
TESOL and Policy Enactments: Perspectives From Practice

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Prior research in the area of language policy and planning (LPP) has been focused primarily on macro decision-making and the impact of national, local, and institutional policies in educational settings. Only recently have scholars begun examining the everyday contexts in which policies are interpreted and negotiated in ways that reflect local constraints and possibilities. The redirection of inquiry toward situated policy enactments in TESOL is the central theme of this special issue and the introductory article. In this article we address and expand on several key themes that arise from and unify the various contributions to the issue: (a) the enhanced status and implications of locality in policy research, (b) practitioner agency and the ethical concerns involved, (c) the globalization of particularistic agendas (i.e., neo-liberalism) and their impact on nation-state identities and policy enactments.

Where on educational landscapes do language policies fall? What are some ways in which individuals and institutions recognize policy-related inequities and what justifications do they draw on as they attempt to explain, question, text, and change policies? In what ways do migrations within and across locales impact language teaching and learning contexts and how does this alter our notions of how policies get thought about and enacted? The various pieces in this special issue are oriented toward addressing different aspects of these questions in situated ways. Yet they are also oriented toward the bigger picture: the discourses, language ideologies, and global flows¹ (cf. Appadurai, 1996) that shape

¹ Our understanding of this term comes from Appadurai's (1996, pp. 33–37) influential book, *Modernity at Large*, in which he details five key dimensions of global cultural flows: (a) *ethnoscapes*, (b) *mediascapes*, (c) *technoscapes*, (d) *financescapes*, and (e) *ideoscapes*. Flows foreground the mobility, hybridity, and multidirectionality of cultural goods and ideas. The visual metaphor of *-scape* signifies how these flows are understood from the perspectives of sociohistorically situated groups and individuals.

the types of language policy questions we might pose or even imagine at this particular historical moment. Diverse as these articles are in their foci, varied as they are in their exploration of community and pedagogic issues, and geographically distant as they are from each other, they are held together by preoccupations with how practitioners enact and transform policies in everyday contexts of teaching, learning, and researching.

We believe that reading and writing about our own and other people's experiences and engagements with language policies enrich and advance TESOL professionalism in several important respects. For one, the localized perspectives offered here illustrate the extent to which policies are intimately and integrally tied to all aspects of our professional spaces and afford us immediate ways of reckoning what is at stake when we read/hear about policy enactments and experiences. Language policies do have consequences—for schooling, public broadcasting, the cohesion of imagined communities and nations (Anderson, 1983), or the status and vitality of indigenous and minority languages. Still, as the LPP field has increasingly come to recognize, such consequences or policy effects often develop in unintended or unplanned ways (Eggington, 2002). Indeed, as foregrounded by way of performativity theory (Pennycook, 2006, 2007), the declarative or propositional content of a language policy, when articulated locally, may actually set in motion group aspirations and/or tensions that governments and administrators may be ill-equipped to resolve but for which teachers, researchers, and administrators must craft workable solutions as these tensions and aspirations arise in classroom contexts.

AGENCY AND LOCALITY

Clearly, it is poor strategy to separate out a language policy and treat it on its own terms, disembedded from sociohistorical conditions and broader policymaking agendas, which persistently complicate language concerns, as Helen Moore's article in this issue demonstrates (see also Fishman, 2006; McGroarty, 2002; Schmidt, 2006; Tollefson, 2002). In this respect, the *practice* of policy encourages us, as researchers and teachers, to read between and behind the lines (cf. Cooke, 2004), to interpret the ambiguities and gaps in critical ways that open up moments and spaces for transformative pedagogical interventions. This latter point gives rise to a second key rationale for this special issue—specifically, a focus on the notion of *agency* and what might be learned and modeled after practitioners' decision-making experiences. As Stritikus (2003) observes, "in addition to [teachers'] pedagogical beliefs, political and per-

