

# Mobility of Knowledge, Practice and Pedagogy in TESOL Teacher Education

Implications for Transnational Contexts

*Edited by* Anwar Ahmed Osman Barnawi

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# Anwar Ahmed • Osman Barnawi Editors

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Implications for Transnational Contexts



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# Introduction: TESOL Teacher Education: Oscillating Between Globalization and Nationalism

### **Anwar Ahmed and Osman Barnawi**

In response to our call, contributors to this edited volume have taken different epistemological, theoretical and empirical positions to examine the ways TESOL Teacher Education constantly oscillates between globalization and nationalism. Like other contributors, Araceli Salas, in chapter "Holidays in Mexico: Developing Transnational Skills in Teaching English as a Foreign Language", underscores the importance of English language teachers' transnational skills "in a world that fluctuates between globalization and nationalism" (p. 163). Taking the notion of oscillation between globalization and nationalism as a point of departure, we invite you to read and engage with the chapters of this volume. As editors, we wonder what TESOL Teacher Education (TE) may offer us to understand this oscillation and how the field may prepare future teachers for a successful career in a complex world that requires innovative ideas, new

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skills, and ethical dispositions. After briefly commenting on the notion of oscillation between globalization and nationalism, we introduce the chapters to you. Then we conclude with an invitation to a dialogic thinking exercise on re-thinking the nation-states in terms of language teachers' mobility, knowledge and practice.

## Oscillation Between Globalization and Nationalism

In the post-Cold War world, the idea of globalization emerged as a potentially liberatory force. However, the promise of a global society championing equality, justice, and prosperity was soon hijacked by corporate greed. Nation-states found themselves immersed in a great dilemma: how to open up to the world while maintaining national identity and cultural integrity. Apart from difficult decisions regarding citizen's mobility, economic activities and trade relations, nation-states had to wrestle with language policies. It is noteworthy that the standardization of language, often in the form of a national language, was a first and important step to the formation of modern nation-states. The economic pressures of globalization have forced many nations to re-consider their language policies and prioritize English in their education system. Once viewed as a symbol of national identity and pride, local languages were soon de-prioritized. This was among the first sacrifices made by national governments in order to participate in the global marketplace. Like the governments, many citizens in resource-poor countries believed that adopting a dominant language such as English was necessary for their upward social and economic mobility.

Since the turn of this century, the world has witnessed a backlash against globalization. Technological advancements and free-market economy have not resulted in equitable distribution of resources as some had predicted. In consequence, many people in both resource-rich and resource-poor countries believe that globalization has failed them. There are increasing pressures on governments to restrict free trades by imposing tariffs, strengthen border security, and focus on the preservation of

national culture and heritage. Thus, when nation-states fluctuate between the forces of globalization and nationalism, language continues to remain as a topic of concern and debate. Educational policies across the world continue to favour English over national and indigenous languages. This problem is particularly acute in post-colonial nation-states that are still trying to recover from historical inequalities implanted by colonial relationships of various types. For example, while the constitution of the Maldives recognizes Dhivehi as the official language, the country's national curriculum adopts an English-first policy. Mohamed's (2020) study has shown that the English-first policy of the Maldives promotes a discourse of "equal opportunities and frame[s] language learning as enrichment;" however, the enactments of the policy "suggest that the presence of inequalities as subtractive approaches to language teaching undermine students' cultural capital and linguistic heritage" (p. 764). This brings us back to the globalization's demand for a common language. While global businesses and communications need a lingua franca, the democratic potential of a common language (which is English at the current historical moment) is never without political and ideological contestations. In fact, a cosmopolitan desire for a common language is marked by "ever-present issues of coercion and economic, political and cultural inequalities" (Ives, 2010, p. 517). The aforementioned accounts are issues that also arise in the field of Global Englishes, where scholars stress the importance of teacher education in creating a more equitable field of language education (see, for example, Rose & Galloway, 2019).

