their language, and learn to communicate efficiently with outside communities. School subjects should be relevant and promote self-determination, self-esteem, and legitimacy of Indigenous groups and their knowledge. The study of Indigenous history, language, culture, art, philosophy, and legal and policy issues can enable understanding of local realities and allow students to prepare and work for the betterment of their people.

Decisions on all elements of education should be influenced by families and communities with the help of Indigenous educational experts. What is crucial is that teachers should come from these local Indigenous communities, regardless of whether they have formal qualifications. Their main qualification is the knowledge of Indigenous ways of being and doing, not the knowledge of a subject. As one Indigenous participant observed,

> Indigenous teachers know more about the language and culture. It is better for children to learn that from the teacher. If the teacher doesn't know anything about the culture, and the language, it's just general.

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Debates over language, culture and identity

Language is the most urgent issue on the Indigenous agenda, as the revival of cultures, identities, knowledge, and traditions is strongly linked to fluency in Indigenous mother tongues. A strong theme in interviews was that strengthening Indigenous identity and self-respect is linked to the revival of local languages, because language helps correct understanding of and relationship with their culture. All participants emphasized the need to know who they are as Indigenous people. As one of them reflected:

> You need to know you are Indigenous. You need to know your culture, you need to learn your language. Only your language will correctly interpret your culture.

Yet, despite the understanding that mother tongue education helps master a second language and protect knowledge systems and traditions, many people desired education in more dominant languages (e.g., Chinese and English) that, they perceive, bring greater value and social capital to their children to succeed in society. Similarly, local Indigenous knowledge of traditions, mythology, environment, hunting, and gathering are not viewed by some Indigenous people as currencies to advance socially and economically. The challenge is multiplied by the fact that many Indigenous groups have lost or are losing their knowledge systems and their sense of Indigenousness. As one participant noted:

> [A]nother challenge coming from Indigenous communities ourselves. Because we are used to the value concept from the colonizers. We need to change that. It's like internal colonization, colonization of the mind, of the way of thinking. We all lost our traditional Indigenous perspectives. It will be very hard, very hard.

In our study, the people who placed a greater value on revival of local Indigenous languages, identities, and cultures were mostly those who came from educated urban backgrounds. These people at the forefront of the development of Indigenous education and advocacy in Taiwan observed that they found their inspiration in the international Indigenous rights framework, the transnational Indigenous movement, and best practices in Indigenous communities across the world (for example, they listed Aotearoa New Zealand and Canada). As the participants reflected on their own standing in relation to other Indigenous people in the country, they noted that knowledge and the vision(s) they had were acquired because of their and their families' socio-economic position in the country, which allowed them to succeed academically and, later, with family investment of resources, receive advanced degrees (often at doctoral level) in English-speaking countries. It is this combination of social and cultural capital, advanced educational achievements, access to high level and intellectual jobs, and fluency in English which allowed these participants to communicate with Indigenous academics and activists across borders, making it possible for them to focus on language and identity issues in education.

As one Indigenous participant involved in developing a local Indigenous school put it, "We need to design an exemplary school that will persuade the parents to send their kids to learn the Indigenous way." Another participant supported this idea by expanding:

> You need to be competitive with other people, and if the school does not provide, parents will not choose it. They will choose a better Chinese school, not Indigenous school. This school will teach them to speak Chinese and be Chinese. They will learn English and world affairs. If Indigenous school won't do it, Indigenous parents will not want it.

For such participants, it is evident that their intention and willingness to educate their children in what all the participants called "the Indigenous way" would not bring potential negatives. Their children already had the capital required to flourish in the mainstream society provided by educated parents with adequate resources. As the participants suggested, for Indigenous people with less education, who work in urban areas as migrant manual workers (which are the majority) or in rural areas as farmers (if they have work at all), education in mainstream non-Indigenous schools remains a chance for their children to acquire skills and knowledge to be competitive, when they as parents cannot provide these elsewhere. As a result, other Indigenous people's needs, the participants shared, lay largely in fighting for survival in an unfriendly environment and not for revival of local languages and identities.

This context becomes even more complicated when considering the viewpoints of Indigenous people who migrate from rural to urban areas for manual work. As their Local experience and identity change, their perspectives on the position of Indigenous languages, cultures, and identities may shift as well. In circumstances where a family is lacking financially, or family structures become compromised due to migration from rural to urban areas, the sense of collectivity and belonging to a collective Indigenous entity becomes weaker, and people tend to focus on individual success or simple survival, rather than on group or collective Indigenous identity, well-being, or revival of the lost languages. This is a contrasting position to what the Indigenous elite represented. Their challenge of more advantaged Indigenous people in Taiwan, therefore, is not only to persuade non-Indigenous people that Indigenous is a self-standing concept for Localization to lead to their empowerment. Their challenge is also, as one participant shared, "to persuade our peoples themselves."

CONCLUSION

In Taiwan, the mainstream discourse on Localization has been a kind of response to the historical legacy of Chinese-centric authoritarian rule that lasted from 1949 to 1987. The new Taiwanese identity the government set since then has focused on blending the identities of all ethnic groups inhabiting the country (i.e., Indigenous people and Han Chinese) into one. This is contradictory to the belief of Indigenous people of the island, that, for their communities to move out of cycles of poverty and marginalization, there needs to be a special attempt to Localize "the Indigenous way," starting with education.

This is, however, not an easy task. While there are similarities across and within Indigenous groups, which includes a common history of subjugation by dominant powers, resistance to oppression, fight for their status, land, and the revival of their cultures and languages, their levels and ways of engagement with the dominant Other (represented currently by the Han Chinese) have differed throughout the centuries of intercultural contact. For individuals and families, it largely depends on socio-economic class, education level, whether they reside in rural or urban areas, and what profession they occupy. For Indigenous groups as communities, the starting point is their numerical, political, and economic power, and their years of recognition and engagement with Indigenous and non-Indigenous groups, among other factors.

Given the differences in viewing the basis of Indigenous cultures and development, the challenge is to determine what foundation education for Indigenous people should be built upon and what elements it should have. Essentially, the question is, in developing "Indigenous education", whose voice matters? Indigenous people in Taiwan agree on the

concept of "Indigenous," which they have collectively fought for in legal recognition and constitutional change, and have since started benefiting from that recognition—although the benefits are limited. In this context, it may be natural for some people to assume that their concerns and their preferred or recommended ways to address them are all the same, or similar. In conceptualizing Indigenous education, one might hope that Indigenous people can draw their unity and solidarity from colonial and postcolonial experiences, and the matters that such a legacy brings.

It is, however, dangerous to essentialize the plights of Indigenous communities in Taiwan, and their responses to them. Indigenous leaders in Taiwan tend to understand that. Non-Indigenous people working with them may lack the same level of awareness. As a result, they see Indigenous people as a static system, and overlook essential developments and changes in communities and individuals as societies, identities, and cultures shift, and people redefine their lives. Focusing on Indigenous identity and culture, instead of the plurality of these forms, contents, and expressions, is misguided and dangerous, as it can lead to exclusion and further marginalization of these individuals and groups when they are not seen as authentically fitting the box which non-Indigenous people have comfortably placed them in.

Educators working on behalf of Indigenous youth in Taiwan also need to be mindful that relationships between and within Indigenous communities can be political, too—there is nothing neutral or impartial in Indigenous definition and re-definition of the world they are living in collectively and individually. Approaching Indigenous education and development in the country may then be seen as a daunting task as so many ethical questions emerge. Who is to speak on behalf of the community or Indigenous people as an entity? Whose vision of education is the vision to build upon? Or can multiple visions or models of education co-exist? There are no correct answers to these questions. What can be assumed, however, is that by devoting time and resources to listen to and work with the smallest and often most marginalized units of Indigenous communities—a family and a child—is a way to start a conversation and action on re-orienting education that will solidify Indigenous identities, respond to their local needs and interests and, in the long run, will benefit the communities and the society.

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Local Insights from the Vietnamese Education System: the impacts of imperialism, colonialism, and neo-liberalism of globalization

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The paper fills a gap in the literature by examining how local dimensions have been demonstrated and fostered in the Vietnamese education system under the differing impacts of imperialism, colonialism, and neo-liberalism of globalization before and after 1986. Thematic analysis of relevant literature and policies reveals that the local dimensions were characterized by local people's responses, such as adaptation, appropriation, creativity, nationalism, and patriotism, in the imperial and colonial times. Under the impetus of the neo-liberalism influences of globalization in the post-colonial period, the local dimensions have been featured by higher education reforms and internationalization policies. Cheng's multiple theories of fostering local knowledge in globalized education were employed to discuss such local dimensions and associated challenges.

Keywords: local dimensions; local knowledge; local wisdom; (de-) colonialism; (de-) imperialism; neo-liberalism of globalization; Vietnamese education system; internationalization

INTRODUCTION

The immense growth of the global knowledge society along with the vagaries of information and communication technologies have led to growing concern about the possibilities of hegemony and re-colonization, whereby the local becomes dominated by global trends. The concern has fuelled a considerable number of investigations in the Asia-Pacific region into the role of local knowledge and wisdom in higher education and in the knowledge system more generally (Cheng, 2000, 2004; Teasdale and Ma Rhea, 2000). Simultaneously, the spirit of de-colonization and de-Westernisation has been expressed in a huge body of literature across the world (Altbach, 2003, 2004, 2016; Chen, 2010; Huang, 2007; Mok, 2007; Pennycook, 1998; Phan, 2017; Takayama, Sriprakash, & Connell, 2015; Zhang, Chan, & Jenway, 2015).

However, little is known about what local dimensions involve and how they vary under differing contexts, such as under imperialism, colonialism, and neo-liberalism of globalization. The paper addresses this challenge by scrutinizing how local dimensions have been demonstrated and fostered in the Vietnamese knowledge system and, particularly, in the higher education sector before and after the watershed of *Đổi Mới* (Open Door policy) in 1986. From thematic analysis of relevant literature and policies, several key local dimensions are identified: in the imperial and colonial eras, these included local people's responses; in the post-colonial times, there have been national reforms and internationalization policies. Cheng's (2000, 2004) multiple theories of fostering local knowledge in globalized education were employed to discuss such local

dimensions and associated challenges resulting from imperial and colonial histories, as well as the contemporary political regime.

METHODOLOGY AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Bowen (2009, p. 29) postulated that documents "are the most effective means of gathering data when events can no longer be observed". They can "track change and development" and "provide background and context". To investigate local dimensions in Vietnamese imperial and colonial times, relevant literature on the Vietnamese knowledge system was collected. Key policy documents also were collated to explore local dimensions in the Vietnamese higher education sector in the post-colonial period. Document analysis described by Bowen (2009) as "a systematic procedure for reviewing or evaluating documents" (p. 27) is the key method of this paper. Document analysis proves to be an effective instrument, revealing meanings, gaining understanding and offering insights pertinent to the research issue (Merriam, 1998). A theme-based approach, which is "a method for identifying, analysing and reporting patterns (themes) within data" (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 79) and "a form of pattern recognition within the data, where emerging themes become the categories for analysis" (Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006, p. 82), was adopted to analyse such documented sources. The thematic analysis centres on "identifying and describing both implicit and explicit ideas within the data" (Guest, Macqueen, & Namey, 2011, p. 9), organizing and describing a data set with "a rich and detailed, yet complex, account of data" (Braun & Clarke, p. 78).

Cheng (2000) proposed the theory of "triplisation", which consists of three interrelated ideas: individualization, localization, and globalization, as a coherent process in reforming education. Individualization is a pivotal part of localization, and localization is a must in globalization of education (Cheng, 2000, 2004). He viewed globalization as a certainty, with challenges and opportunities for local developments, and insisted on ways to foster local wisdom and human growth through making use of globalization. In turn, he claimed that: "the growth of local knowledge and wisdom may contribute back to the pool of global knowledge system and generate impacts on other countries. This becomes a part of globalisation of local knowledge" (Cheng, 2004, p. 15). The local knowledge system in globalized education comprises economic and technical knowledge, human and social knowledge, political knowledge, cultural knowledge, and educational knowledge (Cheng, 1996). They are "the knowledge that has been tested valid in a local context and accumulated by the local community or people" (Cheng, 2004, p. 9). He proposed a multitude of theories to foster local knowledge and wisdom in globalized education, namely: the theories of tree, crystal, birdcage and DNA, which highlight the local base; and the theories of amoeba and fungus, which emphasize the global base (Cheng, 2004).

In this paper, I share Cheng's views on the dynamics of individualization, localization and globalization. Thus, the forces of imperialism, colonialism, and neo-liberalism of globalization have been an integral part of and interactive with local dimensions in driving and shaping the Vietnamese education system. On the one hand, I acknowledge the inevitable effects of such powers; on the other hand, I argue for the significance of localization and individualization in relation to globalization.

Vietnam has evolved its social, political, cultural and economic structure from feudal, semi-feudal, colonial, socialist to socialist-oriented regimes under Chinese, French, Soviet and Anglo-Saxon impacts. Hence, the Vietnamese education system has been subjugated and internationally oriented for centuries. The following discussion provides

a critical analysis of local dimensions in the Vietnamese education system in the times of imperialism and colonialism. This sets an essential background to exploring local dimensions in the system and, particularly, the Vietnamese higher education (VHE) under the impacts of the neo-liberalism of globalization in the post-colonial period.

Contextualization and criticism under Chinese imperialism

Under the 1,000-year Chinese incursion from 111BC to 938AD (Wright, 2002), Vietnam underwent "a comprehensive initiation into the scholarship political theories, familial organisation patterns, bureaucratic practices, and even the religious orientations of Chinese culture" (Woodside, 1971, p. 7). Confucianism's educational philosophies were regarded as the fundamental grounding of the Vietnamese education system (Dang, 2009), exerting wide impacts on the system; "legacies of these impacts remain" (London, 20112014, p. 8). As claimed by Tran, Le, and Nguyen (2014), the Confucian-based feudal system adopted classic Confucian books as the main teaching and learning materials, popularizing incontestable knowledge and rote learning. Teachers and learners were positioned as knowledge transmitters and receivers respectively.

The long-century Chinese rule strongly influenced the local people's social, cultural and educational paradigms. The local education system was subjugated by uprooting the local identities and replacing them with imperial thoughts and practices. However, the local people resisted Chinese hegemony by contextualization that met Vietnamese indigenous identities and socio-cultural settings (Tran et al., 2014). For instance, the local people learnt Chinese characters and used them for writing but had a different way of pronunciation (World Bank, 2008). They then developed their own system of Vietnamese characters: *Chữ Nôm*, in the 13th Century and created a Romanised Vietnamese writing script, *Chữ Quốc Ngữ*, in the 17th Century with the support of Alexandre de Rhodes, a French missionary and scholar (Dang, 2009). The advent of *Chữ Quốc Ngữ* facilitated more accessibility to Vietnamese people, enabled changes in politics and society, as well as impacting Vietnamese education in a substantial way (Dang, 2009). The wave of criticism against the Chinese imperial regime and Confucian-based thoughts was evident in the work of Vietnamese intellectuals, such as Nguyễn Du, Hồ Xuân Hương, and Cao Bá Quát in the 18th Century (London, 2011). It can be argued that such local responses showed an awareness of independence and a refusal to assimilate by the Vietnamese people in the face of imperialism (World Bank, 2008).