sonal ideologies are salient in the policy to practice connection” (p. 33). To understand the reasoning behind a policy-related response or action, increased attention to the complexities and contradictions of teacher identity formation (Alsup, 2006; Varghese, et al., 2005; see Winer, this issue) is warranted. Practitioners not only acquire—most often through teacher preparation—the profession’s dominant discourses on language learning and the linguistic resources or deficits of their minority students; they can also internalize—through a whole range of life experiences and media exposure—commonsense beliefs regarding the “subordinate” status of vernacular languages and literacies vis-à-vis economic development (Ramanathan, 2005), for example. Or, in different contexts, they may come to expect the “foreigner” in their classrooms to generate texts that testify to the exceptionality of the nation-state, particularly in times of tarnished reputation (see e.g., Harklau, 2003; Honig, 2001).

Research on individual beliefs, everyday contexts, and practices casts an instructive light on potential obstacles to policy initiatives and reforms. On these terms alone, however, we should consider the extent to which we have shortchanged the local, as Canagarajah (2005a) argues; that is, by relegating practitioners to the primary function of implementation, we risk reinforcing their subordinate status as bottom-up bit players in the LPP hierarchy, and in doing so, we also fail to fully grasp the conceptual and paradigmatic underpinnings that elevate the status of practice and local and emergent forms of knowledge. *Locality*, in this perspective, does not simply replicate or instantiate macro structures and ideologies of state and society. Indeed, locality is the site in which the microstrategies and techniques of governmental power—or *governmentality*, in Foucault’s terms (e.g., Moore, 2002; Pennycook, 2002, 2006)—are directly experienced and sometimes resisted. And it is from these direct experiences and conflicts that relevant and creative innovations around policy arise. Whether by initial design or not, as this special issue seeks to demonstrate, we are all—teachers, researchers, administrators, or curriculum writers—key stakeholders and partners in the realization of policy practices.

NEW SPACES AND DIRECTIONS IN THIS ISSUE

As with all efforts at creating new spaces for thought and action, the present focus on experiences with language policies would not have come about had it not been for the strong body of work already done in the area of policy studies. In particular, this is the second special issue on language policy (with Hornberger & Ricento’s 1996 issue being the first). To date scholars have provided a rich body of literature that ad-

dresses the status and formation of national and supranational language policies (Kaplan & Baldauf, 1997; Lo Bianco, 2005; Phillipson, 2003; Tsui & Tollefson, 2007) that both give rise to and reflect language ideologies (Ricento, 2000, 2006), linguistic cultures (Schiffman, 1996), and language-related nationalisms (Ricento & Burnaby, 1998). Others have addressed more local policies including those at state and institutional levels (Corson, 2001; McGroarty, 1997, 2002; Tollefson, 2002; Tollefson & Tsui, 2004), those impacting bilingual literacy (Cummins, 2000; King, 2001; Hornberger & Skilton-Sylvester, 2003; Wiley, 2004; Wiley & Wright 2004; Wright & Choi, 2006), minority language rights (May, 2001; Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000), and language testing contexts (Kunnan, 1998; Shohamy, 2006). In recent years, growing interest and international dialogue on LPP research has burgeoned with the growth of Internet forums such as listservs run by Schiffmann (see e.g., Consortium for Language Policy and Planning, n.d.) and Spolsky (see e.g., AILA Research Network on Language Policy, 2006), as well as comprehensive Web site resources such as those operated by the Language Policy Research Unit at Arizona State University (2007) and the Institute for Language and Education Policy (2007). New journals such as *Language Policy* and *Current Issues in Language Policy* supplement this heightened interest.