In the unequal linguistic landscape of a globalized world, how should students be taught so that they can learn and preserve languages and cultures? What should language teachers know about such teaching? What should teacher education programs do to prepare teachers for a complex world where languages are trapped in ideological wars, and the dilemmas of cultural preservation and upward social mobility? While teacher education has important roles to play in creating a more equitable field of language education, it is one of the pieces of a complex puzzle. While teachers continue to change and grow throughout their career, initial teacher education and in-service training can contribute much to their pedagogical thinking, beliefs and activities. The curriculum of TESOL TE has traditionally focused on "effective" teaching understood largely in

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terms of content, delivery and measurement. With too much focus on outcomes and assessments, the TE curriculum has ignored pressing issues of social and linguistic justice (Anwaruddin, 2016). At present, when countries are trying to find a stable middle ground between the forces of globalization and national identity, one crucial task of TE programs, we believe, is to disrupt the idea of the English language as a neutral and disinterred medium of communication. Thus, we agree with Guy Cook (2013) when he affirms that "teachers should be educated in a way which helps them critique and resist a neoliberal business model of language teaching" (p. 19), and that TE programs should "embrace and promote the ideal of a global civil society" (p. 20).

While the creation of a global civil society continues to be an important educational goal, the question of teachers' knowledge remains to be explored with greater attention. What kinds of knowledge do teachers need in order to teach for resisting a neoliberal business model and promoting a global civil society? How do they gain such knowledges? Historically, a dominant flow of English language teachers' knowledge has been from Britain, Australasia, and North America (BANA) to the rest of the world. The dominance of western knowledge in the global field of TESOL education has been critiqued for its colonial, one-way transmission. However, developing professional knowledge is a complex process. Knowledge in use is almost always different from knowledge in store. Local epistemic cultures and contextual circumstances of professional work have strong influences on how knowledge coming from other contexts is interpreted, understood and utilized. Moreover, teachers' professional growth does not follow a linear trajectory. An extra layer of complexity is added to the knowledge question when the geographical borders of nation-states are taken as a unit of analysis. International mobility of teachers appears to be a growing trend in the field of TESOL. However, we do not know enough about how teachers' mobility intersects with their professional knowledge and pedagogical practice in diverse teaching contexts.

To understand TESOL teacher education "in a world that fluctuates between globalization and nationalism," we utilize transnationalism as an

analytical lens. Transnationalism refers to multiple ties and activities that connect people, institutions and cultural practices across the borders of nation-states (Vertovec, 2009). In the last three decades, the notion of transnationalism has attracted considerable attention from social scientists interested in globalization, migration, and international education. Although transnationalism has been hailed as a transformative analytical concept, we want to take a nuanced and careful approach to it. We believe that this construct sheds light on the multifaceted nature of human migration in the contemporary world. We find transnationalism helpful to understand "that migrants do not simply take their social identities from one place to another; rather, they maintain a complex web of identities and activities across national borders" (Toukan, Gaztambide-Fernández, & Anwaruddin, 2017, p. 10). However, we do not wish to look at transnationalism as an unproblematic good. As Toukan et al. (2017) argued, there are reasons to ask questions about who and what transnationalism is good for. While transnationalism's contributions may be analyzed from various perspectives, in this current volume we are interested in the intersection of transnationalism and TESOL Teacher Education. One area of critical relevance is the professional knowledge of language teachers. How does transnationalism affect the knowledge construction of teachers who travel internationally as part of their professional education and training? What does transnationalism do to those teachers who are not able to travel internationally? As editors of this volume, we are interested in exploring the sources and "travel histories" of professional knowledge in TESOL Teacher Education. We believe that a transnational approach is instructive because it decentres, but does not ignore, the role of nation-states in shaping the construction and spread of knowledge. Thus, we agree with Krige (2019) that "the view that knowledge circulates by itself in a flat world, unimpeded by national boundaries, is a myth" (Krige, 2019, Cover copy). Having expressed our nuanced position, we are curious to see how the contributors to this volume take up the issue of transnational mobility of teachers and their professional knowledge.

### The Chapters

### **Setting the Stage**

In chapter "Transnationalism in TESOL Teacher Education and Applied Linguistics: Reflections and (re)imaginations", Eunjeong Lee explores transnationalism in relation to language and literacy practices. She provides a historical background that helps us understand how transnationalism sheds light on complexities around language practices in superdiverse social and cultural contexts. She points out why the global field of TESOL and its teacher education programs cannot shy away from the challenges posed by accelerated mobilities in a changing time. In our view, this chapter sets an excellent stage for the ideas and implications of the subsequent chapters.

