Language Policy

Robert Kirkpatrick *Editor*

English Language Education Policy in Asia

Language Policy

Volume 11

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The last half century has witnessed an explosive shift in language diversity not unlike the Biblical story of the Tower of Babel, but involving now a rapid spread of global languages and an associated threat to small languages. The diffusion of global languages, the stampede towards English, the counter-pressures in the form of ethnic efforts to reverse or slow the process, the continued determination of nation-states to assert national identity through language, and, in an opposite direction, the greater tolerance shown to multilingualism and the increasing concern for language rights, all these are working to make the study of the nature and possibilities of language policy and planning a field of swift growth.

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English Language Education Policy in Asia

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Introduction: The Challenges for English Education Policies in Asia

Robert Kirkpatrick and Thuy Thi Ngoc Bui

Abstract This chapter introduces the volume and considers the realities, possibilities, and challenges of English language policies with reference to a wide range of socio-political, economic, and linguistic shifts among Asian countries. It reflects on English language policies in the countries through addressing three dominant aspects: (1) the relationship of the English language spread and the English language ability for educational, economic, cultural and political equity, and the effects on local/indigenous languages; (2) educational challenges of the current English language policies such as teacher education, English learning environment, national curriculums, pedagogies, English proficiency, evaluation; and (3) approaches to improve English education policies.

Keywords Language policy • English education • Education in Asia • Minority languages • English as an international language

1 Recent Trends in Language Policy Research

In the early 1960s, language policy studies tended to focus on national language policies, nation building, standardization, and officialization at the macrocosmic level (e.g., Ferguson & Huebner, 1996). Their principal aim was to find solutions to problems with language policy, using a linear process of identifying a problem, formulating an appropriate policy, implementing and evaluating that policy, and revising accordingly (Shouhui & Baldauf, 2012). The field of language policy and planning (LPP) has subsequently moved beyond this traditional research model to include a postmodern critical approach (Paciotto & Delany-Barmann, 2011) that

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questions the ideological, socio-structural, and historical complexities of LPP (Canagarajah, 2011). Many LPP researchers have become conscious of the link between LPP and social justice, and the impact of social and economic inequalities on the lives, social welfare, language, culture, and self-identification of minority, immigrant, and segregated populations (Coleman, 2011a, 2011b).

As language policy is to a large extent politically, linguistically, and socially situated (e.g., Davis, 2012), experts in the field have argued that LPP research cannot be detached from the government's larger political, linguistic, and socio-economic agendas (McCarty, 2011). This critical-research framework has been taken up by a large number of researchers, including Clayton (2006), Coleman (2011a), Song (2011), and Rappa and Wee Hock An (2006), who attempt to unpack the linguistic ideologies and realities of LPP with reference to a wide range of socio-political, economic, and linguistic shifts in Cambodia, Thailand, Singapore, Korea, Malaysia, and several other Asian countries (Clayton, 2006).

In parallel with the movement toward investigating language policy in its social, economic, and political contexts, scholarship has begun to move away from the national, official, "top-down" approach to address "bottom-up" language policy practices (McCarty, 2002; Ricento & Hornberger, 1996; Tollefson, 2002). Drawing on socio-cultural theory[1] and ethnographic approaches, a number of scholars scrutinize language policy at the micro level, both inside and outside the school setting. They focus on language shift, maintenance, revitalization, and endangerment, as well as bilingual education, the roles of schools and teachers, and the medium of instruction policies (McCarty, 2002). Other researchers focus on micro level language policy with reference to local and classroom practices and teachers' roles as policy enactors in schools in contexts. These and other scholars undertaking on-the-ground language policy research (e.g., Liddicoat & Baldauf, 2008) call for the formation of a space in which educators and community members can negotiate and address community needs and create more equitable bilingual educational practices. They also emphasize local agency and the self-determination of local/indigenous people (McCarty, 2002) challenging unequal official language policy and bringing about change through grassroots movements.

The 16 chapters in this new volume, written by experts on each country, include both traditional and the most recent approaches and examine the views and controversies, to wit: (1) the relationship of the English language spread and the English language ability for educational, economic, cultural and political equity; (2) educational challenges of the current English language policies (teacher education, English learning environment, national curriculum, pedagogies, limited English proficiency, and evaluation); (3) and consider English in education policies, emphasizing a comprehensive understanding of socio-economic, political, educational, and linguistic contexts in language policy implementation and learners' needs and give reasoned arguments as to what might be the best way forward for each country. The following sections offer a discussion on these major aspects.

[1] Sociocultural theory offers a perspective from which to examine LPP by uncovering the relationships between language and power (e.g., Warhol, 2012).

2 Globalization and English Language Spread

Globalization is intertwined in all academic disciplines, and has had a crucial role in organizing political, economic, social, and educational agenda worldwide, and extending the influence of English language in a great number of countries (Heller, 2010; Ricento, 2012). Heller (2010) argues that in order to legitimize the reconstruction of capitalism and the circulation of resources, the global agenda works to commoditize a form of language capitalism that emphasizes the expansion of markets and increase the importance of English language for the following processes:

> managing the flow of resources over extended spatial relations and compressed space-time relations; adding symbolic value to industrially produced resources; facilitating the construction of and access to niche markets; and developing linguistically mediated knowledge and service industries (p. 103).