Our entry into this space attempts to nudge policy studies in a different direction. With a few notable exceptions (e.g., Goldstein, 2003; Pinet, 2006; Sharkey, 2004; Sritikus, 2003), the local and agentive have been underexamined in TESOL's engagement with language policies and planning. We wish to address this gap by bringing together a body of texts that underscore the idea that policies around English and other languages are more than just mandates formulated behind closed doors, that they emerge from humans attempting to promote their individual or collective visions of what they wish their worlds looked like, and that they defy containment despite efforts on the part of policy makers to package them neatly into manageable solutions to so-called language problems. It seems time that we go beyond documenting and describing how our current language policies often sustain or create inequalities—we accept this as a truism now—to spaces where we become cognizant of our agentive roles in their enactments. In other words, we wish to go beyond asking “what do language policies do,” to asking “what can we do with language policies in our immediate professional contexts?” This shift in emphasis is not as subtle as it first seems; its insistence on the ordinary and everyday experiences of practitioners (Canagarajah, 2005b; Fleming, 1998; Hornberger & Skilton-Sylvester, 2003; Morgan, 1998, 2004; Ramanathan, 2005) brings into view a whole range of movements, flows, and counter- and cross-flows around language policies. It shifts our gaze away from viewing policies as totalizing entities that happen to

people or that create hierarchies to realms where we start thinking more about what we can do with policies in the contingencies of our work.

Such an approach, whereby we move away from *policies as entities* to *policies as engagements*, also permits us to commence thinking about policies in terms defined by Bhattacharya et al. (this issue) as complex, multifaceted *signs* that have distinctive sociohistorical formations, whose interpretations and enactments rest in our hands, and are always contextual, processual, and negotiated. Signs, like policies, signify but never autonomously. They draw their life force from interpretations that get cast on them and from humans that claim and appropriate them into their respective domains (Ramanathan, 2006). Such an orientation helps dismantle the authority with which policies are invested and encourages practitioners to claim them in the most local of spaces. No longer conceived as passive recipients of fixed, immutable codes, practitioners are recast as active *sign-makers* (cf. Kress, 2003) and hence potential agents of change even in the most restrictive contexts.

This active, meaning-making perspective on policy texts recurs in many of the contributions to this special issue, perhaps most explicitly in Bhattacharya et al.'s multimodal analysis of the *textual cycle* (see e.g., Kress, et al., 2005) and the competing agendas realized in the divergent production of subject English across three classrooms in Delhi, London, and Johannesburg. Employing a similar contrastive model, Hornberger and Johnson articulate the emancipatory potential of language-in-education policies (cf. Corson, 1999) in respect to the powerful discursive spaces they create for practitioner interventions in the two case studies they describe (i.e., Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and Cochabamba, Bolivia). Clarke, likewise, describes transformative discursive spaces created through syllabus design—how the selection and classroom treatment of texts heightened student-teachers' awareness of the socio-political aspects of language education in a context (i.e., United Arab Emirates) where connections between policies and teachers' practices are not necessarily explicit. As these studies show, ambiguities, gaps, and patchwork decisions are far more prevalent and regular than previously depicted, and it seems imperative now these spaces between the lines be foregrounded because it is in these spaces that practitioner agency emerges.

KEY THEMES IN THE ENACTMENT OF POLICIES

Understanding Agency in Language Policy and Planning

Belated recognition of practitioner agency does not happen simply of its own accord nor should it be framed in naturalistic, progressive, or

disinterested terms. Following Ricento (2000), it is best contextualized as a historical phase—a transitional realignment of macro-political, epistemological and strategic factors in LPP research and theory. That is, although agency has always been an important aspect of LPP, what has significantly changed is the paradigmatic status of this activity, particularly through the recent advent of critical, postmodern, and ecological discourses (Brutt-Griffler, 2002; Kramsch, 2002; Pennycook, 2004, 2006; van Lier, 2004). In common, these various turns mark a weakening of positivistic modes of inquiry and the forms of misplaced concreteness conveyed through large-scale abstraction, quantification, and generalization across diverse and often incommensurable jurisdictions. In contrast and as amply demonstrated in this issue (see e.g., Clarke, Hornberger, & Johnson; Winer), research models that are locally grounded, critically reflexive, openly ideological, and ethnographic in form cannot help but illuminate the impact of teachers' voices and experiences in policy enactments.