Nationalism and patriotism under French colonialism

The year 1858 marked the first step of France into Vietnam and its colonial control over the country, replacing the Chinese feudal Confucian system. Tran, Marginson, and Nguyen (2014, p. 130) claimed that "during the eighty years of French domination, the VHE system was designed as an elite public system", aiming to serve the children of local French colonists and training people for the colonial apparatus (Pham & Fry, 2004; Tran, et.al, 2014). Although *Chữ Quốc Ngữ* was adopted throughout Vietnam, French was the main language of instruction in secondary and post-secondary schools as well as in administrative bodies (Ngo, 2016) and "the curriculums developed had little relevance to Vietnam and mirrored those in France" (Pham & Fry, 2004, p. 203), leading to 95% of Vietnamese people being illiterate (World Bank, 2005).

As noted in Tran et al. (2014), the period between 1919 and August 1945 witnessed a wave of patriotic education launched by Vietnamese scholars. The first was *Đông Du* (Eastward Travel), launched by Phan Bội Châu aimed "to send talented Vietnamese

youths to Japan for academic and military training to fight against the French as well as to build the country afterwards" (Tran et al., 2014, p. 88). The second, *Đông Kinh Nghĩa Thục* (Tokin Free School), was a reaction by Vietnamese patriotic scholars to *Chính sách ngu dân* (Ignorant People Policy) imposed by the French colonists. The third *Truyền Bá Chữ Quốc Ngữ* (Promotion of National Language Use) was "a practical and strategic political tool to promote patriotism and the aspiration for national liberation and independence during this historical period" (Tran et.al, 2014, p. 88). The patriotism under the French colonial regime was also highlighted by the upsurge of scholar mobility sponsored by the French Government or spontaneously run by strong-willed Vietnamese nationalists. The most typical instance of mobility resulting in a radical change for the liberation of Vietnam nation was the expansive overseas experiences of Hồ Chí Minh (1890–1969) in France, the USSR, England, the US, China, Siam, and Asian and African countries from1910 to the 1930s (Pham & Fry, 2004).

Even after National Independence Day (2 September 1945), the higher education curriculums remained heavily French-dependent. At first courses were conducted in both Vietnamese and French but, subsequently, totally in Vietnamese; the curriculums were translated into Vietnamese and adapted to suit local contexts (Dang, 2009). In 1946, the French returned to colonise Vietnam again with a regime that was met with rigorous resistance until 1954. Even in the revolutionary times, the Vietnamese Government, under Hồ Chí Minh's leadership, secured many educational achievements, such as raising the literacy rate from about 6% to over 90%, opening two junior colleges and five specialty colleges and attracting many Vietnamese intellectuals who were living abroad to become involved in the wars against the French and the construction of a new educational system (Ngo, 2016). The Vietnamese education system between 1945 and 1954 was, thus, formed by Hồ Chí Minh's educational philosophy, which valued the children's potential and talent in society, centred on the well-roundedness in human development and emphasising the interrelationship between practice and theory (Tran et al., 2014)**.**

This spirit of nationalism and patriotism resulted from "the combination of French repression and injustices, the long Vietnamese tradition of resistance to external rule, the flourishing of vernacular writings in Vietnamese raising broad political and social consciousness, the emergence of powerful and dynamic nationalist leaders" (Pham & Fry, 2004, pp. 205–206). According to Tran et al. (2014, pp 88–89), the campaigns and travel conducted by Vietnamese scholars during the French colonialization period typified the mobility and flexibility of Vietnamese education because they promoted "criticism against the conservative, examination-oriented education" and fostered "learning about the advances of the West" to lead to development and prosperity.

Globalization means "the transfer, adaptation, and development of values, knowledge, technology and behavioural norms across countries and societies in different parts of the world from a society, a community, an institution, or an individual" (Cheng, 2000, p. 159). The above discussion demonstrates that the times of Chinese imperialism and French colonialism witnessed such a process of globalization. In particular, there is evidence of Cheng's theories of fungus and amoeba, which compel the local people to absorb significant and relevant global knowledge for local development (Cheng, 2004), in action. However, the local people criticized, and contextualized imperial and colonial practices to accommodate their local desires. They also submitted to the West and other advanced countries through transnational mobility for lessons and collaboration in order to improve the existing systems. The local people's responses represented

individualization and localization, referring to transferring, adapting, and developing "related external values, knowledge, technology and behaviour norms" to accommodate local and individual needs, as outlined in Cheng's triplisation model (Cheng, 2000, p. 160-161).

Complex hybridity under mixed imperialism

France was defeated at the battle of Điện Biên Phủ in 1954. In the same year, however, the Geneva Agreement[1] led to a split between North Vietnam and South Vietnam. The former received assistance from the Soviet Bloc countries while the latter was under the control of the US (Pham & Fry, 2005). In terms of educational philosophy, in Northern Vietnam, under immense Soviet influence, popular education continued to be promoted with the emphasis on personal development. It then shifted to *giáo dục dân chủ mới* (new democratic education) fostering nationalistic, scientific, and mass education (Tran et al., 2014). South Vietnam, under US influence,followed the three principles called *nhân bản* (humanistic), *dân tộc* (nationalistic) and *khai phóng* (liberal) (Tran et al., 2014). These distinct educational philosophies, with, nevertheless, quite contrasting political orientations, both placed strong emphasis on overall individual development complemented by the promotion of nationalism (ibid). With respect to language use, Vietnamese was the language of instruction, totally replacing French in the North after 1950 (Ngo, 2016) while French was still used along with Vietnamese and English in the South until 1966 (Pham & Fry, 2005). With regard to educational structure and governance, VHE in the North adopted the Soviet model in 1956 in which all institutions were public, specialized and mono-disciplinary under highly centralized government. By contrast, South Vietnam adopted the US model in which both public and private institutions ran academic curriculums under a decentralized government (Tran et al., 2014; Ngo, 2016).

After the triumph over the US army in the South in 1975, North and South Vietnam reunited into the Socialist Republic of Vietnam. This period saw Vietnam confronted by overwhelming challenges brought about by the multiple legacies in the north and the south as well as developing a unified education system that had been subjugated for centuries. The Soviet legacy was a system of highly centralized governance with line-ministry management, specialized and mono-disciplinary training, teaching and research separation, and a strong emphasis on fundamental natural and social sciences related to heavy industry (Vu & Marginson, 2014). In stark contrast, the American legacy included philosophies of "democratic decentralisation and pragmatic utilitarianism with a strong element of state and local control at the provincial level" (Nguyen, 2003, cited in Tran et al., 2014, p. 132).

Among the chaos, outbound academic mobility and modelling were common local responses. In the north, the Government sponsored Vietnamese students to travel to Soviet Bloc countries for undergraduate and postgraduate programs whereas in the south,

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[1]The conclusion of the Geneva conference held on 7 May 1954 to negotiate peace settlements for French Indochina had in attendance of the foreign ministers of France, Britain, the US, the Soviet Union, and the People's Republic of China, as well as representatives from Laos, Cambodia, North Vietnam, and South Vietnam. Vietnam divided the country *de facto* into the Republic of Vietnam (South Vietnam) under Ngo Dinh Diem in Saigon, and the Democratic Republic of Vietnam (North Vietnam) under Ho Chi Minh in Hanoi (Riches & Palmowski, 2016 from A Dictionary of Contemporary World History (4th ed.)).

Vietnamese students were assisted and oriented towards US scholarships. Although the Vietnamese Government and the local people underwent a new form of imperialism from communist allies through such mobility, they chose to go outward by will and agency rather than force (Phan, 2017) with aspirations to model good practices to fill post-war and post-colonial discrepancies. In this sense, the theory of DNA, which is "to replace the invalid local knowledge with the vital global knowledge through globalisation" (Cheng, 2004, p. 13), is a valid depiction of the situation in Vietnam during this phase. Due to suffering from multiple imperial and colonial powers, the local dimensions within the Vietnamese educational system and the society as a whole cannot be purely local but hold complex hybridity.

Đổi Mới - Open Door Policy in 1986

The year 1986 marked a watershed for Vietnam. The proclamation of *Đổi Mới* (Open Door Policy) saw Vietnam "shifting from a bureaucratically centralised planned economy to a multi-sector economy operating under a market mechanism with state management and a socialist orientation" (Dang, 2009, p. 10). As part of this approach, Vietnamese VHE had to undergo changes in structure, operation, and governance. Specifically, Pham and Fry (2004) claimed that there were huge shifts in VHE from: (i) narrow specialization training to multiple fields training; (ii) subsidy regime with no tuition fees to market regime with tuition fees; and (iii) from Russian and Chinese as second languages to English. Furthermore, universities gained more autonomy and privatization of higher education was promoted (Pham & Fry, 2004). As claimed by Tran et al. (2014), the post-*Đổi Mới* key reform areas included socialization, diversification, and democratization, which have been fundamental to internationalization policies in the 21st Century. The first refers to the contribution of the whole society to national education under state guidance, followed by the massification of education and fee-paying mechanisms. The second is concerned with diversifying types of institutions and educational methods to meet new educational demands of industrialization and modernization. The third aims to offer encouraging environments for all people to get involved in improving educational management through removing authoritarian bureaucracy (Tran et al., 2014).

The enactment of *Đổi Mới* and of VHE reform policies were Vietnam's responses to the push of "transition" or "post-communist framework" (George, 2010), "restructuring" or "structural adjustment" (Le, 2014), and the growing neoliberalism of globalization. Vietnam's signals of privileging the more advanced and aspiring to keep pace with the world can be seen in looking to the West, especially Anglo-Saxon countries, adopting English as a prominent foreign language, improving mainstream curriculums and importing foreign curriculums. As aforementioned, this has led to a risk of re-colonization and learning from the West and should receive critical consideration. Tran and her colleagues, in their influential book on VHE, drew on Vietnamese traditional values of practicality, flexibility, and mobility in many aspects of life and suggested that these values should be treasured and maintained as remedies to the reform of VHE under the impetus of globalization and internationalization (Tran et al., 2014). Their work highlights the significance of incorporating such local wisdom in VHE and national development as a whole. Nonetheless, Vietnam has experienced differing forms of imperialism and colonialism, causing complex hybridity, as elucidated earlier; hence it has become more challenging to foster local elements in the education system in a systematic and consistent manner.

Internationalisation Policies in the 21st Century

Since the US lifted its embargo in 1994, Vietnam has been actively engaged in expanding relationships and joining regional and international organisations. Vietnam has also been granted opportunities for multilateral loans, international trade, development projects and financial support from globally privileged organisations.[2] In order to respond to this growing trend of regional and international integration, and to address the deficiencies during the above reform process, The Vietnamese Government and the Ministry of Education and Training (MOET) have continuously designed new policy directions for VHE development in the 21st Century. From 2000 onwards, industrialization and modernization through international integration and cooperation have been clearly stated in policy documents for socio-economic and educational development, with a strong focus on human resources and knowledge economy development. Such education policy documents as the *Higher Education Reform Agenda- Resolution 14* (Prime Minister, 2005) and the *National Strategies for Education Development 2001-2010, 2010-2020* (Prime Minister, 2001, 2012) reveal that outbound mobility and transnational higher education are two key pillars of internationalization in VHE.

Outbound academic mobility

Previously, the form of outbound academic mobility mainly catered for a modest number of elite individuals allied with the political agendas of imperialism and colonialism. Since the 1986 Open Door Policy, the Vietnamese Government, the MOET and universities have been increasingly proactive in expanding and enhancing international cooperation in education, research, science and technology. This has resulted in an accelerating trend of outbound mobility among students and academics. At the macro and meso levels, this trend has helped to accommodate the national and institutional demands for a high-quality workforce and advanced technologies under the thrust of the knowledge-based economy. At the micro level, individuals have a tendency to study overseas for academic and professional purposes as well as immigration possibilities.

According to UNESCO (2018), the number of Vietnamese students studying overseas is 70,328 for undergraduate and postgraduate levels. The top five destinations are the US (19,336), Australia (14,491), Japan (10,614), France (4,860) and the UK (4,146). The students are divided into three groups: (i) those who receive scholarships from foreign governments, organizations or institutions; (ii) those who are the recipients of Vietnamese Government scholarships; and (iii) those who fund their own studies (Nguyen, 2009). Among these groups, self-funded students often outstrip others thanks to an increasing number of rich families, the impact of ICT, and the growing aspiration of young people to migrate to more developed countries. Scholarship holders are qualified Vietnamese students granted privileged scholarships[3] at undergraduate and postgraduate levels owing

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[2] The World Bank (WB), the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the Asian Development Bank (ADB), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), the United Nations Development Programme (UND), Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) and Official Development Assistance (ODA) sources.

[3] For example, Erasmus Mundus Scholarship from EU, Chevening Scholarship from British Government, DAAD from German Government, Australian Awards Scholarships from Australian Government, New Zealand ASEAN Scholar Awards from New Zealand Government, Fulbright Scholarship from American Government, Japanese Development Scholarship from Japanese Government, Irish Aid from Irish Government, to name but a few.

to expanded diplomatic relations between the Government and the MOET with developed countries, international organisations and foreign institutions all over the world. In addition, an increasing number of Vietnamese academics and students with outstanding academic merit and high English proficiency have obtained scholarships from foreign universities. Apart from the above foreign scholarship schemes, the Government and the MOET adopted outbound academic mobility through the implementation of Projects 322,[4] 165, and 911[5] for doctoral studies and Projects 322 and 599 for bachelor and masters studies. Pursuant to such projects, a large amount of the national budget has been spent in sending potential academics from research institutes and universities nationwide overseas for postgraduate research or coursework programs.

In spite of exercising more autonomy in international cooperation, Vietnam has been featured as a receiver and importer of international education with the dominance of outbound mobility in both policy and practice. The National Strategies for Education Development 2001-2010, 2010-2020 (Prime Minister, 2001, 2012) prioritized outbound flow of mobility in order to augment the national and institutional human resources capacity. The policies encouraged both self-funded overseas study and foreign scholarship for individual growth to accelerate international integration.

Transnational higher education

Transnational higher education (THE) in Vietnam has been characterized by internationalization of universities through institutional mobility and model borrowing. Typical examples of institutional mobility are the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology, the first fully foreign-owned university opened in 2000 with two main campuses in Ho Chi Minh City and Hanoi; the British Vietnamese University opened in 2009; and the Fulbright University, the first US university, opened in 2016. The introduction of the "Excellent University" project from the Government represented an act of model borrowing, escalating the scope and scale of THE. The project was launched in 2006 with the aim of building four institutions in Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh city that reach global standards with academic support from developed countries, one of which could join the ranks of the top 200 universities in the world by 2020. The universities under this project include the Vietnamese-German University established in 2008 in Ho Chi Minh City; the University of Science and Technology Hanoi founded in 2009; the Vietnamese-Russian University opened in Hanoi in 2013; and the Vietnamese-Japanese University within Hanoi National University established in Hanoi in 2014. These universities have been operating under academic support and partnership from foreign government partners in curriculum, management and delivery. The most recent is VIN University, founded by Vietnamese real estate (the VIN Group) in collaboration with the Ivy League Cornell University. This new, private, non-profit university aimed to be the first world-class, internationally accredited and ranked university in Vietnam (VIN University, 2018).

