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Advancing Excellence in English Language Teaching



A Principles-Based Approach for English Language Teaching Policies and Practices

A TESOL White Paper
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Executive Summary

This TESOL white paper introduces the notion of a principles-based approach (PBA) for English language teaching policies and practices. PBA identifies six principles aimed at helping policymakers, researchers, and practitioners build effective and successful practices within varied contexts while identifying and engaging with the challenges that the implementation of these practices will encounter. The principles are collaboration, relevance, evidence, alignment, transparency, and empowerment (CREATE). While acknowledging the complexities inherent in the process of language policy and planning, this white paper also includes a discussion of how these principles have emerged as a result of the demands of globalization and the interests of the local populations of countries in which the teaching and learning of English is having a major impact.



A Principles-Based Approach for English Language Teaching Policies and Practices

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Introduction: Language Policy and Proficiency Standards

This TESOL white paper introduces the notion of a principles-based approach (PBA) for English language teaching (ELT) policies and practices. PBA builds on the current work on language policy and practice, but instead of providing a set of standards, it identifies a set of principles that can help policymakers in diverse contexts develop locally appropriate language policies and practices. Previous work on the standards in relation to language teaching in a variety of contexts has enabled language policymakers and administrators to identify aspects of quality language teaching and delivery to measure the success of their programs against. However, the development of standards and the application of these standards across varied contexts can be problematic. The application of a set of standards has to be based on assumptions related to the distribution of resources, access to knowledge, and appropriate infrastructure. In addition, the types of methodologies and assumptions about learning and teaching that underlie standards are also based on notions of language teaching approaches which espouse “a particular view of the world and [can be] articulated in the interests of unequal power relationships” (Pennycook, 1989, pp. 589–590). Therefore, deciding which methodology is most suitable and determining what standards the delivery of these teaching approaches are evaluated against could be an imposition of criteria and benchmarks on local policymakers and practitioners, who may not find these approaches relevant or successful in their contexts. Understanding the limitations that such an imposition might pose in different contexts, with varying capacity for achieving these standards, professional organizations such as the TESOL International Association have attempted to collaborate with local ministries of education to develop contextually relevant standards (e.g., *Integrating EFL Standards into Chinese Classroom Settings* series; see Gu, Hughes, Murphey, Robbins, Zemach, & Zhang, 2006). The collaborative development of context-appropriate standards is an important step in developing higher quality language programs in a range of contexts where there is an ever-increasing demand for ELT. However, the involvement of TESOL (or other such entities) in developing these standards in such contexts is limited. In addition, standards developed for one context that are taken at face value in other contexts may achieve variable results.

Ultimately, a set of standards developed to enhance ELT in one context cannot be applied to other contexts. The unique sociocultural, political, economic, and historical aspects of each individual country or setting need to be taken into account when developing language policies and ELT programs and standards appropriate to these contexts. In this respect, local consultants working and developing research in these countries are best suited to determine what constitutes effective practices within those countries. Therefore, this TESOL white paper recommends the development of a principles-based approach to influencing and enhancing successful and effective ELT practices and policies.

This white paper introduces a principles-based approach (PBA) for ELT practices and policies. PBA provides a set of six principles that emerge from a consideration of a range of local and global issues that relate to, impact, and influence the ELT policies, practices, and outcomes in diverse contexts. These principles, which will be discussed in more detail, are collaboration, relevance, evidence, alignment, transparency, and empowerment (CREATE). By considering these principles, various stakeholders will be able to mold their own ELT practices and policies in ways that suit their needs and reflect local conditions and practices. As such, PBA moves away from a prescriptive approach to language practice and policy and refrains from setting any standards or universal measures across diverse contexts. Instead, PBA recognizes the need for using different approaches to ensure effective delivery and successful outcomes of ELT practices and policies. To achieve this goal, stakeholders can use the PBA principles to identify relevant issues, and, by doing so, they can develop local practices and policies that can be easily implemented and that result in achievable outcomes. This paper will show the need for a PBA and outline a tentative set of principles that may be considered in pursuing a PBA. Follow-up papers will discuss the implementation of this approach.

>>> This paper is written to help policymakers, practitioners, researchers, and other stakeholders recognise challenges faced when developing policy.