Still, the foregrounding of practitioner agency is, in several respects, a double-edged sword. For one, it can be a convenient excuse for the scapegoating of teachers when the failure to achieve policy targets is publicly scrutinized. Viewed through particular political agendas, practitioner agency can also invite apprehension resulting in increased forms of regulation through inflexible curricula and funding tied to standardized test scores, concerns frequently raised regarding the No Child Left Behind legislation in the United States (Wright & Choi; Harper, Platt, Naranjo, & Boynton; Romero-Little, McCarty, Warhol, & Zepeda; this issue). The notion and full scope of what agency entails can also be an unwanted responsibility for many practitioners who feel ill equipped and relatively powerless to address the socioeconomic conditions that permeate impoverished communities and classrooms (Zappa-Holman, this issue). The double-edged sword of agency is thus significant in an additional sense: It compels practitioners to engage with the power bestowed on them via contemporary theories and acknowledge the inescapable politics of TESOL (see e.g., Edge, 2005; Kumaravadivelu, 2005). Johnston (2002) clarifies what this realization entails:

The introduction of the political dimension into our discussions about language teaching has also meant the introduction of a language of values to the field: Where before there was only really the question of what, psycho-linguistically speaking, was the most efficient way of acquiring a language, now there are matters of ideology, that is, beliefs about what is good and bad, right and wrong, in relation to politics and power relations. (p. 51)

In the following section, we take up Johnston's "language of values" in describing how various contributors to this special issue directly and indirectly address the ethics of agency in their local enactments of language policy.

Ethics and Policy Enactments

While obvious in some sections and latent in others, the various essays in this issue call attention to the values and beliefs that compel practitioners to respond to policy directives in different ways, whether by working to actively change institutional policies, or by writing about how governments accommodate to globalizing currents through enhanced English instruction, or in voicing concerns about how English positions learners who also speak and operate with other languages. In such examples, practitioners occupy tension-ridden spaces, where their interpretations and enactments of policies/signs are not always constructively received by colleagues and superiors. Nonetheless, many still choose to act, drawing on individualized notions of what is right or wrong in their professional conduct; we substitute the term *ethics* here—a term that has deep philosophical roots and that crucially informs issues around policy change. Our understandings of what ethical action is hinge on what we assume to be facts and values, and as Iris Murdoch (1992) points out, the two are completely intertwined. *Facts* are human inventions, yet we relate to them as independent truths, which make them potentially oppressive when we place them beyond human scrutiny. *Values*, on the other hand, we see in relativistic terms and tend to segregate them "in order to keep [them] pure and untainted, not derived from or mixed with empirical facts" (p. 25). This separation, according to Murdoch, is misleading because our engagements with the world emerge from what we take to be facts and always proceed from values that tinge what we take to be the realities of our worlds.

Several contributors to this issue struggle with the so-called facts imposed on them by outside experts, politicians, and policy-makers. They mediate these facts by drawing on a range of values, enactments that emerge in situ from a heightened sense of disquiet about current conditions (Benhabib, 1988; Lakoff & Collier, 2004; MacIntyre, 1985), and they take actions to mitigate the most oppressive factors in the service of their students and communities. Parmar, for instance, in the Forum section, writes about how he, as the principal of a premier English-medium college in Gujarat, India, and as a Jesuit priest reads the inequities around caste in his contexts and draws on his position and his religious values to change current institutional policies so to make room for vernacular-medium Dalit students. Ethical action for him includes

reading against historically held, allegedly commonsense assumptions about disallowing vernacular-medium students into English-medium colleges, and about Dalit and aboriginal students not being able to succeed at higher order literacy skills in English, given their vernacular-education backgrounds. As his piece points out, much of the success of the admitted Dalit students emerged from creating nonformal contexts where their self-confidence was enhanced and where their awareness about their rights was heightened. Likewise, Omoniyi writes about four non-governmental micro-language planning schemes in sub-Saharan Africa, including the Oudet Project that promotes literacy among rural farmers in West Africa. Facts, in this case, are the Eurocentric discourses about language planning that have typically been formulated in English or French and that have drowned out local needs and aspirations voiced in local languages.