Countries such as Hong Kong, the Philippines, and India relied on English for historical, socio-economic and political processes; and English skills are an integral part of these countries' efforts to integrate with the global market economy for technological advancement and nationalism. Together with national languages, colonized countries, moreover, consistently utilize English as an instrument for the national identity, and historical construction, deconstruction, and proclamation both domestically and internationally (Tsui & Tollefson,, 2007). A number of language scholars such as Coleman (2011a, 2011b), Kirkpatrick and Sussex (2012), Rubdy and Tan (2008) hold that English has been expanding as a multinational and multifaceted tool, performing a broad gamut of purposes, such as a vehicle for economic development, increased employability and productivity, nation-building, technological advancement, fulfilling personal needs, and serving the cause of national integration (Clayton, 2006; Tsui & Tollefson, 2007). For instance, countries such as Malaysia (David & Govindasamy, 2007), Nepal (Phyak, 2011), India (Agnihotri, 2007), Pakistan (Hossain & Tollefson, 2007), Bangladesh (Shamim, 2011), Cambodia (Clayton, 2006), and Japan (Silver & Steele, 2005), as well as countries in Africa (Cameroon, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Malawi, Rwanda, Uganda, and Zambia) (Coleman, 2011a, 2011b), have adopted English as a main foreign language, or official language, and even medium of instruction for students of minority linguistic backgrounds. Williams (2011) observes that in Sub-Saharan Africa, the extreme favoring of English has led various governments to introduce the language as the medium of instruction even when children do not use it at home. In Uganda and other African countries (Coleman, 2011a, 2011b; William & Cooke, 2002), the English influence is so profound that minority parents insist on education in English for their children. In order to legitimize English as the vehicle of mainstream education, many governments have argued that the language is closely linked to increased educational opportunities, economic value, and social equity (e.g., Seargeant & Erling, 2011, p. 11). Moreover, the rapid spread of English indicates the success of neoliberal capitalism in making both governments and individuals believe in English as a powerful tool to solve

various deep-seated social issues such as class division, poverty, and unemployment.

English has been privileged not only through endogenous national strategies but also through the exogenous forces exerted by corporations, international schools, a wide range of philanthropic and educational-exchange missions, Western-duplicate programs, the Internet, television, transnational organizations, and multinational companies (Appleby, 2010; Heller, 2010). Researchers such as Gray (2012), Luke (2011), and Phillipson (2012) have indicated that the investment of Western countries in English language education, the production of materials for an English language curriculum, English testing agencies, and international schools are critical strategies for promoting English inside developing countries, alongside other economic and political agendas. Language policy educators such as Seargeant and Erling (2011) and Phillipson (2012) have reported that this approach to English is reinforced on an ongoing basis in countries such as Bangladesh, Thailand, Burma, and Ukraine by the U.S. and U.K. governments' global push of English language teaching (ELT). It is apparent, therefore, that the influence of English has crossed national borders in its expansion to numerous education systems, signaling a movement toward English (Ricento, 2012).

3 Is It All Good?

Despite the active promotion to embrace the English language on a large scope and scale, an overarching question for scholars of applied linguistics is if or to what extent the widespread teaching and learning English worldwide may be beneficial or detrimental (e.g., Appleby, Copley, Sithirajvongsa, & Pennycook, 2002; Fergusion, 2013; Pennycook, Kubota, & Morgan, 2013; Ricento, 2015).

3.1 Economics

At one end of the spectrum a popular perspective sees the rise of English – not as Phillipson (1992), as premeditated and almost sinister – but accidental and fortuitous and as a driver of globalization and the benefits that come with a mobile and educated workforce, with populations that can learn, speak and write in the international language. This is reflected in the words of Hanewald (see chapter on Malaysia) who writes that English is "the lingua franca of the world, beneficial for global trade and commerce, business and education opportunities". And many researchers see an active link between English and economic development for the nations and individuals (e.g. Seargeant & Erling, 2013). An action research study by Norton, Jones, and Ahimbisibwe (2013) with a group of young women in village in a Uganda indicates that English language embedded in information technology helped these women gain awareness to access better healthcare. Coleman (2011a, 2011b) and

Tsui and Tollefson (2007) acknowledge that English may continue to play positive roles in increasing employability and facilitating international mobility (migration, tourism, studying abroad), and so forth. Moreover the policy makers in practically all countries in this volume recognize the economic advantages of English and are under pressure from their population, who are often even more cognizant of the need for English, to increase the level of English education.While it is true that thousands of Asian students may never benefit much by their years of studying English – and isn't that true of many subjects, from calculus to geography - it also seems that for a significant section English is a genuine economic asset. In the Philippines (see the chapter by Madrunio, Martin and Plata) around one million workers are currently employed in call centers where English ability is a critical requirement and over 10 million more live overseas ("Stock estimate of overseas Filipinos", 2012), the majority working in positions that require some level of English, remitting a significant part of the total national budget back to the Philippines. Ramathan (India chapter) writes that being without English ability "affects personal and professional advancement" and cites a study (Nagarajan, 2014) that finds the English skilled earn over a third more than those lacking English. In Sri Lanka a report by The National Educational Commission Report (2003, p. 176), found that, "English has emerged as a critical factor in graduate employment," (cited by Hettiarachchi and Walisundara, Sri Lanka chapter).