This paper was written to help policymakers, practitioners, researchers, and other stakeholders recognise challenges faced when developing policy and consider how policy is translated into practice. In doing so, it will demonstrate that a PBA will help them design and deliver more effective policies and practices in a range of contexts. For the purposes of this paper, we have assumed that the ultimate goal of any government, organization, or institution involved in developing or using language in education policy (in the context of ELT) is to ensure that students can use the language with the proficiency required to enhance their prospects in accessing better opportunities in education, community membership, and employment within their own contexts and/or globally. Identifying the impact of social, economic, and political forces on policymaking decisions on a macrolevel and the needs of students, teachers, and community members within particular contexts on a microlevel, can enable policymakers, practitioners, and researchers to identify and engage with a range of issues that affect policymaking decisions. In addition, it can enable policymakers to predict any possible challenges in relation to implementation and to ensure that the process of policymaking takes into account these issues when developing ELT initiatives and interventions.

Some of the issues identified in this white paper include the impact and influence of extralinguistic factors on language policy and planning (LPP), such as the sociopolitical context in which policy is formulated (Cooper, 1989). This issue is related to the political and ideological orientations of LPP and the use of language policy, especially in relation to more dominant and powerful languages, to serve the interests of particular political parties and social hierarchies (Ricento, 2000; Tollefson, 1991). As Tollefson states, “language policies are essentially political documents,” suggesting that policies serve the interests of dominant groups in maintaining their power and prestige while marginalizing, excluding, and even exploiting minority groups and speakers of other languages (p. 87). The PBA principles aim to identify potential negative effects of policy by highlighting issues that, if not considered, may further disempower local and minority communities. In the case of English, which has been hailed a global lingua franca and the language of globalization, it is increasingly important to identify and acknowledge the power imbalances that emerge as

English is given a privileged position. In deciding to focus on English over other majority and minority languages within these contexts, policymakers are, deliberately or inadvertently, further enhancing the economic and sociopolitical value of English, and disempowering local languages and communities.

While understanding that LPP is motivated by primarily sociopolitical and economic forces, the LPP research focus on the politics of the English language has shifted the gaze of LPP away from understandings about language itself. Therefore, though LPP uses linguistic theory and knowledge about language for designing and delivering ELT programs, the focus on language itself has often been marginalized without clear acknowledgement of the fact that certain forms or varieties of a language, for example, can have more social, economic, and political privilege and currency than others. In addition, access to and proficiency in privileged forms of language can result in better prospects for students and communities (J. Martin, 1999). A further issue, which relates to the translation of policy into practice, is the limited communication between practitioners and policymakers resulting in a conflict in perceptions between the two (Kaplan, 2009). This paper will address some of these issues by identifying a set of principles that can help ensure that the sociopolitical and linguistic factors are taken into account when formulating policy and translating policy into practice.

We now turn to a discussion of previous approaches to LPP to identify how LPP research has contributed to the understanding of policy and practices and shaped the development of PBA.

Approaches to LLP

Classical LPP research focused on descriptions of policy and planning and goals within varied contexts through the use of frameworks such as Haugen's (1972) ecology of languages, Cooper's (1989) accounting scheme and other frameworks based on understanding the delicacies of LPP from the macro to micro level of implementation. These models are summarised and subsumed in Hornberger's (2006) six-dimensional framework, which divides LPP into three types: *status* (about the uses of language), *acquisition* (about the users of language), and *corpus* (about language). Each of these types of LPP can take a formal focus (policy planning) or a functional focus (cultivation planning), giving us six dimensions of LPP. The six-dimensional framework provides a useful point of departure for the analysis of LPP from the macroscopic to microscopic level; however, classical LPP frameworks such as Hornberger's have traditionally been questioned for their lack of critical approaches focusing on power relations (Hornberger, 2006; Kaplan & Baldauf, 1997). In addition, the frameworks are primarily descriptive in that they do not account for the actual "process of language planning" (Kaplan & Baldauf, p. 87). Although we will not attempt to describe the processes of language planning, it does aim to provide a set of principles that can guide the process to ensure that it is more equitable, effective, and sensitive to the context in which the policy is formulated. In doing so, PBA incorporates the notion of "language ecology" in an education setting by taking into account the diverse sociopolitical settings "where the processes of language use create, reflect and challenge particular hierarchies and hegemonies" (Creese & Martin, 2008, p. i). PBA also acknowledges that "schools and classrooms and their interactive practices [are] . . . part of a bigger and more

powerful political state in which ideologies function to reproduce particular balances of power” (p. i). Because English plays a particularly hegemonic role in most postcolonial communities and endangers other languages through its link with globalization, it is especially important to keep these factors in mind when considering the sociopolitical influences that language policy and practice have in maintaining, developing, and promoting local languages (including minority languages) (Baldauf, Kaplan, & Kamwangamalu, 2010). In the following section, we introduce a set of key factors that contribute to the development of PBA.