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[4] Project 322, between 2000 to 2010, spent each year VND 100 billion for each academic batch and at the end of the scheme, a total cost of VND 2,500 billion was spent for training 4,590 academics (Nguyen, 2009; Tran et al., 2014).
[5] Project 911, between 2013 to 2020, aims to fund 10,000 lecturers nationwide to pursue their doctoral study in foreign institutions and 13,000 lecturers in domestic institutions with the nearly sevenfold cost of around VND 14,000 billion (Nguyen, 2009; Tran et al., 2014).

Secondly, curriculum importation has featured THE in Vietnam. Vietnamese universities have partnered with foreign universities and imported curriculums for their "joint programs" (JPs) and "advanced programmes" (APs) delivered in English for nearly two decades. JPs are designed and the degrees conferred by partnering universities, but are delivered by academics from both sides. There are around 500 available undergraduate and postgraduate JPs to date (MOET, 2017). APs are modified from JPs under transnational agreements and locally conferred (Nguyen et al., 2017). The MOET started implementing APs at some key universities for the purpose of attracting international students and scholars and advancing global rankings of these universities in 2006. The project has been expanded to other universities since 2008 and there are now about 35 active APs in 23 HEIs nationwide (MOET, 2017).

Undergoing continuous reforms and adopting diverse internationalisation policies, VHE has gained certain achievements; however, by 2009, the overall quality was still low and worrisome. The outputs did not "match the demands that arise from an economy struggling to develop its socio-economic infrastructures" (Nguyen, 2009, p. 4). Besides the acknowledged weaknesses in infrastructure, management, curriculum, teaching and learning in the whole system and the higher education sector particularly, there was a concern that the reform policies themselves contained inner contradictions about power among multiple sides, and tensions between mass enrolment and quality assurance, and between efficiency and equality (Tran et al., 2014). As a result, *Đổi Mới* has continued to enter a new and complex form of imperialism from inner-circle countries through its internationalization policies.

Vietnam has attempted to promote internationalization through outbound academic mobility and the implementation of imported curriculums in domestic settings. Although the policy shows the nexus between globalization, localization and individualization, as Cheng (2000) proposed, it remains a concern how to create a favourable environment to augment the potential of individualization and localization for local developments. A common criticism is that there is a lack of incentives to attract Vietnamese returnees to make contributions; hence there is an increasing trend of Vietnamese academics' migration to other countries and a severe risk of brain drain. According to Docquier and Rapoport (2012), approximately 27% of Vietnamese international graduates migrate to the host country or another country. The figure is projected to increase in the years to come. It is a considerable loss because those who have lived experiences in foreign countries could bring global international, intercultural and diverse perspectives to the pool of local knowledge to accelerate reforms both inward and outward.

The origins of this issue could lie in the contradictory political regime of the disputed socialist-oriented market economy set up by the Vietnamese authorities in the contemporary period. Socialism and Capitalism have not, by nature, been the rooted values of Vietnamese people. However, they have acted as ruling, even dictatorial, guidelines for all social aspects, constraining the development of local knowledge and wisdom to a greater or lesser extent. Furthermore, the remains of the long out-dated influence of Confucianism and the Soviet models, coupled with the rise and dominance of China in political areas, are presenting new challenges for education renovation. In this sense, by face value, Vietnam's reform policies reflect Cheng's theories of "tree", "crystal", "birdcage" and "DNA" which refer to the processes of promoting local knowledge through optimizing global flows with a thoughtful consideration of the local base (Cheng, 2004). However, since the succession of colonialism and imperialism in Vietnam over centuries has created complex hybridity in all areas, no proposal in Cheng's

theory can fully reflect the processes of fostering local knowledge and wisdom in globalised education in Vietnam.

CONCLUSION

Among the large volume of scholarly voices against imperialism, colonialism, and the neo-liberalism of globalization, the local dimensions have been highlighted as both concerns and potential resolutions. The paper examines how local dimensions have been demonstrated and fostered in the Vietnamese education system under such impacts before and after 1986. From thematic analysis of documents, literature and relevant policies, the local dimensions in the Vietnamese education system were identified as diverse and varying. They included local people's criticism, contextualization, nationalism, and patriotism in the imperial and colonial regimes. They also have been presented in national reforms and internationalization policies for higher education, such as outbound academic mobility, institutional mobility, model borrowing, and curriculum importation for the past decades of the 21st Century. They hold complex hybridity resulting from a mixture of imperialism and colonialism over the centuries. This paper explored several key local dimensions of the Vietnamese education system from documented sources. It offers a thorough discussion into the nature of these local dimensions and the ways to foster them for the use of future researchers.

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Complex times and needs for locals: Strengthening (local) education systems through education research and development in Oceania

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Researching and theorizing the local in education is often a contested space linked to deficit views of indigenous people by "others". Certainly, the intention to research the local was a consistent concern linked to colonization in the Pacific. The use of the term "local" assumes the disempowering of the knowledge and worldviews of Indigenous people to the moana-Oceania. Indigenous academics have contributed to decolonization discourse linked to disrupting Western research ideals and practice and my fatongia *(obligation and responsibility) in this paper is to specifically share and highlight my experiences as a fellow for the University of the South Pacific (USP) Institute of Education (IOE), whose regional purpose is to support and strengthen the education systems within the region through education research and development.*

Within the postcolonial Pacific context, the complex roles and responsibilities of local educators and researchers continues to infiltrate one's views and assumptions of who education is for, and whose purpose it serves. In this paper, I highlight IOE's role as a regional institution focused on privileging Local and Indigenous knowledges as strengths and working together with regional and international agencies to support and strengthen local education systems in Oceania. Although Pacific professionals continue to perpetuate out-dated colonial systems, including education, I argue that there is an existing body of work and expertise by local people on the rise who are seeking to disrupt the out-dated colonial systems that have greater impetus on the mobilizing of indigenous knowledge and research in the moana.

Keywords: Local and Indigenous knowledge; Oceania; development; education research; Institute of Education; Strengthening

INTRODUCTION

The late 'Epeli Hau'ofa, a Tongan writer and scholar, defined the term *moana* as the ocean, affirming that our islands are intimately connected by the *moana* (Hau'ofa, 1998). *Moana-nui-a-kiwa* is a term associated with the great Ocean/Pacific Ocean (Ferris-Leary, 2013). According to Hau'ofa (1998), the concept of "Oceania" is one that encompasses "a more accommodating, inclusive, and flexible view of people as . . . human beings with a common heritage and commitment, rather than as members of diverse nationalities and races. Oceania refers to a world of people connected to each other" (pp. 401–402). Although Hau'ofa's use of Oceania may appear as a homogenizing tool, its real strength

lies in its political intention that favours inclusivity. Hau'ofa (1998) posits that "anyone who has lived in our region and is committed to Oceania is an Oceanian" (p. 402). Specifically, Oceania is:

> [A]n identity that is grounded in something as vast as the sea should exercise our minds and rekindle in us the spirit that sent our ancestors to explore the oceanic unknown and make it their home, our home. I would like to make it clear at the outset that I am not in any way suggesting cultural homogeneity for our region. Such a thing is neither possible nor desirable. Our diverse loyalties are much too strong for a regional identity ever to erase them. Besides, our diversity is necessary for the struggle against the homogenising forces (Hau'ofa, 1998, p. 393).

In this paper, I position myself as a *moana* (and local) researcher who engages in research practice within Oceania. I highlight and take an Oceanic perspective of the education of local people. As a fellow at the University of South Pacific (USP) Institute of Education (IOE), I not only serve Tonga, where my heritage roots are grounded, but also the other 11 Small Island Nations/Territories (SINs) that USP serves within the region. I utilize the term "Indigenous" as a descriptor; evidently used by many *moana* scholars to position themselves within the postcolonial era as a purposeful attempt to disrupt the misappropriation and imposition of "colonization" and "colonial power" on their lives, and systems within local societies (Smith, Maxwell, Puke, & Temara, 2016). Moreover, I use the term "Indigenous" as a descriptor for Oceanic people in the international context.

As a local *moana* researcher and educator within Oceania, I take on a dual positionality: that of an "insider" and "outsider". This critical two-fold lens provides understanding of what it means to be part of the local community and as a researcher in academia. Rather than the imposition of others' views exclusively from "outside" and making claims of how education should be for Oceanic people, this paper highlights the reflective experiences of one who is currently learning to serve, learn from, work together with, and search for ways to support and strengthen Oceanic people and their educational needs.

Despite the presence of regional aid programs and initiatives in the postcolonial Pacific, improving the education of local people continues to be a struggle for many small island nations (SINs). Many academics have attributed the struggle to inadequate education systems that are not always responsive to the needs of their local communities (Johansson Fua, 2007; Koya-Vaka'uta, 2016; Thaman, 2008). For decades, local educators and researchers have argued for appropriate and relevant programs and initiatives that highlight local knowledge and wisdoms as being central and appropriate to the education of Pacific people (Bishop & Glynn, 1999; Smith, 1999; Taufe'ulungaki, 2003; Thaman, 2007). However, for some small island territories in Micronesia and Polynesia, for instance that are administered by the US and France, many education programs and initiatives are dependent on the political and compact agreements with their colonial administrators.

An insistent concern, as expressed by Indigenous and non-Indigenous people, is evident in the claim that "local professionals are still attempting to preserve out-dated colonial structures and the logic of the system still supports the approaches favoured by old colonial powers" (Ma Rhea, 2013, p. 11). It is a concern because, despite the number of research studies that focus on decolonizing Western practices within schooling and in higher education in the Pacific, including Tonga (Koya-Vaka'uta, 2016; Sanga & Reynolds, 2017; Thaman, 1999; Thaman, 2014a), there are still leaders and educators who favour the colonial structures and systems of the old. There is also ambiguity in local

parents valuing their indigenous knowledge and language at home and in the community but at the same time wanting their children to acquire Western knowledge and language within schooling and in higher education. This paper seeks to unfold some of the ways that the (IOE) has addressed the complexities through its regional research projects.

Education research in the past has not always benefited people in Oceania. Through regional development projects, several initiatives developed in the past to improve education in the Pacific were framed from a predominantly Western view (Taufe'ulungaki, 2003; Thaman, 2007; Thaman, 2008). As such, the theoretical underpinnings from a Western lens of what constitutes education did not appropriately capture local strengths and learning experiences. In the past, the tendency to see deficits in local education was more prominent in educational research and interventions as opposed to highlighting the strengths that exist within those systems. When research is framed using Indigenous concepts and research frameworks, it is a grounded practice because its centre is from within Indigenous peoples' knowledges and lived realities, thus capturing the essence within and highlighting the strengths within the people and local communities.

Educational research that makes a difference to the lives of Oceanic peoples and the community is what defines the notion of research impact (Taufe'ulungaki, 2003; Taufe'ulungaki, 2014). In spite of the diverse institutional expectations of what constitutes research impact, for many institutions the idea of "research impact" is associated primarily as based on the journal ranking in which local research projects are published. Often, the local research studies are published in contexts whereby the readers are from outside of the region. As well, institutional understanding of "research impact" is linked to the number of times that a research journal article is cited, and this is usually by those in academia that are outside of the region. For the IOE, this means ensuring that educational research and its impact on local people and their communities are at the forefront of their efforts. As an emerging local researcher, I have chosen to share my experiences serving our local people within this particular journal because I believe there are people who are generally invested in the work and efforts to improve educational research, educational systems, and educational experiences and outcomes across SINs within the Oceania region.

FATONGIA NGĀUE 'I MOANA-NUI-A-KIWA: AN INSIDER/OUTSIDER VIEW

The idea of what constitutes researching and theorizing "the Local" can be understood in terms of one's positionality and his/her role and responsibility within education. *Fatongia* is a Tongan term associated with obligation and responsibility. In terms of my positionality, I am a Tongan who was born in Niue and raised in Aotearoa New Zealand (hereafter referred to as New Zealand) with heritage links to Samoa. For most of my schooling, I was educated in New Zealand. After years of service as a secondary school teacher and educational leader in South Auckland, a community that has a large proportion of Māori and Pasifika (a term used in New Zealand to refer to families with Pacific heritage) families, my wife, son, and I moved to Tonga in 2014. Despite our initial plan to broaden our sense of service and voluntary work in Tonga for three years, this is our fifth year. Since 2014, I have actively engaged in the training of teachers at a mission secondary school in Tonga. To date, I still continue my service to the mission school and to other educational training organizations in the small island kingdom.

The USP is a "microcosm of the region, and many aspects of its history, which began in 1968 in the era of decolonization of island territories, mirror the developments in the regional communities it serves" (Hau'ofa, 1998, p. 394). When IOE was established in 1976, its central purpose was to fulfil USP's educational obligations to the 12 SINs: Cook Islands, Fiji, Kiribati, Nauru, Niue, Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI), Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tokelau, Tuvalu, and Vanuatu. Currently, as an IOE fellow, serving the 12 SINs continues to be an expectation. I am both an insider and an outsider, and such a two-fold perspective provides the basis for supporting and strengthening IOE's education services through consultancy and advice, research, professional development and learning, and publication. Such a two-fold perspective "demonstrates the value of different prisms of perspective (Western theories [and research] and Pacific conceptualisations)" (Wendt Samu, 2010, p. 1).

Adopting Tagaloatele Peggy Fairbairn-Dunlop's (2015) notion of "intentionality", the deliberate planning, establishing, and tracking of culturally affirming spaces that will inspire and empower local students, educators and researchers—my intention is to highlight the cultural spaces that not only privilege local and indigenous knowledge, but the ways in which Western theories and research can be contextualized to suit our local educational needs as well as the expectations of the outside donors who continue to provide aid to the region. When Pacific people themselves are encouraged and equipped with the necessary knowledge and understanding to empower, there is a level of ownership which allows for rethinking and transformation of their learning and practices within cultural spaces that are conducive to learning and success. I elaborate on the "Rethinking Pacific Education Initiative for and by Pacific People" (RPEIPP) as a culturally affirming space in a later section of this paper.

LOCAL AND INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE

In light of the central aim in this paper, that is, to highlight IOE's role as a regional institution focused on privileging Local and Indigenous knowledges as strengths and working together with regional and international agencies to support and strengthen local education systems in Oceania, this section reviews Local and Indigenous sources that IOE utilizes as cultural reference for research projects, particularly in the design and implementation of research specific to the diverse small island nation contexts in the region.

The former Samoan Head of State, his excellency Tui Atua Tupua Tamasese Ta'isi Efi [Tui Atua] (2005) raised the concern that, when thinking about Indigenous language and knowledge, it does not directly relate to the existence and use (or overuse) of Pacific concepts, methodologies, and competencies in academia. However, the concern is in how we as local/Oceanic researchers specifically use such Indigenous language and knowledge and for what purpose (Thaman, 2014b). Tui Atua (2005) argues that the main concern for local people is not in the "protecting of indigenous languages from change, rather, it is about protecting indigenous languages from loss" (p. 66).