However, taking a more critical position some scholars point out that a consequence of the hegemony of the English language in many developing countries is that it tends to magnify the socio-economic disparity between the "have" and "have-nots" (e.g., Shamim, 2011; Phyak & Bui, 2014). Tsui and Tollefson (2007) note that in Asian countries, "English is a language of the educated elite and is not commonly used in daily interactions" (p. 4). English language promotion assists the cosmopolitan multilingual elite while at the same time closing off opportunities to those from a less advantaged socio-economic background in India, and Indonesia (e.g., Rubdy & Tan, 2008; Williams, 2011) and in Nepal, Singapore, Sri Lanka, and Vietnam (this volume). The consequences can be pervasive when children fail to gain both fluency in English and the ability to satisfy the demands of the job market. Consequently, English language policies may threaten students' social welfare, equipping them only for low-wage, limited social participations, and insecure economic potentials (e.g., Coleman, 2011a, 2011b; Bui, 2012). Through examining the role of English language education scholars (e.g., Appleby et al., 2002; Ferguson, 2013) suggest language policy makers avoid having a sweeping generalization of English language and development since it is highly complex and involves wide-ranging interconnecting social and human factors. Rather, they should acknowledge such complexity in managing effective solutions while providing positive outcomes for citizens. Language policy scholars in diverse geographic settings in Asia and Africa (Rapatahana & Bunce, 2012; Shamim, 2011; Tembe & Norton, 2011; Williams, 2011) argue that subordinate classes often fail to gain both fluency in English and the ability to participate in the world by using it. Accordingly, such policies may fail to uphold class, race, and language equality and social mobility (Butler & Iino, 2005; Paulson & McLaughlin, 1994; Silver & Steele, 2005; Warriner,

2007). In Pakistan (this volume) the authors describe English language teaching as a divisive element between the urban and rural, and poor and well-off, and in the chapter on Sri Lanka, Hettiarachchi and Walisundara speak about historical inequities, where the section of the population skilled in English earned "social prestige and power while dethroning the masses of the country of similar privileges" (although they explain that recent programmes mean English education is now more accessible to the wider population). Kaplan, Baldauf, and Kamwangamalu (2011, p. 106) write that "English-knowing is not a guarantee of an improvement in economic opportunity". These scholars and many others (e.g., Arcand & Grin, (2013); Erling, Hamid, & Seargeant, 2013; Rassool, 2007) added the clear proviso that the economic benefits, while real, are largely in the hands of middle-class elites and/or of members of the ruling class, rather than those who belong to minority and/or economically disadvantaged groups.

3.2 Minority Languages

Some researchers in language policy and planning (LPP) (e.g., Canagarajah, 2005a, 2005b; Rubdy & Tan, 2008; Tollefson & Tsui, 2007) have expressed concerns about the capacity of English language policies to cause the serious depreciation and even extinction of local cultures and languages. The reach of English is almost mystified, giving people the strong belief that acquiring English equates to educational, social, economic advantages. Consequently, individuals belonging to linguistic minority groups often devalue their native languages, or even refuse to receive education in their own tongue (Shamim, 2011; Wedell, 2011), for example, in Pakistan (Mustafa, 2012), in Uganda (Tembe & Norton, 2011). Furthermore, the increasing permeation of English has created divisions and collisions between Western and non-Western pedagogical and cultural values, at times preventing students from accessing the full wealth of knowledge embedded in their own cultural and linguistic traditions (e.g., Phillipson, 2012).

Kirkpatrick and Sussex (2012) and Phillipson (2012) challenge governments' 'quick fixes' for distributing English to the masses, such as importing native speakers, starting English instruction very early in students' lives, and mandating its use as either a major subject or the primary medium of instruction. There is a possibility of taken-for-granted English language policies not only to weaken the vitality of local languages and cultures but to arouse linguistic conflict and confusion among parents, local communities, and children, especially in developing contexts (Canagarajah, 2005a, 2005b; Coleman, 2011a, 2011b; Kirkpatrick, 2012c; Shamim, 2011; Tollefson & Tsui, 2007).

4 Politics

The extensive permeation of English worldwide has transformed both the governments and individuals' ideologies and practices, believing that the language is a powerful tool to solve various deep-seated social issues such as class division, poverty, and unemployment and closely increase educational opportunities, economic value, and social equity. Countries such as Malaysia (David & Govindasamy, 2007), Nepal (Phyak, 2011), India (Agnihotri, 2007), Pakistan (Hossain & Tollefson, 2007), Bangladesh (Shamim, 2011), Cambodia (Clayton, 2006), and Japan (Silver & Steele, 2005), as well as countries in Africa (Cameroon, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Malawi, Rwanda, Uganda, and Zambia) (Coleman, 2011a, 2011b), have adopted English as a main foreign language, official language, and even medium of instruction for students of minority linguistic backgrounds. Williams (2011) observes that in Sub-Saharan Africa, the great favoring of English has led various governments to introduce the language as the medium of instruction even when children do not use it at home. Similarly, Phyak (2011) described the governmentally imposed overhaul of Nepal's education system from a Nepali monolingual to a multilingual curriculum that requires children in both private and public schools to study English from grade one onwards. The existing scholarship of the English language spread has created pressure to promote English for both the governments and individuals. This phenomenon is again explained in several chapters of this volume. An example of the complex relationships between English education policy makers and the local population is Hong Kong (see Jeon in this volume) where after the return of Hong Kong to China in 1997 a compulsory Chinese medium school policy was used to try to cement Chinese identity and government power. Yet, the rulers of a country cannot easily dismiss the aspirations of the people and, demonstrating the power of market forces and individual aspirations, Jeon writes that, "English still symbolizes wealth and power in Hong Kong, and this did not change even after 1997". In Cambodia students protested when the government tried to have French placed as the main foreign language taught (Clayton, 2006), and Macallister (chapter on Timor) notes that while Portuguese was chosen over English as an official language in East Timor most parents and students feel that English is more useful.

