

from a historical as well as contemporary perspective. I believe that they should be obligatory reading for all pre-service teachers. The other chapters, with the exception of ten and eleven, are a review of already familiar concepts and activities, but they are clearly organised and provide a very readable introduction to the field of teaching young second language learners in the mainstream classroom.

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Language Policy, Culture, and Identity in Asian Contexts

Amy Tsui and James Tollefson (eds). New Jersey: Erlbaum, 2007. Pp. 283.
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Globalisation has had a pervasive and profound impact on contemporary societies (Albrow, 1997; Giddens, 2003). In this regard, Asian countries are no exception. The far-reaching impact of globalisation is felt not only on economic activities but also on the political, social and cultural aspects of contemporary life in widely diverse Asian contexts. In particular, globalisation has fundamentally changed the sociocultural and linguistic ecology of Asian societies and brought about highly complex relationships between language, culture, and identity in these societies (Tsui, 2004). *Language Policy, Culture, and Identity in Asian Contexts* is an edited volume that focuses on such relationships in 12 Asian societies differing widely in terms of economic, political, and sociocultural development. It examines how these societies have responded to globalisation in their language policies and how languages are appropriated in the social (re)construction of national and cultural identities.

The book is comprised of a preface and 14 chapters. The opening chapter by the two editors provides an analytic framework for organising the case study chapters and for making sense of the immensely complex trends revealed by the case studies in the intricate interplay between language policy responses to globalisation and national cultural identity (re)construction for economic, political, and sociocultural reasons. The framework addresses a number of important questions that centre on three intertwined themes: (1) the Asian governments' language policy responses to globalisation and their takes on English; (2) the dialectical relationship between language policy and the (re)construction of national and cultural identities to achieve various sociopolitical ends; and (3) language-related tensions in multilingual contexts and the positioning of English in relation to these tensions. In their discussion of the first theme, Tsui and Tollefson point out that in order to participate in the global economy and international politics, many Asian governments have

strongly promoted English by 'making the learning of English a national mission' (p. 7), by adopting it as an official or working language and as a medium of instruction, and by allocating more resources and curriculum time to the provision of English language education. These language policy responses have given rise to 'the paradox of preserving or building national cultural identities and promoting a foreign language that embodies different values, cultures, and traditions' (p. 3). The frequently adopted strategies for resolving the paradox include linking English proficiency to national development, constructing national cohesiveness and cultural uniqueness in English and using English as a tool to promote national, cultural identities to the rest of the world. In their exposition of the second theme, the authors draw on language policy developments in Hong Kong, Brunei and New Zealand to demonstrate how language policies 'have been integral parts of the sociopolitical processes' (p. 13) underpinning the discursive (re)construction of histories and cultural identities. In their discussion of the last theme, Tsui and Tollefson observe that in relation to the tensions arising from policy efforts to engineer linguistic homogeneity as part of nation building in multilingual Asian societies, English may play diverse and often contradictory roles: a tool for linguistic resistance or an embodiment of linguistic hegemony, 'a 'democratising' resource' (p. 17) or 'a resource of the elite' (p. 18), a language undermining linguistic diversity or a language fostering multilingualism, to name only a few.

Chapters 2–13 are organised into three parts based on the three themes discussed above. Part 1 consists of Chapters 2–6, which focus respectively on the language policy responses to globalisation made by the governments of Japan, South Korea, Malaysia, Singapore and Cambodia. In Chapter 2, Hashimoto examines how the teaching of English is positioned in relation to Japan's conception and promotion of internationalisation, a process that centers on the reaffirmation of Japaneseness and 'the "exportability" of Japanese culture to the world' (p. 27). Japan strives to maintain cultural independence and resist cultural homogenisation and linguistic domination brought about by globalisation through 'deconstructing' English, that is, removing the language from the 'core identity of Japan' (p. 27), teaching it as a lingua franca of technology, and appropriating it as a tool for promoting the distinctively Japanese qualities to the rest of the world. As in Japan, Yim points out in Chapter 3, English is also viewed as a useful tool for South Korea to remain economically competitive in the international arena and as an important means of propagating 'the Korean cultures and Korean ways of thinking' (p. 38) to the rest of the world. Unlike Japan, however, South Korea does not resist 'new global cultures, especially those coming from North America' (p. 43). Yim's analysis of government-approved English textbooks reveals the predominance of white middle class English speaking cultures and the promotion of Americanisation. Alongside such cultural assimilation and Westernisation, English is appropriated to foster nationalism, construct national identity, rediscover Korean culture and promote Korean values. Similar strategies have been adopted in Malaysia to confront 'the dual task of nation building and preparing its citizens to take part in globalisation processes' (p. 55). In Chapter 4, David and Govindasamy's analysis of English language education in Malaysia and three government-endorsed English textbook series also reveals the appropriation of English for a variety of