In a recent article, Kabini Sanga and Martyn Reynolds (2017) claim that: "Pacific understandings of reality, knowledge generation, and values stand on their own as the bases of a research paradigm to serve the local Pacific interests without justificatory reference to the West" (p. 198). On the basis of Sanga and Reynolds' (2017) claim and the RPEIPP movement, this paper emphasizes Local and Indigenous knowledges as being central to the understanding and transformation of educational systems and research in

Oceania. As described by Unaisi Nabobo-Baba (2008), a Fijian scholar and educator, the region "needs more research to be done by indigenous researchers using culturally appropriate framings and methodologies that recognise Pacific . . . world views, cultural knowledges and epistemologies, grounds the research and provides it with methodological integrity" (p. 143). Such indigenous framings and theories are similar to other counter-hegemonic struggles by marginalized communities who have made critical discoveries on the role of research on their lives (Smith, 2004, cited in Nabobo-Baba, 2008). Research by and for local people and communities highlights Indigenous epistemologies (ways of knowing, doing, and behaving) and ontologies (ways of being) that are grounded in local and indigenous knowledge and world views. A fundamental role of Local and Indigenous research therefore, is to decolonize Western underpinnings and knowledge and to achieve self-determination for local people (Koya-Vaka'uta, 2016; Nabobo-Baba, 2008).

Pacific researchers in the postcolonial Pacific often seek to foreground Indigenous language and knowledge in their studies. Perhaps the earliest noted and used Indigenous research methodology, the *Kakala* Research Framework (KRF), was developed by Konai Helu Thaman (1988), a prominent Tongan poet and academic. She first developed *kakala* as a metaphor and philosophy for teaching, learning, and research. *Toli* (collection and selection of flowers, fruit, leaves, and other fragrant and decorative elements), *tui* (making and weaving of the *kakala*), and *luva* (giving away or presentation of the *kakala* to someone special as a symbol of love and respect) were Thaman's contribution to research associated with the teaching and learning process. Through conference presentations and workshops with postgraduate students across the region, Thaman continued to promote *kakala* as a research framework. In 2005, Thaman's colleagues 'Ana Maui Taufe'ulungaki and Seu'ula Johansson Fua (2009) critiqued the KRF and added two more phases to the research process. These women also utilized Linitā Manu'atu's (2000) concepts (*mālie* and *māfana*). *Teu* (conceptualization of the study) was adopted as a phase before *toli,* and the last phase *mālie* (relevance of worthiness of the research) and *māfana* (application and transformation) were also added to the KRF. To date, KRF continues to provide emerging academics within the region with an Indigenous approach that is relevant to understanding the educational concerns of families within schooling.

Aue Te Ava (2011), an academic of Cook Island descent, building on the idea of culturally responsive pedagogy, argued that successful teachers of Cook Island students tap into knowledge related to students' cultural values, beliefs, and knowledge. The successful education of Cook Island students supports the "whole person" (Te Ava, Airini & Rubie-Davies, 2011, p. 125), in terms of the individual's social, cultural, emotional, and spiritual wellbeing. Te Ava (2011) developed a culturally responsive framework for the teaching and learning of Cook Island secondary school students in physical education. To support culturally responsive teaching practices in the classroom, the Cook Island concept of *tivaevae* was used as a model for teaching that was based on *te reo Māori Kuki Airani* (Cook Islands Maori language), *peu ui tupuna* (cultural traditions), *peu inangaro* (cultural beliefs), *tu inangaro* (relationships), *peu puapinga* (cultural values), *akaputuputu taokotai* (collaboration), *peu angaanga* (cultural activity) and *peu oire tangata* (cultural community). Despite the *tivaevae* framework having the capability to capture and understand the value and essence of Cook Island culture in the learning and teaching of Cook Island students, more needs to be known about how to enable teachers to make meaning and understanding of curriculum in the classroom (Te Ava et al., 2011, p. 125).

Fuaialii Tagataese Tupu Tuia (2013), a Samoan academic and advocate for gender rights, claims that Local and Indigenous Samoan knowledges is valid and appropriate for teacher education practices in the Samoan education system. Her study utilized the *Talanoa* and *Nofo* methodologies that are linked to the "oral tradition of Samoan culture in relation to *talanoa* (conversation) and *nofo* (sitting)" (Tuia, 2013, p. 88). Tuia's study (2013) concluded that, "while there are no easy answers, an attempt to incorporate traditional values alongside global values would warrant a change in teacher education programs" (p. iv). The implication of using a Samoan cultural framework to theorize Samoan values associated with teacher education practices, and to research local teacher educators, by a local researcher and teacher educator herself, has validated the significant role that local and indigenous academics have on the "conservation and sustainability of Samoan values in education" (Tuia, 2013, p. 88).

To understand the educational experiences of Tongan students within schooling, Timote Vaioleti's (2011) *Talanoa* framework was used as an approach to capture and articulate students' lived experiences. Many local researchers have drawn from Vaioleti's (2006, 2011, 2013) *Talanoa* approach to research as a way of understanding the lived realities of Oceanic people within the region. Nabobo-Baba (2008) established the *Vanua Research Methodology (VRM)*, a Fijian approach grounded in indigenous "languages, knowledge protocols, philosophies and principles" (p. 141). The philosophy behind *Vanua* framing, as described by Nabobo-Baba (2008), is related to the "interconnectedness of [Fijian] people to their land, environment, cultures, relationships, spirit world, beliefs, knowledge systems, values, and God(s)" (p. 143). The *Vanua* is pivotal to the Fijian's identity and is the heart of his/her existence, central to the essence of being Fijian (Nabobo-Baba, 2008, p. 143).

Vā/va is a Local and Indigenous concept and theory associated with space in-between. *Vā/va* is a "valued concept in Tongan and other Polynesian ethnic groups which are often diverse based on language, heritage, and cultural norms and traditions" (Fa'avae, 2018, p. 60). Although Western notions of "space" are sometimes framed in relation to the space between physical objects, for Indigenous scholars the use of *vā/va* denotes space that is sometimes unseen—that exists in the mind and heart (Iosefo, 2016; Ka'ili, 2005). Tamasailau Sualii-Sauni (2017), a Samoan scholar and educator, posits the *va* as a central organising principle in many Pasifika/Pacific cultures. *Va* is also recommended in the same way by other writers from Oceania (Ka'ili, 2005; Lilomaiava-Doktor, 2009; Sanga & Reynolds, 2017). According to Misatauveve Melani Anae (2016), who is of Samoa descent, the practice of *teu le va* "focuses on secular and sacred commitments, guiding reciprocal acting in and respect for relational spaces" (p. 117). In terms of relational space, the concept *vā* relates to the maintaining of relational connections/relationships with other people. As part of my role as a fellow at IOE, whose primary purpose is to provide educational service and support through research and development to the 12 PINs that USP serves, the *vā* and the enactment of *tauhi vā* is encompassing of a deep sense of duty and responsibility. IOE's presence in educational research projects in Oceania is largely due to the philosophy associated with maintaining strong *vā* (relational connections) with colleagues from other SINs. The organization's previous directors as well as the current director take pride in strengthening its collaboration with educational leaders and ministries in the 12 SINs.

Although "collaboration" is a key intention expected in funded project and development work in the region, it is often driven from the understanding of the funding organization. This is mainly to ensure they meet their outcomes and project outputs within a particular

timeframe. Very few funders think beyond the research project; for instance, what happens when the project ends? and, how can they help support local education ministries and communities once the project funding ends? With these questions in mind, the idea and practice of collaboration is more than just establishing and maintaining a professional and efficient working relationship. When using *vā* to understand collaboration, the practice of relational connection becomes sacred and ongoing. For IOE, this means that when a particular project is completed within a SIN, communication continues with the local ministries as well as the communities to ensure that they are supported appropriately. As an organization developed to serve SINs, maintaining *vā* is a sacred obligation for IOE.

IOE'S ROLE: TO PRIVILEGE LOCAL AND INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE AND STRENGTHEN EDUCATION SYSTEMS

One of the culturally affirming spaces recognized within Oceania's local academics and researchers is linked to the RPEIPP movement. RPEIPP was established in the early 21st Century based on the need to "ensure indigenous and Pacific peoples increased ownership of the processes of education as well as to re-examine curriculum processes" (Nabobo-Baba, 2012, p. 83). It was developed by Indigenous and Local scholars as a deliberate move away from the deficit framing of education by global donor organizations, and to "rethink education from Pacific perspectives and world views to complement those promoted by formal education", which are often "irrelevant and inappropriate for Pacific contexts and peoples" (Taufe'ulungaki, 2014, p. 2).

IOE's responsibilities are driven by the RPEIPP movement; for instance, all regional research partnerships that involve IOE and other organizations, such as international donor agencies or universities/institutions from abroad, are governed by the RPEIPP linked to "increased achievement of self-sufficiency in terms of human development capacity, funding and the successful indigenising of education in the [region]" (Sanga, 2011, p. 18, cited in Nabobo-Baba, 2012, p. 83). In my view, as the newest recruit to the institution, one of IOE's roles is based on highlighting the strengths of local education systems. Taking on an appreciative inquiry approach that focuses on strengths within local contexts as opposed to adopting a deficit view of education systems, IOE has utilized its services, which includes education research tools that have been contextualized.

Any academic or researcher involved in research with Oceanic people is required to have full understanding of Pacific knowledge and an awareness of Pacific cultures (Taufe'ulungaki, 2003; Thaman, 2008). When I first started at IOE in 2016, the first research assignment given to me as a research fellow was a United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) funded project which sought to understand school-related gender-based violence in Tongan schooling. As a well-known and respected global organisation, UNESCO is present in all major regions around the world. In the past, not all research partnerships/collaboration with donor organisations were beneficial for IOE (Taufe'ulungaki, 2014). In fact, most were driven by the donor organization's own agenda that often undermined and undervalued Local and Indigenous knowledges. Although the UNESCO project officer had proposed a focus group interview that was based on Western principles of conduct and engagement as one method of data collection, we opted to use focus group *talanoa* instead. Focus group *talanoa* was developed by Mo'ale 'Otunuku (2011) as a method underpinned by Tongan cultural

protocols, conduct, and engagement. IOE's adoption of a local and contextualized research approach through "focus group *talanoa*" was our way of strengthening methods that were underpinned by cultural values and knowledge.

As articulated by 'Otunuku (2011), focus group *talanoa* was both a relevant and appropriate method of gathering spoken data from three groups: Tongan parents, teachers of Tongan students, and Tongan students linked to their perceptions of educational success and achievement. Two aspects of the focus group *talanoa* that 'Otunuku (2011) highlighted as being significant in the implementation were linked to the "absence of a time-frame, and deviation from the focus" (p. 46). Despite the allocated time prescribed by focus group literature, 'Otunuku (2011) found that it was not always appropriate to have a fixed time attached to the discussions. He spent a lot of the time earlier on during the group session to make *talanoa* and make connections with the participants via their "family . . . school mates, acquaintances" ('Otunuku, 2011, p. 46). Unlike the traditional focus group method underpinned by Western principles and language, focus group *talanoa* is governed by Tongan language and Tongan cultural ways of engagement ('Otunuku, 2010). Establishing and maintaining the *vā/va* through strong relational ties and connections is a necessary engagement and should take place prior to asking participants the semi-structured questions.

The Improve Quality Basic Education (IQBE) project, a funded project by the Asia Development Bank (ADB), is a result of the strong network established and maintained by former IOE directors with key educational leaders in the RMI. The education system in the RMI very much reflects the system in the US. The IQBE project requested IOE's delivery of our Graduate Certificate in School Leadership (GCSL) program, which is also an accredited USP qualification. Prior to the delivery of the courses within the GCSL program, and utilizing the Design-Based Research (DBR) approach (Reimann, 2011), the IOE team was permitted to gather some initial pre-profiling data about education and the education system in the RMI that would be used to contextualize the GCSL courses. An initial scoping of the context required the team to speak with officials from the RMI public school system, elementary school principals and teachers, as well as community leaders. Key questions asked in the gathering of data were: "What are the Marshallese concepts of school leadership?", and "What does school leadership in the RMI look like?" Although there are outcomes that IOE is required to complete at certain stages of the project, my responsibility, like that of IOE, is to ensure that Local and Indigenous knowledges in the RMI is conceptualized and utilized in the delivery of our GCSL courses. For instance, a scan for RMI context-specific literature associated with school leadership and general education was carried out and incorporated in the re-design of the courses. One evidence of this was the use of the Marshallese concept *bwebwenato* which is a "well-known form of orality" (Jetnil-Kijiner, 2014, p. 38), or oral tradition, in the initial GCSL course to provide opportunities for school principals to "talk, [have a] conversation, [and engage in] story[telling]" (Jetnil-Kijiner, 2014, p. 38).

Despite the claim that Local researchers often have specific contextual understanding of the educational challenges and are, therefore, able to appropriately serve our local people and communities, this does not necessarily imply that those of us at IOE are the most appropriate to serve the people in SINs such as Kiribati, Samoa, or RMI. The limitation of this paper is that the reflections and views presented are specific to one person who is predominantly of Tongan descent and was educated in New Zealand. I highly recommend that other local researchers from other Pacific groups who position themselves with the

dual binary as an "insider/outsider" share their experiences within their own contexts so that others—within and outside of the region—can learn from them.

An outcome of the RPEIPP movement is the development of the *Vaka Pasifiki* Education Conference (VPEC), a space where Local and Indigenous knowledges and research practices are privileged and strengthened. IOE's role is to coordinate VPEC. The early years of the RPEIPP were focused primarily on rethinking Pacific education by and for local people. Over time, the focus of the RPEIPP movement shifted towards implementation of the rethinking activities through research projects. VPEC is the space where Local and Indigenous educators, academics, and researchers are encouraged to share and implement the Local and Indigenous concepts, frameworks, and methodologies within research. Through *tauhi vā/ teu le va*, the relational connections and sacred commitments by key elders and academics to each other and their respective SINs continues to fuel the RPEIPP movement.

For IOE, strengthening its collaboration with other institutions in the SINs is prioritized. This year, to support national institutions, a "terms of reference" was established between IOE and the National University of Samoa (NUS) Faculty of Education as a way to strengthen research technical skills and analysis. Post VPEC 2018, the collaborative networking with Pacific and non-Pacific researchers and academics from New Zealand universities has increased. Under the broad umbrella of RPEIPP, the sharing, reflection, and critical discussion of Indigenous research methodologies and methods to capture cross-cultural understandings have heightened networking activities between institutions and this has resulted in groups visiting IOE at the USP Tonga campus for further collaboration.