Evidently, no matter how much well-intentioned education ministries, policy makers, or academics try to impose or protect native languages, or indeed any languages other than English, it seems that the population in Asia are intent on gaining access to English, even if detrimental to the local languages and possibly to a wider, deeper education in their own language.

5 Official Language

If English proficiency is a benefit to the overall population of a country then it could be reasoned that any measures, including making it an official language, which assists its rise should be implemented. Kaplan, Richard, and Kamwangamalu (2011)

note that when a language is given official status that this "enhances its prestige [and] extends its use into educational and non-official domains" (p. 116). Yet, applied linguists such as Kirkpatrick (2012c) indicate that favoring English or only English and the national language may increasingly turn Asian multilingualism to bilingualism (national language and English) or monolingualism.

The reasons for this are complex but as Kaplan et al. warn, the granting of official status, because it privileges that language it consequently "impinges on the linguistic rights of speakers of other languages within the community" (2011, p. 116) and that the "official national language is a core value that unites the people and defines the essential culture of the community" (p. 116): In essence, English, if given such official warrant, could be seen as a threat to the local culture. Pennycook, Kubota, and Morgan (2013) argue that promoting English as an official language or a medium of instruction "potentially harm the educational development of children who struggle to understand the educational content… push other languages and subjects out of the curriculum, and… make some languages increasingly redundant (p. xviii). In responding to the current issue of English as an official language, Hamid and Erling (Bangladesh chapter) further explain that there may be a feeling that language learning is a "zero-sum game": hence the concern, sometimes unvoiced, that if English grows stronger this must come at the expense of the local language.

Thus countries like Thailand, Korea and Japan, Indonesia and Malaysia in this volume are torn between a desire to embrace English educationally and officially, hoping that this will increase proficiency and allow a competitive advantage in the global business village, and a feeling of unease that this may harm the local language or even weaken the culture.

And of course making English one of the official language does not solve the more practical issues at the chalk face discussed later in this introduction, and in the individual chapters.

6 Access

Since English is often equated to a key to social mobility, success, and opportunities, many decisions need to be made about (1) who gets to decide the education and English language policies; (2) how is the distribution of English to the overall population; (3) who can access English, what kind of English that people receive; and (4) to what extent people gain from English, and the quality of English programs (Bui, 2013a).

Several authors find that due to their access to private education and tutors, the elite and middle classes can learn English to a superior level and this helps to give them influence politically and economically. In Pakistan, Manan, David and Dumanig (Chapter on Pakistan) note that 30 % of children are studying in private English schools. Ramanathan suggest an even higher number in India, and Prem Phyak (this volume) writes that private English education is a huge industry in Nepal: A kind of beneficent, at least for the well off, market in education. Hamid and Erling (Bangladesh chapter) discuss how this "raises questions of education and

social justice, as those with limited financial ability are denied access to this alternative learning opportunity". Moreover it means those with the means can simply ignore the whole government run education system, meaning that on one hand the private English industry saves a significant part of the public education budget, on the other educational oversight is considerably more complicated.

7 Education

Taking into account the apparent economic need for English, most Asian countries have polices of making English available, often as a compulsory subject, and some countries allocate significant portions of the education budget to English. Yet money alone is not a guarantee of improving English proficiency as we see from Thailand, (see Kaur, Young and Kirkpatrick, this volume), which as a percentage of national budget, has one of the world's highest expenditures on education (although the exact proportion spent on English is hard to gauge) but one of the lower overall levels of English proficiency among the countries examined.

7.1 Classroom

Apart from the controversies about the rise of English as lingua franca, and whether it should be an official language, there are those, about how to best develop it in each country. Should it, for instance, be based on an enforced national curriculum or dependent on local school districts, or even left up to each school? Bui and Nguyen (Vietnam chapter) and Widodo (Indonesia chapter) among other authors suggest that that at the school level teachers and administrators have to deal with "ideologically and politically imposed language policies" and the discussions in these chapters explain the diversity and changing balance involved in curriculum development in the various countries. While Bui and Nguyen and Widodo argue that teachers should have more autonomy when implementing the English curriculum, other writers note that in their respective countries the teacher's English level overall is too low to be able to properly implement the curriculum even if they use the prescribed textbooks.

Another issue is how much of the curriculum should be given over to English instruction and when should it begin. Educators and academics are well aware that every class devoted to English is one that is taken from another subject and this tug-of-war remains unresolved in most of the countries. Japan, for instance, in 2011 introduced English lessons into elementary schools, although at only at 45 min a week one must wonder if this is more than a token; but even that small amount has been criticized by some educators in the country who feel that (choose a subject) is more deserving.

7.2 Language Teaching and Teacher Professional Development

Researchers of language policy and planning (Canagarajah, 2005a, 2005b; Menken & Garcia, 2010) have examined a variety of impacts of language shifts on teacher education, resources, and teaching practices. English language shifts in many nations urge teachers to re-conceptualize their teaching ideologies from the grammar-centered into the communicative approach.