### **Professional Development**

Historically, teachers' professional development has been conceptualized through a deficit lens, that is, teachers are lacking in appropriate knowledge; therefore, they are in need of developing. This kind of deficit approach has ignored teachers' lived experiences and personal knowledge that develop as a result of their pedagogical experimentation within specific socio-cultural-material contexts. In the field of TESOL, the question of knowledge and its sources and directions of flow have recently attracted research attention. The mobilization of knowledge for teachers' professional development is a complex process that requires interpretive, cultural and contextual attention (e.g., Anwaruddin, 2019). In chapter "Transnational Professional Development Practices in TESOL Teacher Education", Bushra Ahmed Khurram, Kenan Dikilitaş, and Hadia Zafar present their findings from eight educators from seven different countries. Their findings include how these educators conceptualize transnational professional learning, their learning and development opportunities, and the challenges they encounter in transnational initiatives.

In TESOL, professional development (PD) initiatives often involve individuals from multiple national contexts. In chapter, "Bangladeshi

English Language Teachers' Use of Transnational Teacher Training", Anne McLellan Howard presents Bangladeshi English-language teachers' perspectives on professional development provided by non-Bangladeshi trainers. Howard reminds us why it is important for transnational training programs to pay attention to local contexts and needs. In chapter "Assessment Literacy: Transnational Teachers' Concepts, Practices, and Professional Development Needs", Samar Almoossa picks up the issue of teachers' assessment literacy, a topic which is often neglected in discussions of inter/transnational education. The focus of her study is on transnationally mobile language teachers' understanding and practice of classroom-based assessment. Almoossa's participants are foreign educators currently teaching in Saudi Arabia, who bring with them diverse beliefs and practices of assessment, but have to constantly negotiate their beliefs and practices of assessment in order to meet the local pedagogical conditions. In chapter "Professional Development for Chinese EFL Teachers in Australia: Perspectives, Challenges and Research Potentials", we move to Australia where Dat Bao tells us about Chinese EFL teachers' professional development activities. Bao presents findings about Chinese teachers' PD activities at Monash University, field-trips outside of Monash, and their exposure to Australian ways of education. He also discusses challenges in such transnational identifies and programming.

### Ideology, Culture and Peace

There is no such thing as ideology-free, neutral education. For example, the most instrumentalist forms of education that teach to the scripted curriculum have a certain kind of ideology, i.e., the goal of education is to prepare efficient workers and obedient citizens. What is more interesting to us, as the editors of this volume, is how ideologies embedded in TESOL Teacher Education programs interact with epistemic and political cultures across the world. For a globalized field like TESOL, the ideological layers and cultural lenses are never secondary to the officially mandated scripted curricula. Language educators have the potential to work as cultural workers and contribute to a culture of peace (e.g.,

Morgan & Vandrick, 2009). However, an empirical question that needs further digging is whether or how TESOL TE programs are taking up this challenge of preparing teachers as cultural workers aiming for a peaceful world. In chapter, "The Effect of U.S. Curricular Ideologies on Mexican Transnational Pre-service English Language Teachers" David Martínez-Prieto investigates the effects that the United States of America's curricular ideologies have on the education of Mexican transnational preservice language teachers. Martínez-Prieto depicts complex trajectories of Mexican transnationals' migration journeys and construction of identity as prospective English language teachers. We stay in Mexico in the following chapter "Holidays in Mexico: Developing Transnational Skills in Teaching English as a Foreign Language". In this chapter, Araceli Salas takes up the issue of English language teachers' transnational skills. Salas highlights the importance of developing transnational skills and shows the complexities in such skills development through the examples of celebrating the Day of the Dead and Halloween in the English classroom.