economic, cultural and sociopolitical purposes. Thus learning English is viewed as a means of strengthening Malaysia's competitive edge, and the English curriculum materials are used not only to foster global awareness but also to promote national pride, national cohesiveness and mutual assimilation of different cultures.

Chapter 5 by Chew examines language ideology and language practices associated with two varieties of English in Singapore. Singlish, the basilectal variety, 'draws its roots from several Chinese dialects, Malay, Tamil, and English' (p. 80), is widely used in daily interaction, especially by those with a low proficiency in English, and is regarded as a marker of the Singaporean identity. However, it is also viewed by many, including those who speak it at home, as lacking importance and symbolic capital. By contrast, Local Standard English (LSE), the acrolectal variety, has a close affinity with Standard British English, is spoken in the public domain by educated Singaporeans, and is seen as having greater exchange value in the global market. In recent years, there has been strong intervention by the Singapore government to promote LSE at the expense of Singlish through the annual Speak Good English Movement launched in 2000. Chew observes that this language choice is 'based on economic criteria rather than cultural and nationalistic ones' (p. 75). It is a pragmatic initiative taken to enable Singapore to ride high on the wave of global capitalism and to benefit maximally from globalisation. In contrast to Singapore's proactive approach, Chapter 6 by Clayton shows that language choice in Cambodia has developed largely as a reactive response to globalisation. The country's economic and political transition in the last 20 years has brought in various economic, political and assistance actors. Because of the enormous clout wielded by them, these actors have been able to influence language choices in education. In particular, they have introduced demands for English, French, and Chinese. According to Clayton, these international actors have so much sway in language choice that they pose a serious threat to the government's language policy agenda.

Chapters 7–9 on Hong Kong, Brunei and New Zealand comprise Part 2 of the book, which explores the second theme discussed above, that is, the relationship between language policy and identity (re)construction. In Chapter 7, Tsui examines the role of language policy in the construction and redefining of the cultural identities of the people of Hong Kong before and after its reunification with mainland China. Her analysis shows that the British colonial government's language policies were integral parts of the sociopolitical processes engineered to 'de-sinicise' the people of Hong Kong, to discursively construct a denationalised and depoliticised Hong Kong identity, and to establish the hegemony of English over Chinese. Since its reunification with China, language policies have again played a significant role in the reconstruction of a new identity for Hong Kong and in the process of 'resinicisation' which reconnects Hong Kong's history and cultural traditions with China. Similar to Hong Kong, language policy has also played a significant and symbolic role in the discursive construction of cultural identities in Brunei. In Chapter 8, Saxena explores how 'the policy pressures from above and diverse forms of sociolinguistic practices from below are constructing, deconstructing, and reconstructing Bruneians' multilingual and multicultural identities' (p. 158). In doing so, the author

presents a complex narrative of how the dominant Brunei Malays have been able to consolidate their privileges and political power by constructing a hybrid national cultural identity through the official ideology of Malay Islamic Monarchy and language policies that support Malay, English, and Arabic. In contrast to Brunei, it is the language of an ethnic minority, Māori, that has been appropriated as a symbol of national identity in New Zealand. As Benton points out in Chapter 9, however, the appropriation of language as a marker of identity is a 'two-way street' (p. 177). Alongside the appropriation of Māori by the English-dominant state, a Māori identity has been woven through English, and a Māori worldview has been infused into English so that a distinctive variety of English, Māori English, has become a marker of Māori identity.