In another development some researchers have embraced theories of multilingualism and literacy learning (e.g., Canagarajah, 2009; Creese & Blackledge, 2010; García & Sylvan, 2011; Hélot & O'Laoire, 2011). They suggest that language policy and teaching should accommodate the linguistic complexity, fluidity, and flexibility of multilingual populations, whether in a single country or as part of diasporas/immigrant communities (Creese & Blackledge, 2010). Arguing against monolingual instructional approaches that tend to marginalize the voices, restrict educational access, and weaken the linguistic and cultural pride of multilingual students, some scholars urge policy makers and teachers to regard multilingualism as the norm: a teachable, flexible, and feasible practice (Cenoz & Gorter, 2011) or a "pedagogy of the possible" (Hélot & O'Laoire, 2011, p. xv) that should constitute educational praxis in all schools.

Aligning theories of multiculturalism and literacy and language learning with this current volume, some authors in this volume call for taking advantage of students' experiences of literacy acquisition, teachers' literacy teaching practices, students' authentic and rich linguistic and cultural capital, and ways of using students' traditional narratives, knowledge, learning styles, and identities to scaffold teaching. Generally, the scholarship on language and literacy acquisition is of assistance in posing the following questions in Bangladesh (Hamid & Erling), China (Gil), Indonesia (Widodo), Nepal (Phyak), Pakistan (Manan, David and Dumanig), Korea (Chung & Choi), and Vietnam (Bui & Nguyen) chapters: What does teaching English language mean to the teachers? What are the students' experiences of English language learning? In what ways can teachers help socialize students into different discourse, register, and genre, to prepare them for academic literacies and meta-awareness of linguistic interaction? How do teachers and students challenge and appropriate the national ideologies of literacy and language learning?

7.3 Examination Backwash

Evaluation is controversial in English language education transformation because the current evaluation systems have not been an effective tool to articulate students' knowledge and skills. Byrnes (2007) raises the question: How do we enable students to display that knowledge (language knowledge) on tests and other assessments of

competence? Several chapters (China, Bangladesh, Japan, Thailand, South Korea, Sri Lanka, India, Malaysia, Pakistan and Indonesia) noted the effect, always important and sometimes damaging, of examination backwash on the English curriculum.

Part of the problem facing examination boards, assuming they wish to improve backwash, is the practical element(s) involved in adding communicative, direct testing of speaking, writing, and listening (reading comprehension is more straightforward): The listening section needs foolproof audio systems, while a speaking component needs a veritable army of trained raters. Even requiring written essays – in an effort to improve validity – is fraught with rating problems. For these reasons it is perhaps not surprising that most examination boards focus on grammar in multiple-choice formats: objective, but with the disadvantages inherent to indirect ways of assessment. It is encouraging, then, to see recognition of these effects of the university entrance examination (Center Shiken) in Japan, where in 2006 a listening component was added to the all-important national university entrance examination. A partial step but the backwash from this move does bring a communicative aspect to the generally academic way English is taught, and gives an indication of where other Asian countries may improve.

The next and final section of this introduction section briefly summarizes each chapter and lists key points.

8 Bangladesh

The status of English language fluctuated after the golden time of the British colonialism. English was for the most part rejected in Post-independence as Bangla was a potent symbol of identity and national aspiration. However, since the 1970s and 80s until the present, the language has been strongly promoted for various historical factors and national priorities, educational NGOs, and international development agencies. English occupies a significant place in the Bangladesh curriculum, and is a compulsory subject from grade 1, yet Hamid and Erling explain that results are unimpressive countrywide and even worse in rural areas, with some studies (e.g. Hamid & Baldauf, 2008) suggesting little progress in English skills even after 10 or more years of schooling. Part of this can be explained by a lack of teacher training, minimal resources and low expenditure on education. However, because of the language's prestige socially and in business those with the means send their children to private English-medium schools which thrive in major cities like Dhaka.

This has led to a degree of social inequity where those who cannot afford the fees are at a disadvantage in the severely competitive job market (see Erling, 2014). According to the authors, sustainable and effective English language teaching must be built on the examination of real roles of English, collective efforts of multiple actors across disciplines in policy enactment and implementation, as well as effective professional development and evaluation systems.

9 China

In this chapter Jeffrey Gil examines both official and popular views of English, and considers the efforts to build English competence from the latter half of the twentieth century until the present day. We see that in the current Peoples Republic of China (PRC) English is pre-eminent among foreign languages, although, like many other countries in Asia, there are concerns about the erosion of the local culture and even language due to the rise of English worldwide.

English today is used to varying degrees in many domains in the PRC, including academic research, media, business, tourism, literature and creative arts. Nevertheless, the number of functional English users and the population's levels of proficiency in English are still low. The chapter explains significant obstacles encountered in the development of communicative competence in the PRC: most importantly; the backwash from examinations which emphasize academic knowledge of English rather than communicative competence; teacher and student beliefs that academic study of English, rote learning and grammar analysis are superior to CLT; and a lack of resources and qualified teachers. Gill also discusses the challenges of providing English language education to ethnic minorities, and speculates on the possible future of English language education policies in light of the PRC's recent efforts to promote Chinese language learning around the world.