In chapter, "Transnationalism Contextualized in Miami: The Proposed Component of Dialectal Spanish Negotiations in Undergraduate TESOL Courses" we go to Florida, USA. Here, the authors Xuan Jiang, Kyle Perkins and Jennifer Pena make an argument for including the Hispanic cultural familiarity and Hispanic culturally relevant knowledge in TESOL pre-service teacher education curriculum. The primary means for this curricular goal, as the authors propose, is dialectical negotiations of Spanish. This is an important goal to recognize and reflect local demographics in the TESOL teacher education curriculum. In chapter "Engaging East African Voices for Teacher Education in the Digital Age: Exploring Transnational Virtual Collaboration", Robin L. Rhodes Crowell takes us to a world of virtual collaboration where one of the key goals is to disrupt the naïve assumption that speaking English as a mother tongue means teaching it effectively to speakers of other languages. Rhodes Crowell's case study demonstrates virtual collaboration between pre-service TESOL teachers at a liberal arts university in the USA and in-service English teachers in Nairobi, Kenya. One of the outcomes of this collaboration that, in our perspective, is much needed in a transnational world is what the author describes as intercultural pedagogical identity. This leads us to ask a question about peace. Do teachers'

ideological awareness and intercultural competencies enable them to work towards building a more peaceful future? In chapter, A Transnational Peace-Education Framework of EFL Material Development for the Islamic School Context in Indonesia", Dana Kristiawan and Michelle Picard propose a framework of transnational peace education, with a special focus on EFL materials development. While their work is based in the Islamic school contexts of Indonesia, the framework may be applied to other similar contexts.

### **Turing to Self in a Crowded World**

When we hear the term "transnational mobility," the images that come to mind are busy airports, long lines at immigration checkpoints, and meeting new people from diverse contexts who often speak different languages and exhibit different cultural practices. In other words, the idea of transnational mobility creates a mental image of a busy world (although the pandemic of COVID-19 has recently painted a picture of a somewhat lonely world). While we are busy meeting new people and ideas, we may sometimes forget to look inward and understand our self in relation to the world. In this context, autoethnographic approaches to research and pedagogy become relevant. Recently, we have seen a growing interest in autoethnographic approaches to language teachers' professional knowledge formation and identity construction (e.g., Sánchez-Martín, 2020).

With this inward look, Yutaka Fujieda — in chapter "Promoting Transnational Teaching in Pre-service Language Teacher Education Programs in Japan: An Autoethnographic Approach", – takes an autoethnographic approach to promoting transnational language teaching in a pre-service teacher education program in Japan. Focusing on the intersection of autoethnography and transnationalism, Fujieda makes a case for embracing World Englishes and reflective practices in TESOL TE programs. In chapter "TESOL Teacher Education Programs and Transnational Perspectives: Critical Reconstruction of Experiences Via Duoethnography and Autoethnography", Salim Almashani, Mahmood Alhosni and Bryan Meadows examine their evolving perspectives on TESOL TE program in the United States. Taking autoethnographic and

duoethnographic approaches to reconstructing their experiences in teacher education, the authors detail their views on transnationalism, power relationships, and ownership of knowledge. In chapter, "The Reflective Journal: A Transnational Networking Tool for (TESOL) Teachers" Dana Di Pardo Léon-Henri describes how journal writing can be an important tool for teachers' professional learning and development. She argues that journaling is helpful not only for an examination of daily in-class experiences, but also for expressing emotions such as joy and frustration in teaching. She also provides important implications for how teacher journals can become a professional knowledge base and a transnational networking instrument.

### **Rethinking Teaching Expertise**

Throughout the history of formal teacher education, there have been heated debates about the kinds of knowledge that teachers must possess. For example, should teachers possess propositional knowledge codified by educational research or practical knowledge gained from teaching experiences? What should be the legitimate sources of their knowledge? What does teachers' expertise entail? Should they be expert in content areas or in pedagogy, or in both content and pedagogy? What should be the role of professional context in teachers' knowledge and expertise? If "context is everything" in teacher education (Freeman, 2002, p. 11), then how are we supposed to understand context in a transnational world? Does context mean a stable, physical, and geographically demarcated space, or is it a fluid entity subject to constant change and re-construction? While answering all these questions is beyond the scope of a single study, in chapter "Developing Teaching Expertise Through Transnational Experience: Implications for TESOL Teacher Education", Zhenjie Weng and Mark McGuire investigate how contextual factors influenced one teacher's development of teaching expertise across EFL and ESL contexts. By chronicling an American teacher's journey of teaching in China and the USA, and his professional education and training in the USA, the authors show how teaching experiences in different transnational contexts impact the development of teaching expertise. This chapter brings