CONCLUSION

Researching and theorizing the Local has been a past imposition as a result of colonial rule and colonization in Oceania. Specifically, such research tasks carried out on local people have predominantly been carried out by those outside of the local context, thus often perpetuating deficit views of local people (Smith, 1999). In the postcolonial era, local and indigenous educators and researchers have taken up the responsibility of researching and theorizing the Local from a strengths-based view linked to privileging Local and Indigenous knowledges and research. There is a growing number of local researchers who use Indigenous research methodologies and frameworks to capture and understand the lived realities of people in Oceania. When uniquely positioned in an organization like USP and IOE, whose primary role is to support and strengthen local education systems, the criticality lies in our engagement with global/international organizations. Re-orienting engagement with donor organizations, such as UNESCO and ADB, to centre Indigenous epistemologies, knowledge, and ways of being through the collaborative projects have been challenging yet useful at the same time. Our responsibility is to not only engage with donor organisations but to mediate their expectations and the community's expectations. The complex needs and complex times for locals in relation to improving education systems is exacerbated when what is brought in by external agencies do not always fit with what local people need. As an insider/outsider researcher, my role as a fellow at IOE is to support and strengthen existing practices that privilege Local and Indigenous knowledges and research.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Cross-border education for pupils of kindergartens and schools: The case of Hong Kong

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Cross-border education is defined as the movement of people, knowledge, programs, providers, and curriculums across national or regional jurisdictional borders. Each year, millions of students access better education by crossing their national borders from less developed or newly-industrialized countries to Western, industrialised countries. Most are tertiary education students but the numbers engaged in secondary, primary, and pre-school education are also significant.

Under the implementation of "one country two systems" in Hong Kong after the transition of sovereignty from Britain to China in 1997, and a decision of a case in The Court of Final Appeal of Hong Kong in 2011, babies born in Hong Kong to mainland Chinese parents are entitled to the right of abode in Hong Kong. Since then, tens of thousands of such births have occurred. More than 20,000 cross-border students travel from China to attend public schools in Hong Kong every day. This paper explores equality issues faced by these students. The paper evaluates the results of various stakeholders working together to solve important issues; for example, dedicated school zones, immigration clearance services, setting up Hong Kong classes in Chinese schools, and language, communication, and cultural support. The paper argues that inequality is prevalent.

Keywords: Cross-border education; educational equality; school education

INTRODUCTION

International and cross-border student mobility is not a new phenomenon. Tens of thousands of students cross their national borders to other countries or administrative regions for their education. These students migrate between two cultures, two languages, and two nations or regions every day, straining the resources of public-school districts. These students can be found crossing the Mexico-US border, the Malaysia-Singapore border, the Mongolia-China border and the China-Hong Kong border (de la Piedra & Araujo, 2012; Leung, 2012).

Each day, 28,000 Hong Kong-born students living in mainland China cross the Shenzhen (China)-Hong Kong border, one of the busiest borders in the world, to attend school or pre-school. This number has increased 120% in the last few years and is projected to continue to rise in coming years. The issues of cross-border/cross-boundary students

(CBS) are complex and include: dedicated school zones; CBS immigration clearance services; CBS transportation; CBS safety issues on roads; setting up Hong Kong classes in Chinese schools; language, communication, and cultural support; and family support services. Policy makers and various stakeholders have expended considerable effort to address the issues in the last ten years; some issues have been eliminated, some remain, and some new ones have arisen.

This paper discusses the issues. It begins by discussing the concept of "cross-border" education, then introduces Knight's framework, which is adopted for use in a study of the issues reported in this paper. The methodology is discussed before the impact of CBS on various stakeholders is examined and possible solutions for the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) government proposed. Finally, the key points of the argument are summarized with concluding remarks.

"CROSS-BORDER" EDUCATION

Scholars use terms such as "transnational", "cross-border", "offshore", and "borderless" education interchangeably to describe the concept of education across borders (Knight, 2006). I will limit myself to the term cross-border education, meaning it to refer to the movement of students, programs, providers, curriculums, projects, research, and services in the education sector across national jurisdictional boundaries (Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) & World Bank, 2007). Knight (2006) describes cross-border education as a complex issue and emphasises its historical processes. In doing so, she develops a framework based on "what moves" and "under what conditions" to conceptualize cross-border education. In the context of globalization, it is interesting to examine the processes of why, how, and where education moves across borders (Knight, 2006). In this article, I first briefly address the historical roots of cross-border education and illustrate the relationship between globalization, internationalization, and cross-border education. Then I trace out—as Knight frames— "what moves" under "what conditions" from one country to another so as to conceptualize cross-border education.

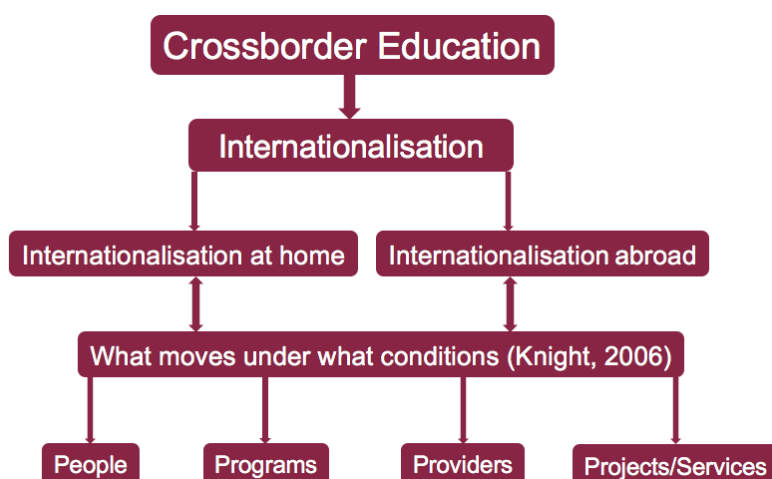Figure 1 summarizes a conceptualization of cross-border education.

Figure 1: A conceptualisation of cross-border education

Industrialization helped to move education from the elite to the masses and then to universal access by the masses in the Western world (Altbach, Reisberg, & Rummbley, 2010). Globalization has then added an international dimension to education (Knight, 2006). Post World War II, the forces of globalization have facilitated an increase in student enrolments worldwide (Altbach et al., 2010), with a trend towards the internationalization of education occurring especially since the mid-1980s due to global economic forces; that is, as Knight (2005) states, the knowledge society and market economy are increasing the demand for tertiary and continuing education. This is leading to increased cross-border education provisions involving new types of education providers, new modes of delivery, new programs and qualifications, new partnerships, and new affiliation modes. For example, the HKSAR Government and Chinese local governments work together to provide better arrangements for the CBS, such as setting up Hong Kong (HK)-based curriculum classes in Chinese schools in mainland China. In effect, a mutual relationship has developed between globalization and internationalization: internationalization has shaped the notion of globalization on the one hand and has been an agent of globalization on the other hand (Knight, 2006).

Internationalization of education refers to "the multiple activities, programs, and services that fall within international studies, international educational exchange, and technical cooperation" (Arum & van de Water, 1992, p. 202). Internationalization is generally defined in two ways: "internationalization at home" and "internationalization abroad". "Internationalization at home" consists of strategies and techniques designed to incorporate an international dimension in local campus experiences; "internationalization abroad" refers to sending students to study abroad, establishing overseas branches of a university or developing collaborative programs (Altbach et al., 2010). The approach of internationalization of education, then, embraces the notion of cross-border education, which can be conceptualized as a subset of educational internationalization (Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development [OECD] & World Bank, 2007).

Knight (2006, p. 358) proposes four categories: people, programs, providers, and projects/services, to classify "who/what" moves across borders. The first category, people, refers to the movements of students, professors, scholars and experts from one country to another. Students move across borders to attain a degree or participate in a study abroad program, undertake fieldwork, a course or an internship, or enrol in a semester- or year-long program. These movements are self-funded, home country fellowships or host country awards, exchange agreements, and private sources. The global flow of academics, scholars and expertise from low salary and/or limited research resources countries to high salary and/or rich research resources countries has increased because of cross-border education. The academic talent from developing countries is mostly moving to North America, western Europe, and Australasia because these regions offer better salaries and work environments (Altbach et al., 2010).

Alongside the physical movement of students, academics, and expertise from one country to another, cross-border education has expanded with the increased mobility of educational programs and institutions (Altbach et al., 2010). In the last decade, the numbers of international programs, which Knight identifies as the second category, have also increased. These programs can be delivered face-to-face, by distance mode, or both ways (Knight, 2006). Often, collaborative programs are developed between different, reputable universities.

The third category, providers, speaks to the physical or virtual movements of the educational providers or institutions across borders (Knight, 2006). Over the years, some universities have set up fully fledged university campuses in other countries, in addition to, and in partnership with, their existing universities. For example, New York University established its "sister" university in Abu Dhabi (Altbach et al., 2010, p. 25). Many universities are recruiting international faculties and international students, and are incorporating international and contemporary perspectives in their curriculums. By these means, higher education is becoming a part of international business to earn foreign revenue for the host countries (Universities Australia, 2016).

The fourth category, projects/services, deals with the movement of a wide range of education-related projects and services across borders. These activities include multifaceted initiatives, such as curriculum development, research and benchmarking, technical assistance, e-learning, and professional and capacity building programs. Often, the projects and services are initiated as development aids by the government, educational institutions and international organizations (Knight, 2006).

As stated in the introduction above, I adopt Knight's (2005) framework of cross-border education in this paper. Knight's model recognizes the processes of cross-border education on a global scale to identify what moves under what conditions in the education sector across borders. More importantly, her framework acknowledges that global economic forces have been leading the internationalization of education. Such global economic forces contribute to the increased mobility of students and faculty, programs, institutions and projects across borders. Utilizing this framework, I examine the processes of cross-border education, including why and how education moves, between China and HK.

METHODOLOGY

In this paper, I use a mixed method design, combining quantitative and qualitative methods to derive results. That is, results are triangulated and assessed for convergence (O'Toole & Beckett, 2010). The qualitative component of my study involved a case study of young students from China attending public schools in HK, which describes as a particular facet of cross-border education. According to Merriam (1988, p. 16) a "case study can be defined as an intensive, holistic description and analysis of a single entity, phenomenon, or social unit. Case studies are particularistic, descriptive and heuristic and rely heavily on inductive reasoning in handling multiple data sources". A case study is a holistic view of a particular event in context and provides a way to take important personal, social, and cultural phenomena into account (Johnson, 1993).

The quantitative components of my study involved the collection and analysis of statistical data from government sources and other documents. In social research, documentary research techniques can be used to help categorize, investigate, interpret, and identify the limitations of physical sources (Payne & Payne, 2004). This method is essentially concerned with the problems of selection and evaluation of evidence (Bell, 2005). It is a supplement to conventional social surveys, in-depth interviews or participant observation, but it is seldom the main or principal research method (Mogalakwe, 2006).

Specifically, I analysed a data published in *The Legislative Council, Hong Kong Special Administrative Region* (HKSAR) (2013–2017) and *Hong Kong Monthly Digest of Statistics* (2013–2017), all published by the Census and Statistics Department, HKSAR.

The data included numbers of babies born to mainland China mothers in HK between 2001 and 2012, the numbers of cross-border students between 2004 and 2016, as well as the annual change of cross-border students in percentage between 2004 and 2016. These data provide information on the scope of educational provisions in public schools in HK for this group of students. Results from an analysis of these data is summarized in Figures 2, 3, and 4. Other government documents were analysed to gain insights into the cross-border education of young children in Hong Kong in the recent past to check the reliability of evidence gathered from the statistical data, including Legislative Council and court case documents (Johnson, 1984), all collected from government websites. In developing a model for analysis, I recorded answers to a series of questions formulated by Scott (1990).

HONG KONG CONTEXT

Over the last 150 years, HK developed from a little-known farming and fishing village into a world-leading finance centre, and spectacular, cosmopolitan metropolis (Tsang, 2007). HK's economy and education developed rapidly in response to the city's growth.[1] Hong Kong is now one of top performing economies in OECD's Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) (OECD, 2003, 2010). Since the 1950s, many Chinese families migrated to HK to find better life opportunities and education for their children. In 1997, the sovereignty of HK was returned to China after 150 years of British administration. The issue of cross-border students has subsequently become more prevalent.

A case in The Court of Final Appeal of Hong Kong in 2001 (*Director of Immigration v Master Chong Fung Yuen*)[2] confirmed that Chinese citizens born in HK enjoy the right to live there regardless of the HK immigration status of their parents (The Court of Final Appeal of Hong Kong, 2001). In other words, babies born in HK to mainland Chinese women are entitled to the right to live in HK. A large number of pregnant mainland Chinese women travelled to HK to give birth there and to secure their children's right of residence. The number of children, like Master Chong Fung Yuen, who were born in HK increased more than fivefold from 7,810 (16.2% of total live births) in 2001 to 43,982 (46.1% of total live births) in 2011 (LegCo, 2013a) (see Figure 2).

Unsurprisingly, the rise in demand for medical services in HK caused a lot of problems, including that local pregnant women could not secure hospital beds to deliver their babies. Since 2011, when 43,982 births to non-local women were recorded, the HK Government

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[1] For more details about Hong Kong 's education system refer to Murad, 2002.

[2] Master Chong Fung Yuen's parents are both Chinese citizens who were married in mainland China. He is a Chinese citizen born in HK on 29 September 1997 (after the establishment of the Hong Kong Special Administration Region (HKSAR) on 1 July 1997) when his parents came to HK on a tourist visa (namely a two-way permit) on a visit. His parents were then lawfully in HK. But neither his father nor his mother (i) was settled in HK or (ii) had the right of live in HK at the time of his birth or subsequently. His parents were given extensions of stay until 24 November 1997. Thereafter, they became overstayers. They were located by authorities and returned to the mainland. Chong has been given extensions of stay pending the resolution of proceedings. Chong claimed to be a permanent resident of the HKSAR, and to have the right to live there pursuant to BL 24(2)(1), which, when considered in the light of its context and purpose, clearly states that Chinese citizens born in HK before or after 1 July 1997 have the status of permanent residents. The meaning is not ambiguous. Detailed case information can be found at: http://www.doj.gov.hk/eng/public/basiclaw/basic2-22.pdf

placed restrictions on the number of non-local pregnant women who could give birth in HK, and the number declined to 33,199 in 2012. From 2013, non-local pregnant women giving birth in HK has been forbidden (LegCo, 2013a). Therefore, the demand for public sector, primary one, school places by CBS is expected to decline gradually. The Education Department of HKSAR expects that the CBS problems will be relieved after the academic year of 2017/18.
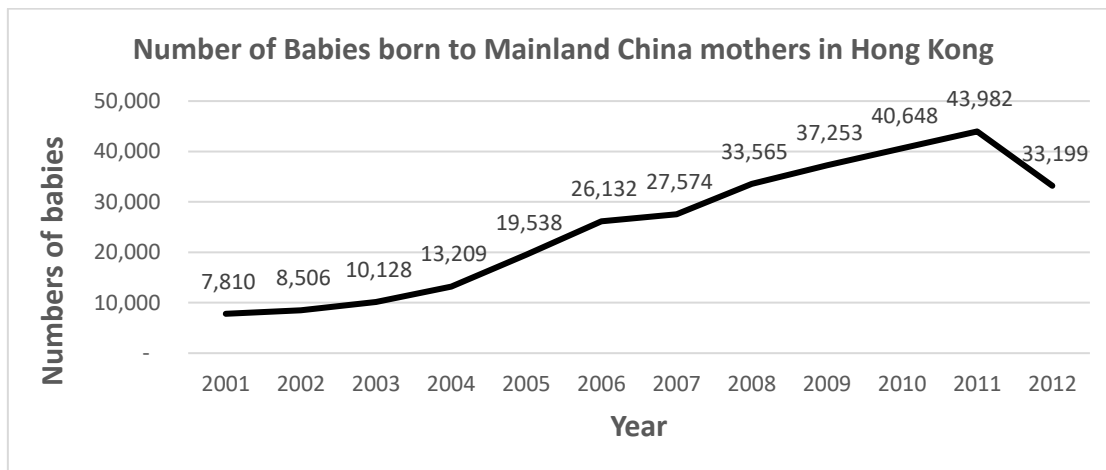