10 Hong Kong

The Hong Kong chapter explains how the language-in-education policy has been deeply historically, politically, economically, pedagogically, and ideologically situated. The country has faced complex pressure, ambivalence, and conflicts of legalizing different languages for multi-faceted purposes. It is an ongoing pendulum of promoting English for global development, social mobility, social status, and job market competitiveness on the one end and maintaining Chinese language and culture at the other end. The chapter further reveals the Hong Kong people's hidden ideologies and desires of protecting their own identity, image, and culture in the light of persistent language policy shifts especially after Hong Kong was turned over to China. English has been a language of wealth and power in Hong Kong since the colonial era, and its prestige did not diminish even after the sovereignty change-over to China in 1997. After reviewing the current status of English in Hong Kong, Mihyon Jeon explains the four periods of Hong Kong's medium of instruction policies and explains the debate over the compulsory Chinese medium of instruction (CMI) policy that was adopted in 1997.

Language-in-education policy in Hong Kong has reflected around the issues of medium of instruction and of coping with declining language standards, particularly the supposed decline of English proficiency, through various language enhancement policies, to combat declining language standards, focusing on the biliterate/trilingual

policy and the Native-speaking English Teacher (NET) Scheme implemented in 1997, respectively. The chapter explains that the NET Scheme was initiated to counteract concerns that the compulsory CMI policy led to declining standards of English, creating unequal access to English between Chinese and English medium school students; and tainting Hong Kong's image as an international business centre.

11 Indonesia

Widodo explains that after the independence of Indonesia (from the Japanese occupation in 1945, and the Dutch colonial rule soon after) English was chosen as a compulsory foreign language subject and has been widely taught in secondary schools and universities. The decision to opt for English rather than say Dutch or Japanese was because the latter languages were tainted as the languages of colonists and because English was already seen as the main language of international communication and also Indonesia's ELT curricula, especially since 2000, have undergone substantial changes. However, Widodo notes that English remains viewed as a school subject, rather than social language, where the success and failure of English learning are determined by a high-stakes university/college entrance examination. Widodo suggests six principles for reframing the current ELT curriculum: (1) revisiting roles of teachers from a curriculum development perspective, (2) negotiating policy and curriculum materials: teacher-driven language curriculum development, (3) positioning and framing English language pedagogy, (4) integrating assessment and pedagogy: a dynamic approach, (5) re-envisioning sound language teacher training and education, and (6) sustaining teacher professional development.

12 India

Hema Ramanathan finds that English in India continues to grow in importance. English, while technically only an associate official language is also an "additional" national language, making its status close to that of Hindi, the national language; and Arunachal Pradesh and Nagaland states count English as the state language. English is the lingua franca for business and administration and public exams for civil services are required to be available in both English and Hindi, but in local languages only if these are available.

In public schools Hindi and English, the official and associate official languages, must be studied as two of the three languages taught. Ramanathan notes that the demand for private English medium schools continues to grow and cites one study (iValue Consulting Private Ltd, n.d.), that estimates 40 % of students now attend these schools.

Furthermore, unlike some of the countries in this volume, where English is viewed by students and teachers as primarily an academic subject (e.g. see Thailand, or Japan), in India academic results are only part of the focus and students are expected to be proficient in English for communication in social settings and business. As with Bangladesh and Pakistan anyone without English skills can expect to have limited opportunities in which university they can attend and consequently career choice.

While acknowledging the government's consistent efforts to improve the English language education system, the author points out a range of issues of thriving multiple languages in education, weak and problematic correlations between pedagogy and assessment, unresponsive curriculum, and ineffective teacher education. These matters are reflected from dominant questions arising from the chapter: How can English be taught as a first, second and foreign language in the same setting? How can the curriculum be differentiated for each group of learners? What teacher education will adequately meet the needs of different learners?

13 Japan

Japan, while expending significant sums, publicly and privately, on English education, does not seem to be fully rewarded with the fruits of this largesse.

As noted earlier in this introduction in 2006 the always conservative education ministry (MEXT) introduced a listening component to the university entrance examination which has helped to moderate the grammar oriented approach and add a communicative element to the exam. However the national exam is only one component and students must then pass individual university exams, written as often as not, by educators with an academic view of what is important about English language, and frequently involving translating obscure English texts into Japanese.

From 1987 an ambitious project bringing assistant teachers from English speaking countries was introduced with the aim of to expose Japanese youth to foreign cultures. This remains a noteworthy aspect of English education in Japan but has limitations which are brought out in the chapter by Glasgow and Paller.

Building upon the notion of teachers' agency as the heart of language policy reforms, the Japan chapter further depicts various ideological and implementation clashes between the policies at the macro level and teachers' interpretation of the policies in practice. Ambivalent curriculum organization, incomprehensive and neglected professional culture and teacher education, unresponsive teaching materials significantly weaken teachers' professional well-being, generate ineffective outcomes, as well as create multi-layered tensions between the macro and micro levels of language policy reforms.