In the Japanese context, Kobayashi feels compelled to write against gender discrimination and English language policies, especially in relation to ways in which national-level TEFL policies and ideologies work to elevate and sustain male success, while keeping women in lower paying and lower status jobs. As she points out, commonsense assumptions in this case include hegemonic societal discourses that allocate high-powered, corporate jobs to men regardless of their English language background, when women in that context with greater English language fluency and motivation find themselves left out. Likewise, Romero et al.'s and Harper et al.'s pieces detail oppressive conditions that current U.S. educational policies such as No Child Left Behind (with their insistence on test and assessment measures) create in Native American communities and Florida K-12 classrooms, with ethics being about giving voice to ways in which historically marginalized communities struggle to maintain their languages and identities, and to documenting teachers' struggles with mandated reading curricula that position their ESL students in nonfacilitative contexts.

Interpretations around *ethics*, though, are fraught, because enactments around them beg the question about whose terms, interests, and collective common values are being negotiated. An ethical imagination is not born of some intrinsic human essence and is in fact rife with debate and contestation. Debates over what rights and whose rights warrant our intervention and formal protection in the form of policies (linguistic, economic) raise pertinent question as to how and why particular values get promoted through the English-globalization nexus (see Bruthiaux, 2007, for a critique of the moralistic overtones of language rights debates). As the next two sections show, surges around language policies and globalization emerge from competing ideologies and legitimizing of certain facts and call into question issues about national or group identities and the agendas of neoliberalism.

Globalization² and Policy Enactments

A *globalizing* world, according to Appadurai (2000), is “a world fundamentally characterized by objects in motion. These objects include ideas and ideologies, people and goods, images and messages, technologies and techniques. . . . It is also, of course, a world of structure, organisations, and other stable social forms” (p. 5). For Appadurai, however, this stability is only apparent in that the nation-state, the most “stable” of structures, is seriously constrained in its capacities to address and manage transnational phenomena and their local articulations. The uncertainty and unevenness of such a characterization, on the one hand, underpins the strategic relevance of micro language planning (Baldauf, 2005; see Omoniyi, this issue), the devolution of policy decision-making (Corson, 1999), and on the conditions of locality and agency that support such interventions, as foregrounded in this special issue. On the other, Appadurai’s thesis highlights the complex challenges that macro policy makers face in their responses to globalization.

National governments are deemed irresponsible if acquisition planning fails to provide sufficient access to the language of global opportunity—now universally perceived as English. Yet, the language of opportunity can have serious status and prestige implications for local languages of solidarity and ancient memory. In particular polities, ideologies that adhere to English (e.g., [neo] colonialism, consumerism, secularism, egalitarianism) invoke mixed or hostile receptions for the perceived threats they may pose to indigenous beliefs and traditional social hierarchies; or alternatively, they can create new political and cultural expectations that threaten to destabilize existing regimes and federations. It is not surprising, as several contributors to this issue show, that nation-states develop self-interested and selective habits, appropriating the global code in ways that seek to sustain, with varying degrees of success, the linguistic and sociocultural integrity of their societies.

In their report from France, for example, Clapson and Hyatt detail the obstacles (i.e., native-like French language abilities and an acculturated understanding of the national exams) that native-English-speaking teachers (NESTs) face in order to be accredited as English teachers in the public education system. The French model thus serves to mitigate dominant TESOL discourses both by undermining its monolingual biases through the promotion of native-French speakers for EFL teaching and by privileging traditional humanities/humanistic approaches and

² For our purposes, *globalization* can be usefully defined as a “multidimensional set of social processes that create, multiply, stretch and intensify worldwide social interdependencies and exchanges while at the same time fostering in people a growing awareness of deepening connections between the local and the distant” (Steger, 2003, p. 13).

contrastive/grammar-translation methods over communicative language teaching. Historical and ideological undercurrents, where the United Kingdom is perceived as being reluctantly European, or the United States as being economically hegemonic, seem to inform the ambivalence NESTs feel of being signs of the Anglophone world. In a similar perspective, Winer correlates the rise of Québec nationalism and growing support for sovereignty and independence since the mid-1970s to the creation of language-in-education policies that promote and extend French in the province while restricting the study and use of English. She describes the indifferent and sometimes hostile reactions to English from francophone teachers and students and details how a bachelor of education program helps prepare new English language teachers to address such tensions and the low motivation they will often face in their future classrooms.