Figure 2: The number of babies born to mainland Chinese mothers in Hong Kong between 2001 and 2012
Source: LegCo (2013a)

The babies born to non-local parents have grown up and now study in HK but live in Shenzhen, mainland China. They cross at the six border control points (Lo Wu, Lok Ma Chau, Lok Ma Chau Spur Line, Man Kam To, Sha Tau Kok, and Shenzhen Bay) each school day to attend HK schools, which are mostly located in the North District of HK, particularly Taipo, Yuen Long and Tuen Mun Districts. Figure 3 shows the number of CBS in three categories (kindergarten, primary, and secondary students) between 2004/05 and 2012/13. During these periods, the total number of students grew from 3,803 in 2004/05 to 28,106 in 2015/16. The kindergarten, primary students, and secondary students increased 14.2 times, 5.6 times and 6.5 times respectively.
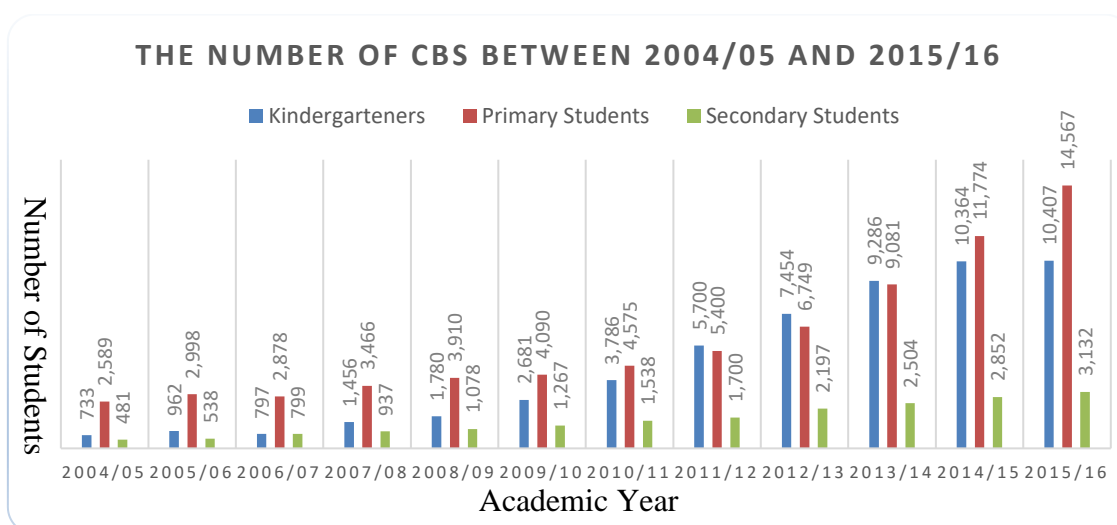

Figure 3: The number of cross-border students between 2004/05 and 2015/16
Source: (LegCo, 2016b; Leung, 2012; K. Y. Li, 2013). NB: The academic year is from September to July.

More importantly, the percentage annual growth of student numbers between 2005/06 and 2015/16 is close to an average of 20% (see Figure 4). All three sectors (kindergarten, primary and secondary) show considerable growth. However, from 2011/12 the annual growth began to decline.
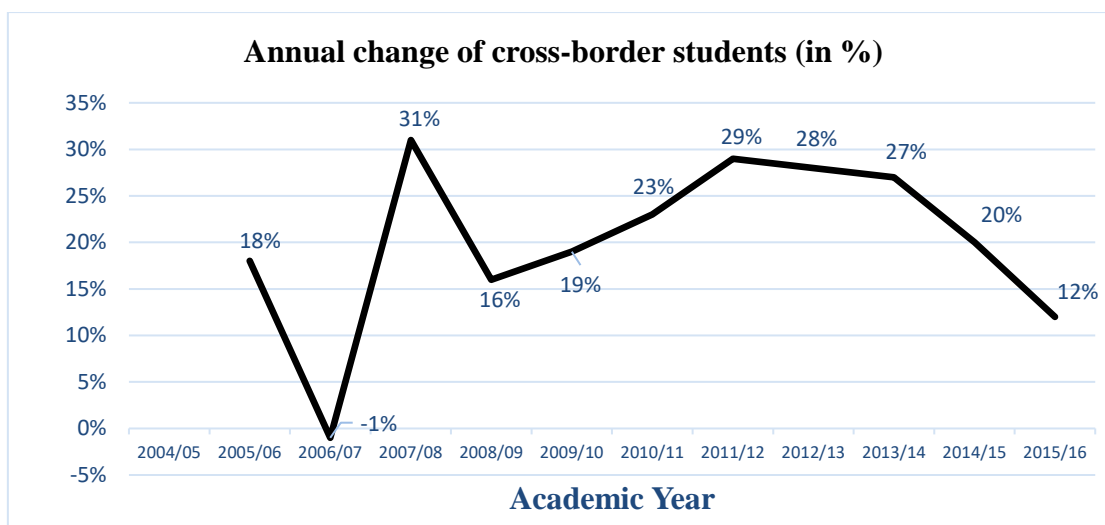

Figure 4: The annual change of the cross-border students between 2004/05 and 2015/16
Source: (Leung, 2012; K. Y. Li, 2013). NB: academic year is from September to July the following year.

Most CBS parents are keen to send their children back to HK to enjoy 12 years of free education: three years early childhood education, six years primary education, and three years of junior secondary education. They believe their children will benefit on many fronts from receiving an education that cannot be provided in China, including: open and equitable teacher-student relations; an English-language learning environment; small class sizes; and an international learning perspective (Yuen, 2017). The strong push factor for these parents is that the Chinese government does not provide public education to these CBS, who are without *Hukou*. *Hukou* is a household registration system at the town or city level in China. Originally, this system was one of the major tools of social control employed by the state to limit population mobility within China (Chan & Zhang, 1999). Therefore, *Hukou* is an important possession nowadays that recognizes people's identity and enables access to local benefits. Without *Hukou*, CBS parents are required to pay the expensive tuition fees of private schools in China.

IMPACTS, SOLUTIONS AND SUPPORT SERVICES

Accommodating these 28,000 CBS in HK is not an easy task: no individual school district in HK can hope to accommodate all these students. The daily impact on immigrant clearance services, transportation, and travel safety are also major concerns.

Dedicated school zones

The HK Education Bureau (EDB) anticipates the demand for public sector, primary one (P1), school places will surge temporarily to reach its peak in the 2018/19 school year. To alleviate the problem of tight supply of primary one school places in the North District as a result of increasing cross-border students, the EDB announced a new arrangement of Central Allocation under the Primary One Admission system. From 2014/15 onwards, applicants residing on the mainland are provided with an additional "Choice of Schools List for Central Allocation" for selection by CBS (LegCo, 2015). The list consists of all

schools in the eight school districts, including Tuen Mun West, Tuen Mun East, Tin Shui Wai, Yuen Long East, Sheung Shui, Fanling, Sha Tau Kok and Tai Po. Individual schools in these other districts are ready and willing to support CBS.

The new arrangements are similar to providing a "dedicated school zone" for the CBS with a view to diverting them to other districts, hence alleviating the excessive demand for P1 school places in districts close to the HK-Shenzhen border, such as the North District. It also helps meet the demand from local children while upholding the rights of cross-boundary applicant children.

CBS parents aim to send their children to the school zone which is closest to the HK-Shenzhen border to save transportation time and energy. Therefore, the Northern District School Zone is the first preference. Constructing many new schools to meet this enormous demand is a long-term solution—and direct competition with local parents is unavoidable. Many local parents are unable to secure places for their children in their local schools in the Northern District. It is inconvenient for them to send their children to schools in other districts, so they are reluctant to do so. It is also against government policy to allow the children to stay at their neighbouring schools. HK parents feel angry and so they protest because they are forced to queue for days and nights outside schools to collect the application forms (Chan & Kao, 2013). One angry mother quit her job to concentrate on getting a place for her son. She had slept overnight at two kindergartens. She expressed her frustration, saying "When I was pregnant, I had to compete with the mainlanders for a hospital bed. Then it was baby powder. Now, it's school places. This is so unfair to local parents" (Siu, 2013, para 4). HK parents set up a mothers' group (named *Sheung Shui – Finling Mama* group) to make their complaints heard about long queues outside kindergartens.

The CBS will face long travel times and safety issues when they are relocated to the districts which are far from the border. These issues will be discussed in the next section. The EDB reminds and encourages the parents concerned to choose suitable schools which are near to their residence for their children, especially those of tender age at kindergarten and primary school levels. If their children have to cross the border to attend schools in HK, they should personally accompany their children on the way to and from school or arrange for other adults to do so. If such an arrangement cannot be made, they should choose a suitable mode of transport, such as cross-border school coaches or other public transport services.

Tu (2013) reports the results of a survey by the International Social Service Hong Kong Branch in August, noting that 70% of CBS parents did not agree with the dedicated school zone initiative. The parents argued that current CBS already get up very early to travel an hour to their schools. Tiredness impacts on the effectiveness of their study. If future CBS are allocated to the school zones further from the border, parents claim it would be impossible for them because they would spend three or four hours daily travelling between home and school. Some parents indicated that they would not let their children study in a HK school if they are allocated to these school zones.

CBS immigration clearance services

Clearly, travelling 1.5 to 2 hours each way to school and back to home is tiring for CBS, especially kindergarten and primary school students. Without providing speedy and safe immigration clearance, CBS are competing with more than half a million other HK citizens and visitors who pass through the six Boundary Control Points (BCP) each day.

In order to cope with the increasing demand for immigration services for CBS, the Immigration Department makes available designated CBS counters at BCP during CBS peak hours before and after school to expedite the processing of CBS immigration clearance (The Immigration Department HKSAR, 2014). The Immigration Department, the Customs and Excise Department and the Department of Health have also put in place various facilitating measures for CBS, which include:

(1) Providing CBS e-Channel services at the Control Points;
(2) Implementing a "Simplified Clearance Procedure" to shorten the time for immigration clearance for CBS; and
(3) Providing "On-board Clearance" services for CBS taking cross-border school coaches under special quotas at the Control Points where officers from these three departments will provide clearance services for CBS on board such coaches.

CBS transportation

In 2008, the HK Government, the Guangdong Provincial Government, and the Shenzhen Municipal Government signed an agreement to issue special quotas for cross-border school coaches to pick up CBS at the four BCP. All these governments review the demands for these special services annually. For instance, the special quotas for cross-boundary school coaches have been increased from 170 in the 2014/15 school year to 220 in the 2015/16 school year, representing an increase of about 30% (LegCo, 2016a).

Using public transportation to schools may cause lengthy travel times, especially in bad weather (Zhao, 2013a). In addition, HK school buses cannot pick up CBS at the border control points because of border control security policies. The implementation of cross-border school coach services may reduce this problem (LegCo, 2013c).

CBS safety issues on roads

When travelling without the company of their parents or teachers, CBS have been exposed to safety issues. Firstly, due to limited pick-up/drop-off points at some border control points, CBS may need to get on or off the cross-border school coaches in crowded areas. This exposes them to the dangers of traffic accidents and kidnap. In addition, CBS are used as smuggling tools. Customs officials intercepted 10 cases where CBS (especially primary students) were used to smuggle smart phones and expensive food ingredients into mainland China (Li, 2013; Wong, 2012).

To prevent the smugglers from exploiting students for cross-border smuggling, government departments, cross-border coach operators, schools, and parents work together to protect these students and educate them to abide by the laws. The Education Bureau (EDB) has formulated safety guidelines and points to note in which coach operators providing school bus services for CBS are required to remind escorts and parents/guardians not to instigate and exploit CBS to engage in smuggling activities. The guidelines also set out clearly the relevant ordinances, criminal liabilities, and reporting hotlines as a deterrent. The HK Customs and Excise Department has stepped up publicity, education and enforcement at BCPs, including setting up signage for clearance of CBS at customs halls and increasing spot checks on CBS and their escorts. When conducting a clearance, the officers often remind students to keep a watchful eye on their personal belongings in order to prevent smugglers from exploiting them for smuggling prohibited and controlled items (LegCo, 2014).

Setting up HK classes in Chinese schools

As already noted, it is more expensive to send children to private schools in Shenzhen than to public schools in HK because CBS do not have Hukou and, therefore, are not entitled to public education in local government schools in China (Wong, 2001). It is proposed that the HK Government should build and run some government schools in China (Takungpao, 2013). Under the principal of "one country two systems", the establishment of HK schools in Chinese territories would have involved high costs and complicated arrangements (Wong, 2001). However, this situation of creating HK classes with a HK curriculum in Shenzhen schools became possible after a series of negotiations between the two governments in 2010.

In 2013, the EDB and the Shenzhen EDB signed the "Co-operation Agreement on Operating Classes for Hong Kong Students in Shenzhen Schools" to admit CBS to form classes for HK students in the Chinese local school in Shenzhen (HKSAR, 2013). This arrangement provides more HK children residing in Shenzhen with the option of pursuing their studies in Shenzhen instead of travelling across the border for schooling (Zhao, 2017). The number of schools offering HK primary school curriculum to Hong Kong students residing in Shenzhen increased from nine in the 2014/15 school year to 11 in the 2015/16 school year. Eligible primary six students can join the HK Secondary School Places Allocation System and be allocated subsidized secondary one places in HK schools. It is a way to facilitate HK children to receive education on the mainland and to transit into the education system of HK as early as possible. However, when compared with the 28,000 CBS travelling to HK, the provision of spaces in these schools has a very limited effect. Therefore, other options need to be considered.

Some private schools, like Luohu School for Hong Kong Children and Shenzhen Oriental Hong Kong Children's School, are operated under a self-financing mode. The HK Government does not provide subsidies of any kind to them. Under the prevailing policy, government subsidies provided to schools are restricted to those within HK. The suggestion of buying places from such schools in Shenzhen involves the policy of welfare portability, which has far-reaching implications. Thorough and in-depth studies are required before this move can be made.

Language, communication, and cultural support

Language is another barrier for CBS and their parents. Language differences result in communication difficulty since many of the CBS are more fluent in Mandarin than Cantonese (the local language in Hong Kong). Thus, it is harder for them to connect with local students and teachers. They find English difficult and traditional Chinese writing hard to learn (Yuen, 2010). A large-scale survey conducted by the International Social Service Hong Kong Branch reports that "80 percent of respondents [Hong Kong teachers] perceived that it is more difficult to teach cross-border students, with more than half contending that the English proficiency of students is low. Another 42 percent of respondents complained that the parents of cross-border students could not give guidance in their children's studies" (Fan, 2012, para 2).