14 Malaysia

Quite similar to the case of language policies in Hong Kong, language-in-education policy in Malaysia "brought out ethnic conflicts, ideological pressures, and political dogmas". Malaysia has been an ongoing process of reconciling tensions to foster national languages, unity, and pride, while allowing other minority languages to co-develop. To add to this already complex language issue, English is ever needed for a plethora of economic and social developments and global integrations. English retained its historically loaded association with the British colonialists and was therefore rejected shortly after Malaysia's Independence in 1957 although it served as a common language among the diverse populace which comprised of Chinese, Tamil and Bahasa Malay speakers. The various groups tried to preserve and assert their cultural identity, social and economic power in the newly formed nation but national unity was the prime aspiration and the struggle for dominance was won by the Malays, hence Bahasa Malay become the national language by law. The government's endeavours to institute Bahasa Malay for social identity, harmony and language unity did not extend into the private sector, where the ability to speak English provided social mobility, economic opportunities and potential wealth. Nevertheless, three decades of Malay-only policy caused English proficiency levels among Malaysians to dwindle and became an impediment in the quest for Malaysia's economic advancement. English was again reinstated in the education system due to the necessity for global communication and the recognition that English proficiency is key for success in a globalized economy. In spite of this, Hanewald notes that even after studying English "… in primary and secondary schools, Malaysian students present at university level with limited vocabulary, a weak understanding of difficult words and difficulty in understanding long sentences". In addition the focus on grammar and the mechanics of the language to pass exams that neglect communicative practice of English; and the interference from Bahasa Malaysia with reliance on translation and dictionary use to comprehend English texts do not properly prepare students for the communicative use of English. Overall, in an attempt to maintain Bahasa Malay as the official language and English as an effective lingual franca, Malaysia continues to face with problems of ineffective language policies which subsequently lead to inequalities, linguistic and ethnic conflicts, limited academic outcomes and misrecognition of linguistic rights.

15 Nepal

By situating the global discourses and ideologies of English language education in the multilingual context of Nepal, this chapter analyzes how two major ideologies—English-as-a-global-language and English-as-social-capital—have significantly contributed to shape the current de facto expansion of English as the medium of instruction policy in Nepal's school level education. The ideological analysis of

English medium education policy, grounded in Nepal's historical-structural condition, reveals increased social divide in terms of social class and tension between local and global discourses. Historically rooted in Nepal's stratified social structure, English medium education remained in the sphere of social elites and rich people in the pre-1990 era and such elitism eventually indexed English as a social capital, that is, English is projected as the marker of social prestige and identity in dominant language policy discourses. While the general public was forced to learn only through Nepali, in the guise of nationalism, high-middle class people still had access to English medium education in private schools (particularly in India) and missionary/international schools. The ideology of English-as-social-capital is later coupled with English-as-a-global-language ideology in the post-1990 era, when the country adopted neoliberal educational policies. The privatization of education not only legitimized the symbolic power of English as the medium of instruction, but also constructed a myth that defines English medium education as quality education and the only way to produce students who can participate in global market economy. Such a myth has forced policymakers to encourage public schools to adopt English as the medium of instruction policy from Grade 1. Yet, children are not receiving better English language education nor are they learning what they are expected to learn from content area subjects such as science, social studies and mathematics. While very few high-middle class people benefit from English-only policy, a larger number of students still fail national tests and could not join higher education. More importantly, this chapter reveals that while embracing global ideologies the current English as de facto medium of instruction policy conflicts with the local need for a multilingual education policy.

16 Pakistan

The authors contend that the current English education policy suffers from solid theoretical foundations and sound empirical research work. The public need for English medium education on one hand and the poor standards of the government schools on the other hand has led to a proliferation of private English medium schools. Such schools which cater to the educational needs of the lower middle and lower class children advertise themselves as English medium; however, the findings suggest that neither are teachers qualified to teach English language well, nor is school environment nor social environment favorable to expose children to the English language. Thus, alienation from the English language results in poor English language proficiency, lack of subject knowledge, use of rote-learning. The authors conclude that the teaching of English language cannot be viewed in isolation from some major critical issues in the context of Pakistan. English language teaching plays a major divisive role between the poor and the rich, between the urban and the rural population and between the haves and the have nots because a very small percentage of children from the rich, urban and the haves have access to quality English education. Finally, on sociolinguistic and ecolinguistic grounds,

the only English in education policy seriously threatens the vitality of a large number of minor and major local languages. An additive multilingual policy that begins with children's mother tongues till the primary stages with later transition towards English as a medium from post-primary levels and Urdu as a subject , could potentially prove beneficial.

17 Philippines

While other nations in the volume such as Nepal, Malaysia, Bangladesh, and Vietnam have been continuously facing tensions, inconsistencies, and ineffectiveness in English language policy reforms, English language policies in the Phillipines are seen in a more positive light. English persistently functions both as a crucial language for economic development and an exportable product (e.g., through providing English knowledge and training teachers of English within the ASEAN nations). According to the authors, the language has provided wide-ranging economic advantages to the nation, turning the Phillipines into the world's business process outsourcing, creating nearly one million jobs, enabling importing workers overseas, and stimulating remittance. The integration of the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) in 2015, as well as the United Nation's call for Education for All (EFA) by 2015, has pushed the Philippine government to review the effectiveness of English language education (ELE) in the country, as stakeholders strive to address issues of developing the English language competencies of Filipino students on the one hand, and the strengthening of academic achievement on the other. ELE policies have been beset with issues of alignment and coherence in the areas of curriculum and assessment, as well as having too much focus on linguistic accuracy and knowledge of grammar. In addition, ELE has been implemented at the expense of literacy in the mother tongues. This chapter then provides an overview of how ELE in the Philippines is evolving and what may be expected in the future.