Factors That Should Be Considered in a PBA

To further our understanding about how a PBA can contribute to the successful implementation of ELT, it is necessary first to look at some of the major factors that inform LPP. As stated earlier, all language learning, teaching, and other education practices take place within a broad sociopolitical and economic context. These factors influence the development of ideas, theories, and policies that influence what happens in a classroom, with what resources, and how. To understand and develop an appropriate set of principles, some of the key factors that relate to students’ experience of language learning and teaching need to be unpacked.

Table 1 outlines some of the major factors in LPP. The top row in the table includes a list of contextual factors that shape the overall agendas of a geopolitical region (e.g., a country, a province, a state, etc.) or a unit (e.g., an institution, a school, etc.). Below this, we have identified three sets of knowledge structures that are shaped by the contextual factors that, in turn, bear on students’ classroom experiences. The three knowledge structures that relate to PBA are *linguistic theories*, *theories of language learning and teaching*, and *frameworks of language policy and planning*. Each of these knowledge structures is a set of abstract ideas that are translated into tangible materials and experiences through an interim stage in which the ideas are documented through a set of descriptions and protocols. The ideas and knowledge become increasingly concrete as we progress through each of the columns.

Table 1. Factors Influencing PBA

Socio-economic, ideological, political, and other contextual factors

Abstract ↑ ↓ Concrete	Linguistic theory	Theories of learning and teaching	Policy & planning
	Grammatics; language description	Teacher education	Curriculum
	Texts, lexico-grammar, phonology, etc.	Classroom practices	Textbooks, syllabi and other material etc.

Students

>>> Different linguistic theories explain language in different ways, which result in different types of language descriptions and influence the choices of pedagogical material.

Linguistic theories are abstract ideas about what language is and how it works; this knowledge is understood in terms of the study of language (through a creation of metalanguage—grammatics—and language descriptions). These linguistic descriptions are then taken into account in developing texts and other material that students are exposed to in their learning environment. In short, different linguistic theories explain language in different ways, which result in different types of language descriptions and influence the choices of texts and grammatical components used in the pedagogical material that students learn and are taught through. Similarly, various theories of learning and teaching explain how (language) learning takes place and how this understanding can be used for teaching purposes. These theories are taught to the teachers during their training programs, and the teachers use them in developing their pedagogical practices. Frameworks of language in education policy also influence the curriculum, which in turn, shapes the syllabi, textbooks, and other teaching and learning resources that the students use in their classes. Thus, the three broad theoretical areas are operationalized in different ways to shape the learning-teaching behavior and material that students experience. These different theories and areas are not necessarily independent of each other and may overlap and/or influence the other areas. Traditional approaches to LPP tend to focus on the policy and planning factors just described; however, PBA builds its framework by integrating not only work on LPP, but also in the areas of linguistic theory and theories of learning and teaching.

The factors outlined earlier are illustrated in Figure 1. The inner circle represents the students who experience, learn from, and resist forms of language, material, and pedagogy that they experience. These concrete experiences are themselves shaped by larger discussions and beliefs about education, language, and curriculum that are, in turn, influenced by theoretical positions. The more abstract theoretical positions are not neutral, but are, in turn, shaped by the resources available and the cultural, ideological, and political contexts in which they evolve.

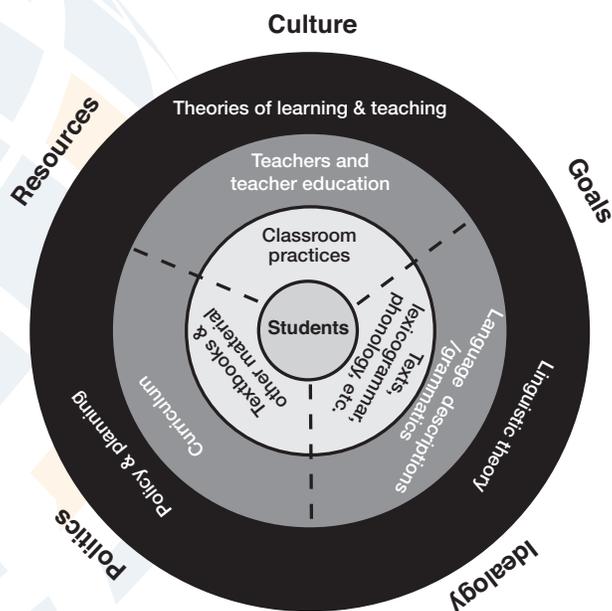


Figure 1. Factors That Shape Students' Learning Experiences in an ELT Classroom

In the following discussion, we consider the factors identified in Figure 1 as we look at their implications for PBA. In doing so, we discuss aspects of policy and planning then consider learning and teaching theories and linguistic theory. This discussion then leads to a presentation of the six key principles of PBA.