It is misleading to view these types of language policy decisions as merely regressive or rearguard actions to safeguard ancient tongues and authentic traditions. They provide, at the same time, strong evidence of the imagined nation being selectively and performatively retraditionalized in reference to international audiences and the global marketplace of ideas.³ Clarke's article on English language teacher education in the United Arab Emirates is indicative of this dynamic, outward-looking perspective. In the classes he taught and observed, local cultural practices and materials are used alongside popular ELT resources, resulting in a process Lim (1991) defines as *cultural equivalencing*—the “systematic promotion of the local culture in an English language teaching program with the aim of putting it on the same level of significance as western culture” (p. 61). On a related note, Schneer explores the Japanese discursive notion of *kokusai-ka*—a term loosely defined as “internationalization” but with clear, nationalistic connotations—in the construction of Japanese and Western identities in English language textbooks. The learning of an international language, in this perspective, has the additional function of conveying and promoting a notion of Japan's uniqueness to the world (cf. Kubota, 2002). In instances such as these, cultural continuity is a dialectical process oriented to the future and relations with Others, a point Schneer eloquently states:

Any country's display of national identity is rarely grounded in the present. It is a self-gazing, implicit assessment of what the country was or what

³ Bauman's (2005) insights on identity in a globalizing world are insightful for the performative point being made here: “Boundaries are not drawn to fence off and protect already existing identities. . . . ‘Communal’ identities are byproducts of feverish boundary drawing. It is only after the border-posts have been dug in that the myths of their antiquity are spun and the fresh cultural/political origins of identity are carefully covered up by the genesis stories” (pp. 452–453).

it hopes to become. Whether that gaze be deemed patriotic or nationalistic is really a matter of degree that requires not only looking at how the state relates to itself in space and time, but how it relates to other states as well.

To reiterate, nation-states lack the jurisdictional means to coordinate or manage global flows and the threats/opportunities they pose. In English-dominant societies, for example, governments presume the general utility of learning and speaking English, and they set out to provide uniform ESL policies and related curricula designed to facilitate the integration/assimilation of adult immigrants. Yet, such strategies often ignore the degree to which newcomers—especially in major cosmopolitan centers—collectively transform and hybridize the social practices, attitudes, and spaces into which they ostensibly integrate, rendering them largely unrecognizable by the terms defined in policy. Nor do such strategies adequately account for the vibrant multilingualism and creative forms of language contact that often occur in these globalized centers—the codeswitching and crossings, and what Block (this issue) has termed *niche lingua francas*, a phenomenon he examines through a small-scale study of service workers in London. Reminiscent of Goldstein’s (1996) workplace ethnography, Block explores the social and economic reasons why English isn’t the only game in town and then considers their broader significance in the context of TESOL policy making.

When nation-states do acknowledge and address their ethnolinguistic pluralism, it is increasingly in terms of human capital and as leverage against the uncertainties of a highly competitive and integrated global economy (e.g., Corson, 2002). In this respect, the global marketplace of ideas—similar to the market for goods and services—is a notably unlevel playing field in which control of mass media and global information systems gives marked advantage to powerful Western nations in their abilities to naturalize and universalize their own values and interests. And it is the global naturalization of a particular economic ideology—neoliberalism⁴—that, in large part, inhibits policy-makers and practitioners from addressing the substantive material factors that obstruct their local language policy goals, as several contributors to this issue indicate.