The last part of the book includes four chapters on language politics in India, Nepal, Pakistan and Bangladesh. In Chapter 10, Agnihotri presents a detailed account of how language policy efforts aimed at seeking linguistic homogeneity and 'monolingual solutions to a multilingual and multicultural problem' (p. 192) have favoured the elite, discriminated against the underprivileged minorities, given rise to political conflicts among ethnic groups, and contributed to the supremacy of English over other languages in India. In Chapter 11, Sonntag shows how shifts in language policy have been closely linked to tumultuous politics in Nepal, a small country with rich linguistic diversity. Although an official language policy favoring multilingualism and a more inclusive definition of linguistic minorities was implemented by a democratically elected government in the 1990s, the current political turmoil caused by an autocratic dictatorship and an increasingly successful Maoist insurgency is undermining the nascent recognition and expression of multilingual identities ushered in by the earlier democratic transition. Chapter 12 by Rahman addresses the politico-economic inequality in Pakistan perpetuated and exacerbated by language policies that have supported English in public and private domains. English, Rahman points out, stays at the top of the linguistic hierarchy in Pakistani society and has contributed to a social divide and linguistic apartheid. Although it is associated with the propagation of liberal values and tolerance, English has had an important role to play in the concentration of economic, political and social power in the hands of the Westernised urban elite. A similar language-based socio-economic divide characterises Bangladeshi society as well. Chapter 13 by Hossain and Tollefson focuses on the officially promoted dual roles for Bengali (nationalism) and English (instrumentality) in Bangladesh and the accompanying socio-economic inequality. Although Bengali is recognised as having played a fundamental role in the independence of Bangladesh, made the state language, and constructed as a central expression of Bangladeshi national identity, it is English that has enjoyed a powerful status, gatekeeping access to economic rewards and sociocultural advancement. The continued use of English by a small but powerful elite has maintained wide socio-economic divisions in Bangladeshi society.

The closing chapter by the editors summarises and discusses four major research issues that emerge from the case studies. The first issue concerns the advantages of, and challenges for, a constructionalist perspective on identity, as compared to an essentialist one, in research on the impact of language policies on identity (re)construction. The second issue relates to the appropriation of an

essentialist discourse of cultural identity in state language policies and the important political, economic and social reasons behind such discursive processes and strategies. The third issue has to do with the complementarity of a social class perspective and a discursive one in the study of the role of language policies in identity (re)construction and the 'importance of a complex analysis of discursive processes and social class' (p. 266). The last issue concerns the need to move beyond a top-down rationalist approach to language planning and policy to focus on 'culture, ideology, changing and fluid identities, and the complex and shifting hierarchies of social (in)equality that are at the heart of language policy processes' (p. 268).

Overall, the book has a number of strengths. One strength is its inclusion of a range of Asian countries that differ in sociopolitical contexts, in particular, countries that have been under-represented in the language policy literature, such as Bangladesh, Brunei, Cambodia and Nepal. A second strength is the insider's perspective provided by each chapter on each of the Asian societies presented. In addition, the opening chapter with its analytical framework and the closing chapter with its insightful generalisations help to put the case-study chapters in perspective. Finally, the chapters collectively present a rich and textured narrative that captures complex patterns and contradictory trends in the intricate intertwining of language, culture and identity in Asian contexts. There are a couple of downsides to the book as well. First, several chapters are devoid of analyses grounded in a theory of language policy and identity, though admittedly this problem is alleviated to some extent by the first and last chapter. Second, there is the conspicuous omission of mainland China. Given its growing economic, political, and cultural influences in the region and the world, the failure to include mainland China makes any book on contemporary Asian societies incomplete. These downsides notwithstanding, the book is a timely and invaluable addition to the scholarship on globalisation, language planning and policy, culture and identity.

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