Also, because of the limited communication with schools and the cultural barrier between the two regions, CBS parents know very little about their children studying in Hong Kong, nor are they really familiar with HK itself (Yuen, 2010). Without full knowledge about the school system of HK, CBS parents play a passive role in their children's education in Hong Kong (Yuen, 2012). When added to their low English proficiency, many of these

parents cannot efficiently help with their children's homework. CBS parents who arrange private English tuition for their children face significant financial pressure.

More resources are required by school principals to cater for the needs of CBS, especially in language support and family issues (Zhao, 2013b). Currently, the schools can apply the School-Base Support Grant to support CBS learning, such as through the provision of supplementary English classes (Yuen, 2012). Hong Kong teachers have difficulty reaching the CBS parents to discuss their children's education because the parents live in China and cannot enter HK without a visa. The situation with CBS puts a massive workload and more pressure on teachers. In addition to their normal teaching duties, teachers would benefit from more professional development on cultural awareness and sensitivity concerning the circumstances of the CBS and their families.

Other family support services

For many reasons, HK teachers are unlikely to conduct home visits in order to understand the CBS living environment and family situations. One of the major reasons is the language barrier for teachers communicating with CBS and their parents whose mother tongue is Mandarin. Another reason is that the homes of CBS are scattered throughout the districts in Shenzhen and far away from schools. It may be that CBS have limited support from relatives and friends if the CBS families are from other provinces in China. This may cause psychological impacts for CBS (Law, 2007).

The HK Government could consider funding and encouraging more Non-Government Organisations (NGOs) and schools to introduce support programs to CBS families. For example, The Shenzhen Luohu Cross-border Students Service Centre was organized jointly by the International Social Service Hong Kong Branch and the Luohu District Women's Federation, partly funded by the Community Chest of Hong Kong. This service centre provides diversified and tailor-make programs for CBS and their parents. HK schools could expend more effort and attention on the CBS as well as their parents. One way might be for school meetings to be held in Shenzhen, rather than HK for the sake of the mainland mothers. Or more mainland schools could introduce the HK education system (Wong, 2001).

CONCLUSION

The growth of CBS has impacted a diverse range of stakeholders, including HK schools, HK parents and their children, and CBS parents and their children. However, different stakeholders have put considerable effort into tackling various CBS issues by implementing dedicated school zones, speedy and safe immigration clearance services, cross-border school coach services, language improvement programs, and family support services.

Since non-local pregnant women giving birth in HK have been disallowed from 2013, the demand for public sector, primary one school places by cross-border students is expected to gradually decline. The HK government expects the CBS problems will be relieved after the academic year of 2017/18. More research will need to be conducted to follow the trends. More importantly, education equality should be addressed with regard to the CBS students because they are HK citizens, although their parents are not. Consequently, additional support should be made available to them.

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Acknowledging the legitimacy of local practices: A study of communication challenges between Chinese and Australian university students

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English is an important medium for global communication but its use in different communities is inevitably shaped by their local languages and cultures. International education research shows that differences in English language practices could introduce difficulties and stress into intercultural communication between international and host students. This study examines how Chinese international students understand and deal with difficulties in communication with host students at an Australian university in relation to different English practices. Findings show that Chinese students tend to consider their own practices as less legitimate than those of Australians. Since intercultural communication is a process of negotiating shared meanings based on each other's "Local", linguistically and culturally, without acknowledgement of the legitimacy of their own local practices, Chinese students may find it difficult to utilize language and cultural resources to communicate with their Australian peers.

Keywords: English as a local practice; legitimate speaker; intercultural communication; international student

INTRODUCTION

Over half a million Chinese students travel abroad to study in countries like the US and Australia every year (Department of Education and Training, 2016; Ghazarian, 2014). Ideally, this should generate intercultural learning opportunities between them and students of the host country. However, almost unanimously, research shows that it is difficult for international students from China and other Asian countries to communicate with the locals (e.g., Henze & Zhu, 2012; Sovic, 2009; Spencer-Oatey & Xiong, 2006; Wakefield, 2014).

Among other factors, the language gap between native and non-native English speakers is commonly seen as a barrier that hinders communication. Not only do non-native speakers find unfamiliar acronyms, slang, and speed difficult (Sovic, 2009), many also find talking to native speakers a tiring process and a major source of stress (Wakefield, 2014; Woodrow, 2006; Wright & Schartner, 2013). Since it is unrealistic to expect non-native speakers to achieve the fluency of a native speaker in the duration of their academic sojourn, it is timely to find solutions to communication difficulties based on their own experiences that suit their own needs.

In 2010, Chen proposed the concept of "Asia as method" for an Asian imaginary anchoring point that allows local knowledge and experiences to be mobilized and transformed for studies that suit local needs. Education researchers Zhang, Chan, and Kenway (2015) advocate for "translation" and "negotiation" between Western theories and Asian education contexts, "foreign" cultures and "Local" learning traditions. In other words, the West is no longer seen as "universal"; instead, it is itself one kind of Local. This dialectic process enables studies to effectively address Local issues in Asia without losing their connection with the Local theories of the West. In this way, a more inclusive and contextualized synthesis is created. Communication between Chinese and Australian students could probably be seen as a mimic of this dialectic process. While English originated from the West, its spread around the world suggests that practices of English would inevitably be Localised according to each community's specific context.

Ting-Toomey and Chung (2012) define intercultural communication as "the symbolic exchange process whereby individuals from two (or more) different cultural communities attempt to negotiate shared meanings in an interactive situation within an embedded societal system" (p. 24). When people from two different Locals speak, they ought to negotiate and translate each other's Local to reach mutual understanding. However, is it always the case? The present study explores how Chinese students understand and deal with the Local as regards their own English and that of Australian students and how this, for some, might make talking to native speakers more stressful and difficult than it might otherwise be.

LITERATURE REVIEW

English as a local practice in intercultural communication

The ideologies of English as language have changed significantly among scholars and educators in the last few decades, manifested by the acknowledgment of local practices against the monolithic standard of "Western English". To challenge the dichotomy between native and non-native speakers, Kachru (1992) proposes the three circles model: the Inner Circle represents the traditional bases of English; the Outer Circle includes countries like India and Malaysia where English has been institutionalized and used in daily life; and English in the Expanding Circle is not institutionalized and is used primarily as a foreign language. Predominantly examining the Outer Circle, Kachru and other World Englishes (WE) scholars argue for the inclusivity and pluricentricity of English study and advocate for the recognition and acceptance of national varieties of English which emerge from people's daily lives in their local contexts (Bolton, 2006; Kirkpatrick, 2006).

Findings by WE from intranational practices in Outer Circle countries, however, are relatively inadequate for addressing the needs of the Expanding Circle; in addition, problems occur in cross-national communication where two or more local varieties are involved. Since the early 2000s, these two issues have been taken up by English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) researchers who study English practices among people with different first languages, including native and non-native English speakers (Dewey & Jenkins, 2010). ELF researchers, on the one hand, try to identify core phonological and lexico-grammatical features of regional communication to safeguard mutual intelligibilities and, on the other hand, they account for an egalitarian model of English and international norms which are not from native speakers but through negotiation of speakers with different local practices (Jenkins, 2006).

Simultaneously, the cultural aspect of Local in English has been studied. For instance, Sharifian (2012) argues that English is used in intercultural communication for people to express and communicate their unique cultural conceptualization of the world, and differences between these conceptualizations could impede communication. To deal with differences, intercultural speakers might negotiate a third space for flexible norms and practices (Canagarajah, 2006b), or use semantically transparent languages to avoid misunderstanding (Kecskes, 2007).

Intercultural communication conducted in English between people who have a different first language, then, inevitably includes the negotiation of their specific Local, linguistically and culturally. Pennycook (2012a) defines the use of English as local language practice as a process "that is constantly being remade from the semiotic resources available to speakers, who are always embedded in contexts and who are always interacting with other speakers" (p. 152). Arguably, the Local, here, refers to the Local in each speaker's English, as well as the context in which they are communicating. Instead of trying to meet a native-speaker's standard, a resourceful speaker who "[has] available language resources and is good at shifting between styles, discourses and genres" (Pennycook, 2012b, p. 99) may be better able to meet the challenge of dynamic Locals.

This conceptualization frames a balanced relationship between Self and Other as well as local features and mutual intelligibility in communication. To achieve this balance in practice, however, requires collaboration between speakers whose "locals are regarded as equally legitimate in the first place".

The legitimate Local(s) in intercultural communication

A well-known definition of "legitimate" comes from Bourdieu (1992), the meaning of which is considerably different from that often used in English studies. As summarized by Pennycook (2012b), legitimacy, according to Bourdieu, is a result of the misrecognition of power and is achieved by symbolic violence. To Bourdieu (1992), legitimate language practices are the practices of those who are dominant, while speakers lacking legitimate competence would be excluded or condemned to silence.

The term, legitimate speaker, in English studies, however, is likely to take its literal meaning of "people who have the right to speak" and link it with a sense of ownership and the recognition of local creativity in the social domain (Higgins, 2003; Jenkins, 2006; Kirkpatrick, 2006; Zheng, 2013). However, Norton (2018) argues that "what and who is considered 'legitimate' must be understood with respect to a given 'field' or social context that is often characterised by unequal struggles for meaning, access and power" , (para. 1). In other words, while the definition itself is innocent, the process of defining "what and who are legitimate" could be controlled by the dominant and, therefore, turns into the practice of symbolic violence.

Under the Standard English ideology, native-speakers are (mis)recognized as the sole legitimate speakers who control the authenticity and authority of English (Widdowson, 1994). Alongside the development of WE, Outer Circle speakers' legitimacy has been (rightly) acknowledged in their own context. The local variety of English passes through phases of not-recognized to co-existence to eventually recognized in the society (Kirkpatrick, 2014), at which time individuals see themselves as legitimate members with authority over the language (Higgins, 2003; Tokumoto & Shibata, 2011).

In ELF, as long as they are communicatively effective and appropriate to lingua franca use, first language (L1) related creativity and innovations of second language (L2) speakers that differ from native-speaker norms are entitled to linguistic legitimacy (Dewey & Jenkins, 2010), which grants legitimacy to practices in all three circles. In a debate with Yoo (2014) on whether the Expanding Circle could "own" English, Ren (2014) points out that the ownership of English rests with the people who use, adapt, and change it for their own purpose, which is not restricted to the Inner and Outer Circle. In short, every effective speaker is entitled to own English and their local adaptation of the language ought to be seen as legitimate. Yet, it is not clear if all these local practices are equally legitimate in intercultural communication between people from different circles. To put it another way, would dissimilarities be seen as differences rooted in each other's Local that require negotiation on the part of all parties involved, or does one side have a greater responsibility to accommodate the other?

Individuals from the Expanding Circle, for example, might not consider their own practices as equally legitimate to those of the Inner Circle. Firstly, their use of English in daily life is quite restricted compared to the other two circles (Kachru & Nelson, 2006a); therefore, they would normally not have the same level of proficiency (Ren, 2014) or, in the words of Pennycook (2012b), not have as many language resources. ELF advocates for the acknowledgement of legitimacy of "local creativity" instead of dismissing all such usage as error (Jenkins, 2006); but an objectively defined line between the two is difficult to draw. When differences occur, it may be difficult for Expanding Circle speakers to be confident they are demonstrating local creativity or exhibiting a problem caused by their lack of language resources. Moreover, the native-speaking model and its codified materials are widely spread in and out of the classroom but it is not the same for local varieties (Kachru, 1986; Kirkpatrick, 2006). As a result of this imbalanced exposure, English learners in the Expanding Circle tend to be prejudiced against their own practices, such as their accents (Tokumoto & Shibata, 2011) and expressions, again being reluctant to accept their local variety as legitimate (Wang & Gao, 2015).

The legitimacy of their practices faces more challenges when individuals from the Expanding Circle become students at universities in Inner Circle countries. Canagarajah (2006a) and Pennycook (2012b) argue for the need to see language as a social practice and to measure proficiency not in native-speaker terms but by one's ability to utilize language resources and communicative repertoire according to local conventions. Yet, the scenarios these authors refer to are likely to be native English speakers visiting Outer or Expanding Circle countries, in which case to emphasize the importance of local context helps encourage negotiation between them and non-native English speakers. For international students in Inner Circle countries, however, to emphasize the importance of local context is to emphasize native-speaker legitimacy, which would consequently further disadvantage their own practices. This might partly explain why international students often feel a lack of confidence when facing native speakers and find the conversation to be stressful and intimidating (Sawir, Marginson, Forbes-Mewett, Nyland, & Ramia, 2012; Spencer-Oatey & Xiong, 2006; Wakefield, 2014; Woodrow, 2006). To make the conversation less daunting, then, requires acknowledgement from both sides that international students are speakers as legitimate as their native peers.

Chinese students

Since the 1990s, English has been embraced across China and considered a vital element for success at both the individual and societal levels (Pan, 2015c). People believe that,

without efficient English, they would be denied opportunities in education and career development; English is also considered essential for the modernization and internationalization of China (Hu & Adamson, 2012; Pan, 2015b).

However, there are continuing concerns over China's English education. For instance, it is often regarded as examination-oriented, paying little attention to students' communicative competence (e.g., Fang, 2010). And it relies heavily on native-speaker norms—both linguistically and culturally. Although current policies show more awareness of the need to include cultural knowledge of home and other non-native countries in English education, the emphasis is still on English-speaking countries and policy seems to deliberately avoid acknowledging its local variety, "China English" (He & Li, 2009; Pan, 2015a). Classroom teaching and learning are dominated by American or British English and their cultures (Wen, 2012). While students prefer native-English accents and expressions (He & Li, 2009; Pan, 2015b; Ren, Chen, & Lin, 2016; Wang & Gao, 2015; Xu, Wang, & Case, 2010), they lament they do not get to use English to talk about their local experiences and culture since these are seldom part of the English textbook (Liu, Zhang, & May, 2015; Wang, 2010). As a result, they tend to construct their L2 ideal self around native-speaker norms rather than norms of competent ELF users who utilize Local creativities (Zheng, 2013).

In recent years, the acceptability of "China English" has increased since it is considered to be useful for communication and is a show of Chinese identity (Edwards, 2017; Wang & Gao, 2015). For example, students found Chinese sayings useful for describing their overseas learning experience (Liu, 2017). Many of the sayings are distinctively Chinese (Kachru & Nelson, 2006b) and can only be expressed in English via loan translation (He & Li, 2009). Many teachers and students believe there is a need to include more features of "China English" and Chinese culture in their English-language textbooks (Liu & Fang, 2017; Pan, 2015b). Nonetheless, preference for native-speaker English prevails and learning English remains one main reason for Chinese students studying overseas (Counsell, 2011; Zhang, Sun, & Hagedorn, 2013). As mentioned previously, however, when conversing with native English speakers, and not recognizing the Local in practices of others and their own, it can be difficult for Chinese students to maintain an equal status with a legitimate speaker.

When intercultural communication occurs in the Expanding Circle, the "English as a local practice" ideology reduces the dominance of native-speaker norms and grants legitimacy to the practices of local speakers in the local context. However, when communication happens in the Inner Circle, the dominance of the native norms combines with preference for the local context. This, then, requires Expanding Circle speakers to develop different strategies to maintain a balanced conversation. Based on Chinese international students' communication experiences with Australian students at an Australian university, this paper explores how students understand and deal with the linguistic and cultural Local of English in this Inner Circle context.