Zappa-Hollman’s article on EFL instruction in Argentina (this issue)

⁴ *Neoliberalism* is a confusing term if viewed through contemporary ideologies, particularly in North America, where liberalism is equated with state interventionism in the service of greater socioeconomic equality. Neo-liberalism, here, traces its roots to the *laissez-faire*, noninterventionist ideals of 18th-century British philosophers such as Adam Smith and David Ricardo—a legacy reflected in current measures that seek to create optimal conditions for economic globalization through the down-sizing of national governments, reduced taxation, and the privatization and de-regulation of economic activity (Steger, 2003, pp. 40–41).

reveals the not so invisible hand of the World Bank and Inter-American Development Bank in promoting neoliberal reforms that have reduced public investment in education and have exacerbated class inequities. She then describes how these structural changes are experienced by EFL teachers at the local level, where the harsh socioeconomic conditions of many Argentinean communities contribute to low motivation and problems with discipline and violence. In multilingual Djibouti (Dudzik, this issue), where Arabic and French are official languages, Western influences and market-based concerns are also evident in the perception and adoption of English as the language of modernization. Still, Dudzik is optimistic that recent competency-based reforms to English curricula can be indigenized to more closely serve Djiboutian goals and values. On an optimistic note as well, Martin's Cuba report details the collaborative development of a successful program in ESP for tourism and the pre-eminent role of English in the nation's "creative adaptability to changing circumstances in a volatile international environment" (this issue, p. 556).

It is not only so-called developing countries that are compelled to reduce public expenditures and to reform education in the service of corporate agendas. In Canada, a country of enviable affluence and whose national identity is symbolically bound to immigration and multiculturalism, the current provision of adult ESL instruction reflects a consistent pattern of provincial and federal government cutbacks and accountability measures which have "deprofessionalized teachers of non-credit ESL and allowed their job conditions to deteriorate" (Burnaby, 2002, p. 76). Haque and Cray's study of teachers in the federal government's Language Instruction for New Canadians (LINC) program substantiates the deterioration that Burnaby describes. Haque and Cray's informants give voice to teaching conditions characterized by substandard classrooms, poor teaching resources, low pay and lack of job security. They also describe conditions of continuous intake and multilevel classrooms, which make adherence to closely specified levels of LINC curricula unworkable in most accounts.

To varying degrees, all policy enactments reflect powerful discourses that compete in shaping the imagined horizons of nation-states and their citizens. "The work of the imagination" as Appadurai (1996) concurs, "is a space of contestation in which individuals and groups seek to annex the global into their own practices of the modern" (p. 4). The practices of neoliberalism indicate such an example, especially as reflected in the "glib-speak" (Hasan, 2003, p. 446) of institutions such as the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, and the World Trade Organization in promoting the types of reforms decried in this section. As Hasan shows, neoliberal values do not spread solely on their intrinsic "merit" but also through language practices that seek to construct realities favorable for

their spread. Her notion of a *reflection literacy*⁵ suggests the kinds of language priorities we practitioners can draw on to construct alternative realities in our local enactments of policy.

CONCLUSION

Our aim with this special issue is to raise awareness among *TESOL Quarterly* readers about localized enactments around language policies and the ways in which issues of agency, national identities, and globalizing currents find distinct articulations on the ground. Our focus on the local is deliberate, because single cases afford glimpses into complex interplays between policies, pedagogic practices, institutional constraints, and migrations. As the various pieces show, our individual and collective existences do not occur in pristine spaces within which we place individuals, institutions, and policies, but inside a fluid set of social relations with emergent possibilities for change. In other words, locality is not just the end point of top-down directives but also the genesis of bottom-up initiatives, which cumulatively and over time transform traditional flows and frameworks of decision-making. Our focus on language is also deliberate, particularly in respect to the creative, interpretive possibilities we assign to policies as texts/signs. Viewing policies this way, as texts that are wrought by their cultural codes and conventions and that are imbued with particular ideologies and perspectives, permits us to consider how meanings around them emerge from our engagements with them. It is on these themes around English language policies that we wish to cast disciplinary floodlights, hence this issue.

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⁵ A critical, humanistic counter-discourse, Hasan's (2003) *reflection literacy* "aims to create in the pupil an understanding of reading and writing as bearers of deep social significance, not simply as a vehicle for information but as a potent instrument of social formation" (Hasan, 2003, p. 446).

development. Her most recent book, *The English-Vernacular Divide: Postcolonial Language Politics and Practice*, offers a situated account of localized language policies and enactments around English and vernacular-medium education in postcolonial India.

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