Policy and Planning

As Kaplan, Baldauf, and Kamwangamalu (2011) point out, language in education policy is a complex process and includes a number of issues that must be considered for it to succeed. Policymakers face the difficult task of planning goals and strategies that are ultimately linked to and informed by larger issues of political, social, and ideological frameworks that function in the context in which the LPP takes place.

The impact of globalization on LPP has propelled the teaching of English with greater urgency and has major implications for the language teaching contexts in which English is prioritised above other immediate educational concerns and over the promotion of bi/multilingualism. Additionally, a lack of communication between policymakers and implementers (and other stakeholders) means that successful practices occurring within the classrooms rarely inform policymaking, and that practitioners have access to policy only as it is filtered down through the curriculum and textbooks to the classrooms. In advocating a PBA, we believe that policymaking decisions should be bidirectional and that within each context teachers (and other stakeholders, such as syllabus designers, textbook writers, etc.) should be able to reflect on effective pedagogical practices and should be able to communicate these practices to policymakers. The following section examines some of these issues and attempts to highlight ways in which the use of PBA can move beyond these issues. The three major challenges that policymakers face when designing LPP interventions include: (a) a deficit in understanding of planning goals (b), a lack of collaboration between policymakers and implementers, and (c) the problem of negotiating between local needs and the demands of globalization.

Planning Goals

In LPP the purpose of the policy strategy needs to be considered with a view to achieving particular goals and outcomes. Often the ELT programs' need to enable enhanced English proficiency and to improve delivery of language programs in local contexts conflicts with other competing agendas by both the government and aid agencies. As Ricento (2000) points out, language policy is determined by the ideological and political agendas of governments and other organizations, which create LPP strategies. Therefore, the goal of policymakers is often concerned with factors other than ELT and associated with political and ideological issues. To ensure that the goals of LPP support the best interests of local communities, policymakers should ensure that their policies and practices are transparent and the public is given information regarding policy to allow them to participate in the policymaking process. As Kaplan (2009) states, this includes getting the general public to buy-in to LPP ideas so that LPP can be smoothly implemented and the general public can enter into a dialogue with policymakers regarding policy implementation and relevance. The Australian National Policy on Languages (Lo Bianco, 1987), for example, outlines principles

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related to transparency in LPP, such as “explicitness and clarity.” Transparency of LPP objectives will enable various stakeholders to engage with ELT practices that policymakers advocate. It will also enable researchers and policymakers to capture (and critique) local ELT practices to ensure that LPP decisions are made based on evidence of successful and empowering practices from local communities.

Policy and Implementation

Policy may not be effectively translated into practice for a variety of reasons. During the legislative process, for example, policy is transformed by political processes (Hornberger & Ricento, 1996). Although the political influence on policy formulation is abstract and difficult to change, the role of teachers in the translation of policy into practice is currently underutilized. Teachers themselves often believe that they have little power to effect policy and do not view themselves as implementers of macro-level policies (Ramanathan & Morgan, 2007; Tsui & Tollefson, 2006). Policy is also rarely accessible to practitioners working in classrooms and communities, and the underlying ideological motivations of policies tend to be implicit. Policy is formulated at the level of government, but practitioners responsible for implementation often have access to the implications of policy only through the curriculum and textbooks. Some of the issues around formulating and implementing policy, then, are directly linked to the lack of communication and collaboration between policymakers and practitioners—teacher trainers and teachers. This lack of collaboration is detrimental to the process of policymaking because teachers working in a variety of contexts have access to the classrooms and students in a way that policymakers do not. Policymakers at all levels need to consider teachers’ successful classroom practices. Therefore, it is necessary to ensure that policymaking is a consultative process that takes into account the role of teachers as the point of contact between the educational objectives of language policy and the students. The policymaking process should be inclusive. Teachers should be able to communicate their experiences to policymakers to ensure that what is taught in schools is relevant to the varied contexts in which they work. Practitioners should also work collaboratively with policymakers to determine policy goals, and policy decisions should be made visible, transparent, and accessible to practitioners and aligned with those goals.

Global versus Local

English has been referred to as the language of globalization with a strong emphasis on the fact that English is linked to technology and hence to notions of development and modernization (Block & Cameron, 2002; Tsui & Tollefson, 2006). Although this concept is not unproblematic, it informs a great deal of LPP, which often requires policymakers to ensure that English takes a primary position in the education system at the risk of marginalizing local languages and other school subjects. The complexity of language planning in relation to English is also linked to the fact that the demand for ELT comes from several different sources such as aid agencies, which provide funding for educational programs. Policymakers are in the difficult position of taking all these factors into account while acting in the interest of the general public and representing local needs and global requirements.