METHODS

This paper is part of a larger research project carried out by the authors on what hinders intercultural communication between Chinese and Australian students at an Australian university. The project uses a mixed-methods approach, which began with a quantitative component to enhance the generalizability and validity of the qualitative study by obtaining a more representative sample and providing a context for the qualitative data

(Hesse-Biber, Rodriguez, & Frost, 2016). Data were gathered via an online survey (n=124) and a series of focus groups (N=16).

A multiple-choice survey was administered online via the Qualtric platform. A link to the survey was sent to students through the newsletters of student associations. In the meantime, students on the two main campuses of the university were randomly invited to take part in the study. In total, 124 students completed the survey (49% Chinese, 51% Australian; 41% male, 58% female, 1% rather not say). From the online survey, nine Chinese (3 males, 6 females) and seven Australians (3 males, 4 females) were recruited to participate in focus groups. Of the five focus group discussions held, two were mixed Chinese and Australian participants and three were co-national groups of participants. Three (the 2 mixed and one co-national) were conducted in English while the other two co-national were in a mix of Chinese and English.

Data were drawn from both Chinese and Australian participants, but, since Chinese students are the main focus of this paper, the analysis here is mainly about the experiences and perceived difficulties of the former. For the survey, statistics from Chinese and those from Australian students were summarized respectively then juxtaposed in tables or charts. For focus groups, transcripts were analysed through thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) and recurring themes such as "rely on Australian norms" and "acknowledgement of local legitimacy" were identified. Eventually, it became clear that two different types of understanding and possession of Local in English linked closely to two different types of intercultural communication experiences. They are presented respectively in the next section after an overall analysis of differences and difficulties identified in Chinese-Australian communication.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The signs of Local: Differences and difficulties in intercultural communication

The majority of Chinese and Australian survey participants considered they were, at least, somewhat different in accents and choices of words when speaking English (see Tables 1 and 2). In focus group interviews, Chinese students said they had a recognizable non-native accent, were not familiar with Australian slang and had a rather limited vocabulary compared to Australians. Australian participants noticed differences in pronunciation and intonation, as well as the choice of filling words in a phrase and even keywords in a sentence. When it comes to cultural knowledge, the majority of both Chinese and Australians were aware their understanding of their own and each other's country could be different.

Table 1: Perceived differences in the use of English – Chinese students (n=61)

	No different	Slightly different	Somewhat different	Different	Very different
Our accents	3.3%	27.9%	36.1%	23.0%	9.8%
Our choices of words	3.3%	11.5%	39.3%	31.1%	14.8%
What we know about China	1.6%	14.8%	36.1%	37.7%	9.8%
What we know about Australia	1.6%	23.0%	47.5%	23.0%	4.9%

Table 2: Perceived differences in the use of English – Australian students (n=63)

	No different	Slightly different	Somewhat different	Different	Very different
Our accents	11.1%	15.9%	30.2%	28.6%	14.3%
Our choices of words	6.4%	30.2%	42.9%	17.5%	3.2%
What we know about China	6.4%	17.5%	17.5%	34.9%	23.8%
What we know about Australia	9.5%	36.5%	33.3%	14.3%	6.4%

Around 60% of Chinese survey participants reported that they were confident or very confident in English listening but only 43% said the same for their speaking. Despite their varied proficiency, the phrase "my English is not good" was mentioned by eight out of nine Chinese focus group participants. To them, one reason to talk to Australians is that it helps them improve their English, which would then benefit their study and future career.

A significant portion of participants encountered difficulties in intercultural communication. Around 40% of the Chinese survey participants found communication with Australians was likely to be difficult and stressful, and a similar percentage of Australians reported that conversation with Chinese was likely to be difficult and confusing. According to focus group participants, many problems stemmed from comprehension difficulties and a lack of things to talk about.

Comprehension issues were often clearly related to language differences. For instance, Peta (Australian, female) described an unsuccessful conversation with two Chinese students who asked for directions: "I just could not comprehend what that [key]word was, and they could not comprehend what the Australian way of saying it was". But differences in cultural knowledge also occurred as a barrier. For example, Chinese students often felt lost when the name of a suburb or a person was brought up in a conversation, in contrast to the Australians who clearly understood them as "far away" or "a famous athlete/news anchor".

For survey and focus group participants alike, the most common theme was the university. By comparison, only around one third as many would talk about aspects of life outside university such as "jobs", "Chinese/Australian news" or "Chinese/Australian customs". This, as observed by Michael (Australian, male), "can be restrictive and make it hard to get the conversation to flow". Some Australians felt that talking about shared experiences was a safer routine compared to topics around unfamiliar cultures. For Chinese, the lack of knowledge made talking about Australian events challenging. Vivian (Chinese, female) reflected on her confusion over the comment "I am a Collingwood fan", that "if you know nothing about it [a team in the Australian Football League (AFL)], you just don't know what to say". To talk about Chinese customs and culture, on the other hand, could lead to the struggle of turning unique Chinese expressions into English that Australians could understand. Liqiu (Chinese, female) once tried to explain Chinese cooking to an Australian but soon realized, from cooking techniques to utensils and spices, there seemed not to be a specific English word for any of them: "it was so difficult for both us, so we soon gave up".

Largely aligned with existing research (e.g., Henze & Zhu, 2012; Holmes, 2005; Sovic, 2009; Wright & Schartner, 2013), students were aware of their differences in language practices and cultural knowledge. Things, such as unfamiliar expressions and the lack of background knowledge does make communication rather stressful and tiring. The problem is how these challenges should be interpreted and dealt with. Firstly, unique practices of Chinese and Australian English (Burridge, 2010; He & Li, 2009) should be treated as equally legitimate from the perspective of WE and ELF (Dewey & Jenkins, 2010; Kachru, 1992). Understanding issues, according to Sharifian (2012), could be caused by differences in cultural conceptualizations. As a cultural schema, "Collingwood" could evoke AFL knowledge among Australians who are familiar with Australian football but would not do the same for Chinese who do not share the culture. Similarly, in the cooking discussion, difficulties occurred partly because students were not familiar with each other's local practices. Therefore, it is essential for both sides to negotiate and utilize available language resources to enhance mutual intelligibility (Canagarajah, 2006a; Pennycook, 2012a).

Yet, it seems to be common for Chinese students to hold the idea that "Australian students speak the right English". It might be true to a certain point since Chinese simply do not use English as much as Australians do in daily life (Kachru & Nelson, 2006a). On the other hand, it might also be due to their preference for native-speaker norms (Pan, 2015b; Ren et al., 2016; Xu et al., 2010) and perceived deficits of English education in China (Fang, 2010; He & Li, 2009). Such beliefs could prevent students from rightly acknowledging the legitimacy of their own local practices, instead, holding themselves solely responsible for difficult intercultural communication.

"My English is not good": The missing Local

As already noted, some Chinese students saw themselves as the cause of difficulties in intercultural communication. Several participants were concerned that words they used were "weird". Qing (Chinese, female) remembered one exchange about swimming that made her feel slightly embarrassed:

> So, I told him (the Australian student) that I could swim, but I can't do it well because my movement is not standardized. He's like: "um, I understand what you try to say, but, it's kind of strange when you say it that way".

Some students considered their English as "weird" because Australian students "would use a different word" or "looked confused". Although none of the Chinese participants felt any unfriendly intention from their Australian peers, the sense of not knowing the common way of saying something affected their willingness to speak.

At the same time, a few Chinese believed that they should take responsibility because difficulties occurring in their communication with native speakers would not occur in communication among native speakers themselves. As Celine (Chinese, female) put it:

> I think it is my responsibility, and it is due to problems of my accent that they don't understand me. Usually locals do not have problems communicating with each other, but when I say something they might need to think for a while, repeat the word and say, "oh that's what you mean". [translated from Chinese]

Similarly, at least three participants said they spoke rather slowly compared to Australians. Not wanting to keep them waiting, these Chinese students would keep their own answers short, or just remain quiet.

Some had even more negative interpretations for difficulties they experienced. Natalie (Chinese, female) said:

> I think most of the time I don't understand them maybe because I am not familiar with Australian culture or my English is terrible? There are some things I just don't know about it, and when they talk about it to me in English, I just assume that I don't understand because my English is not good.

In fact, Natalie did the whole focus group interview in English, and her competent expression (transcribed verbatim above) is strong counter-evidence against her own belief.

In scenarios described here and the previous sub-section, Local is missing for Chinese students in three ways: firstly, the legitimacy of their own local practices has not been properly acknowledged; secondly, it did not occur to them that instead of having low English proficiency they might just be unfamiliar with Australian local practices; and thirdly, language resources for expressions of their own cultural Local seem not to be sufficient.

Higgins (2003) noticed that Outer Circle speakers referred to their own norms for deciding if a sentence is acceptable. By contrast, Chinese students in this study seemed to rely more on Australian norms. In Qing's story, "my movement is not standardized" is an adaptation of the Chinese phrase "我的动作不标准" used to describe swimming strokes. Although in native-speaker terms the equivalence might be "my style is wrong" or "my stroke is bad," the Australian student clearly had no problem understanding Qing. Following the ELF ideology, being able to achieve mutual intelligibility means the phrase should be seen as legitimate (Jenkins, 2006). Moreover, the difference is arguably not a language issue but an example of different cultural metaphors (Sharifian, 2012) since the criteria for measurement are different (correctness versus efficiency). However, instead of upholding its legitimacy, Qing agreed with the Australian student that it is "strange".

While Celine and Natalie held themselves responsible for comprehension difficulties occurring in communication, they evaluated their own performance against the Australian standard. Instead of trying to negotiate a third space for flexible norms and practices (Canagarajah, 2006b), they showed a strong tendency to accommodate Australian practices and blamed themselves for not being able to do so. They seemed to assume that one should understand Australian English and having comprehension issues meant that their English was "not good". Getting used to relying on native norms (Wang & Gao, 2015; Xu et al., 2010) and constructing their L2 ideal self around these norms (Zheng, 2013) make them place the legitimacy of Australian practices over their own practices, without realizing that difficulties might not be caused by their lack of proficiency but by differences between local varieties and cultural knowledge.

Both Widdowson (1994) and Ren (2014) argue that to own a language is to be able to turn it to one's advantage, adapt and change it for one's own purpose. The struggle experienced by Liqiu shows that she had not truly owned English since it was difficult for her to utilize English to express her own cultural Local. This might be caused by the lack of opportunity for her to talk about her own life and culture in the English classroom (Liu et al., 2015; Wang, 2010).

Without their local practices rightly acknowledged, difficulties caused by unfamiliar Australian local practices properly addressed, and capacity of expressing their local culture sufficiently built, it might not be a surprise that a significant number of Chinese

survey participants found communication with Australian students difficult and stressful. Based on focus group interviews, some would blame themselves and take their voice out from a conversation. As pointed out by Norton (2018), the process of defining "legitimate" often happens in a social context characterized by unequal struggles for meaning, access and power. In a social context where Australian English was preferred by both Chinese and Australian speakers, Chinese students were disadvantaged in the struggles. The misrecognition of the power of native-speaker English made some of them feel like being excluded or condemned to silence (Bourdieu, 1992). While WE and ELF scholars have been advocating a more equal relationship between native and non-native speakers, greater effort might be required to spread the advocacy across English classrooms and university campuses.

A resourceful speaker: Negotiating between Locals

To acknowledge the Chinese Local is not to refuse practicing English in an Australian context. On the contrary, being able to keep their Local empowers Chinese students to explore the Australian Local further, since talking to Australians become easier and more enjoyable. Vivian (Chinese, female), stopped feeling nervous talking to Australians when she realized that: "I don't have to know everything, it's not like my English not good enough that's why I don't know how to answer; it's just because I don't know, I don't know that in Chinese as well."

Students like Lucas (Chinese, male) went even further by making conversation with Australians the platform for cultural exchange. To him, what makes intercultural communication difficult is our lack of competence to compare, analyse, and, eventually, synthesize two different cultures. Noticing that Australians love AFL as much as Chinese love soccer, Locus liked to discuss the similarities and differences between the two sports:

> My ultimate target is to convey my messages to them, and theirs to me. Even though it is a complicated process, we need to use dictionaries, to try different words, and to repeat several times, when we eventually make it the whole thing would feel like a rewarding experience of conquering challenges. [Translated from Chinese]

Just like for Lucas it is "we" instead of "I" who need to conquer challenges. Acknowledgement and negotiation require effort from both sides. Australian students' responses play an important role in keeping both Locals in communication. Celine (Chinese, female) described a scene to explain why she always feels comfortable and confident to talk to her Australian friend, Jasmine:

> She would always slow down, try her best to explain everything to me. And she's curious about my life back in China. Once we were talking about the similarities between an Australian dance and a Chinese dance but felt difficult to explain to each other. Then Jasmine said, "wait a second, let me grab my laptop and show you the picture", which made me feel that she was really into that conversation. [Translated from Chinese]

To be able to differentiate one's English proficiency from one's knowledge of the host culture is arguably a crucial step for international students in Inner Circle countries. Realizing that she does not need to take responsibility for not knowing the part of Australian Local in a conversation helps Vivian recognize herself as a legitimate speaker and subsequently reduces her anxiety, which could significantly affect her performance (Woodrow, 2006).

As for Lucas, English is a real Local practice since he becomes a resourceful speaker who utilizes his language resources and communicative repertoire to convey his Local to Australians in a way that is effective and appropriate in the Australian context (Pennycook, 2012b). And what Jasmine did was to acknowledge the legitimacy of Celine's Local, including her talking style and the content she talked about, by demonstrating her interests and willingness to put an equal amount of effort into making the communication work. The scene between them shows that good intercultural communication requires interlocutors to work collaboratively to ensure each other's Local is properly acknowledged and understood.

CONCLUSION

In this paper, we look into how Chinese students understand and deal with language difficulties occurring when communicating with Australian students. By focusing on their (lack of) awareness regarding the legitimacy of "local" practices, we hope to develop insight into how intercultural communication between native and non-native English speakers could be improved.

A significant percentage of Chinese and Australian participants did find intercultural communication difficult. It might not be easy to eliminate such difficulties since they are rooted in barriers caused by language and cultural differences. To achieve better mutual understanding, both parties should negotiate for shared meanings by utilizing their language resources, and to do so requires them to treat each other as equally legitimate speakers.

While in the field of English studies there is a clear trend of recognizing different English varieties as equally legitimate, the ideology of standard English still seems to be popular in and out of the English classroom. Both Chinese and Australian participants were likely to consider Australian English to be more legitimate than Chinese English. For some Chinese students, this could make conversations with Australians even more difficult. In Bourdieusian terms, the misrecognition of sole legitimacy in native English practices turned equal negotiation into unequal struggles, with these Chinese students becoming dominated by symbolic violence.

To facilitate intercultural communication, then, requires both Chinese and Australian students to recognize the legitimacy of each other's local practices, and to demonstrate it by making efforts together to create shared meanings. Chinese students need to embrace and develop their own Local, but Australian students also need to embrace the Local of others. Following a similar logic, one may argue that it is the same for "Asia as method" proposed by Chen, since "translation" and "negotiation" between the West and the Asia always require efforts from both ends.

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