18 Singapore

Patrick Ng's chapter looks at some social, economic and political problems resulting from the dominant English-medium school policy. Drawing upon the theoretical framework on why educational language plans fail (Kaplan et al., 2011), and a sociohistorical, sociocultural and sociopolitical analysis, the author critically evaluates the bilingual school policy in Singapore. Although the English-knowing bilingual policy is based on a functional 'division of labour' between languages, the emphasis on English in the educational policy has resulted in an unequal power distribution between English speaking and non-English speaking citizens. Ng also reports other issues such as the lack of interest in Chinese mother tongue learning in schools, the prevalence of Colloquial Singapore English, the decline of the

Chinese-medium schools and the language shift to English within the Chinese home environment.

19 Sri Lanka

English in Sri Lanka is used by government ministries, in commerce and technology and in colleges and universities. In some areas English language has been a unifying force in the country: when Sinhala communicate with the Tamil minority for example English is the medium, for the fluent it is vehicle of social mobility. And it is a needed tool for international trade. On the other hand for much of the last century those who were not English able were often excluded from the higher levels of society. This led to a degree of cynicism and mistrust of the “colonial” English language and those who spoke it, by sectors of the population. From 2003 numerous programmers and activities including bilingual schooling have been implemented that mean English skills are becoming available to a majority of the population.

20 South Korea

The chapter by Chung and Choi explains that English functionality is still at a relatively low level countrywide but English holds significant value in the country with English proficiency perceived as evidence of competence and success. Since the early 1990s the South Korean government, “has actively upheld English proficiency as an essential medium”. In the private sector ELT is an enormous market ranging from English language pre-schools to language institutes for adults. Although South Koreans seem to display higher levels of English proficiency than expanding circle countries such as Japan and China, several measures suggest that their English proficiency does not fully reflect the dedication that is put into English teaching and learning.

In South Korea English is officially introduced as a subject in the third year of primary education, and from secondary level to the first year of senior high school, English is taught as a compulsory core subject. The communicative approach to teaching English is upheld as the best way to teach English, and the Teaching English in English (TEE) scheme that requires the subject to be taught in English, has also been nationally instituted since 2010. However, the chapter, based on case studies, finds that teachers implementation of the policies is subject to their own interpretations and beliefs about pedagogy. Drawing on the notion of teacher agency and language policy as multifaceted and interactive (Menken & Garcia, 2010), the study argues for engaging multiple actors, especially teachers and teacher trainers, the “actual policy executors”, in interpreting, negotiating, and enhancing the success of the current English education.

21 Timor-Leste

Timor-Leste presents an unusually complex case. Four languages are recognized in the constitution and compete for space, both in education and in society generally. While the adoption of Portuguese as the co-official language (with Tetun) is understandable in light of the country's recent troubled relations with Indonesia and with a wish to distinguish itself from English speaking Australia to the south, it also marks Timor-Leste as different in a region where an emphasis on English language learning is the norm. While national education policy tends to favor the Portuguese language, arguably at the expense of Tetun, there is a feeling among students and parents that English and Bahasa Indonesia have more practical use. For this reason, and because many school teachers are not sufficiently fluent in Portuguese, English has remained the second language of choice and private English classes are common. In public spaces, too, English is the prevalent language. As a result, and also because of a feeling that current language policy is contributing to educational failure, there remain questions about the future of languages in education in Timor-Leste. A case can be made, for example, for moving to mother tongue based education leading to additive multilingualism.

22 Thailand

The authors of this chapter give an overview of the development of the English language in Thailand from its past to its present status. With the introduction of education reform through the National Education Act (NEA) of 1999, the Ministry of Education in Thailand sought to improve education standards in Thailand at all levels. Moreover, to prepare the nation to compete with other nations in the era of globalization, emphasis on English language skills acquisition was given extra impetus. The chapter investigates a wide range of efforts, initiatives, national policies and education reforms that demonstrate Thailand's willingness to equate itself in English language skills with the rest of the world. However, the examination of the current status of English language in the country shows a disproportionate progress of English language skills in relation to the effort made. This leads the writers to examine the policy related challenges and societal obstacles that inhibit or discourage the healthy progress of English language in the country. Towards the end, the chapter provides practical strategies and plans for various levels that may improve growth of the English language in the country.

23 Vietnam

In the Vietnam chapter, Bui and Nguyen provide an assessment on English language policies (ELPs) in Vietnam by examining their challenges, and consequences. In particular, they focus on the reality of current teacher quality in response to the

recent language policy implementation. They further explain the roles of the ELPs in advancing linguistic, education and socio-economic developments for various students, especially those from minority linguistic backgrounds in a remote province. While applied scholars and critical educators advocate placing teacher professional development at the epicenter of language policy reforms, teacher professional development in the current ELP reform in Vietnam is, for the most part, controversial, ambivalent, and contested. An array of issues including teacher training, teachers' limited English proficiency, and the shortage of English teachers are not yet effectively addressed. Furthermore, drawing on Bourdieu's (1991) social reproduction theory, Bui and Nguyen argue that, contrary to the state's goal of promoting English for socio-economic and educational advancement, these language policies may threaten social, educational and economic development, and minority students' linguistic and cultural ecology. The study thus emphasizes the need for a comprehensive understanding of the interconnectedness among effective teacher professional development; cultural and linguistic complexity; language/literacy education; and socio-economic needs throughout the processes of language policy decision-making and implementation. To this end, the chapter strongly recommends respecting home languages and multilingualism for effective schooling and language policy reform.

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