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One of the key issues in the conflict between the global and the local arises in relation to the notion of World Englishes, which enabled varieties of English to be recognised as “cross cultural and global contextualizations of the English language in multiple voices” (Kachru, Kachru, & Nelson, 2006, p. 1). Although the World Englishes movement has helped politically empower and legitimize localized varieties of language in the past 30 years, the inner circle varieties of Standard English nonetheless still claim prominence over localized varieties in many different contexts. The reason for the continued hegemony of inner circle varieties of English becomes clear when the uses of language are considered in relation to the users of language (Halliday, McIntosh, & Stevens, 1964). On the one hand, language is shaped by its uses; on the other hand, it carries markers that identify the users or speakers of that language. The World Englishes movement focuses on users, but, as increasing evidence is showing, the uses of English are determined by academic, educational, and professional communities of practice, which still rely on Standard Englishes (Canagarajah, 2002; Mahboob & Szenes, 2010).

Thus, if ELT is to empower local communities by engaging with globalization and providing them access to global resources, then it must answer questions about the relevance of teaching English, and in particular about what variety of English is taught and for what purpose. Initially policymakers should determine the purpose of English LPP, whether it is to enable proficiency for global or local purposes, and whether it is for predominantly written or oral communication. In determining the purpose of English LPP, they should collaborate with local communities, practitioners, industry, and other stakeholders. Policymakers should also ensure that ELT teaching practices are suited to the needs of the particular context in which they occur. Again, consultation with local experts is key to ensuring that ELT practices are locally and contextually relevant. Consulting with local experts and practitioners will enable policymakers to assess and respond to issues that may arise when (foreign) experts promote a particular teaching practice that might be at odds with local sociocultural practices. As Rajgopalan (2005) states, “global, specialist knowledge” needs to be readjusted “to suit local circumstances” (p. 119), which will ensure that language programs are suitable to a particular context. When programs are suited to local contexts, they will be well received by the public and implemented successfully by practitioners and other stakeholders. In addition, evidence of program outcomes should be monitored to ensure that they achieve the goals determined at the outset of the policymaking process.

Theories of Language Learning and Teaching

Drawing on theories of language learning and teaching can contribute significantly to the improvement of language training and delivery. Policies should be formed with an understanding of this literature so that they can be translated into more effective practice. However, theories of language teaching and learning developed in center contexts, with little influence from major theories of language learning and teaching developed in periphery contexts, presents obstacles to both the extension and development of these theories and their application in noncenter countries. A theory is only as good (or bad) as the data that it draws on. Most of the dominant theoretical frameworks are developed in the West with data collected in those contexts. These theories are then often (uncritically) adopted and promoted in the rest of the world, where the local practices (data) may or may not support

them. However, given an absence of visible local theorization, policymakers continue to privilege the Western theories, leading to mixed outcomes.

Learning and Teaching Resources and Methodology

In contexts with few resources, financial constraints, and a lack of infrastructure, the delivery of language programs and material promoted as “solutions” by major international publishing companies can be problematic. In addition, methodologies are filtered down through aid programs, nongovernmental organizations, and other state and nonstate sponsored agencies, advocating pedagogies and methods that are largely theorized and developed in the West and then exported without considering whether these pedagogies are appropriate or effective in other contexts. The development of language programs based on learning and teaching methodologies imported from developed countries is, therefore, an inadequate solution with which to equip teachers who face a variety of unique context-specific issues in their classrooms. The communicative approach, which has been marketed extensively throughout the world, is an example. The use of the communicative approach has been questioned for some time because it has “a sort of naive ethnocentrism prompted by the thought that what is good for Europe or the USA had to be good for KwaZulu” (Chick, 1996, p. 22). When faced with a variety of methodologies and material imported from Western contexts and promoted by international organizations, educational institutions and consultants, the local experts, policymakers, researchers, and teachers within these contexts must determine what is and is not suitable for use within their particular contexts and classrooms. In many cases, policies developed based on Western theories do not produce the desired effect because the teachers in these contexts do not see the relevance of the ideas and usually either reject them or adjust them to suit the needs of their classrooms. As Canagarajah (1999) and P. Martin (2005) demonstrate, effective teachers adjust practices that are handed down to them through policy and curriculum to serve the needs of their students. Other teachers who may not have appropriate expertise, training, time, or resources, might reject and ignore the policies and materials altogether. When such failures happen, experts and policymakers often jump to the conclusion that the local teachers or their students are lazy or nonreceptive, instead of reflecting on the nature of the material or the policymaking processes. As pointed out earlier, it is important to give teachers access to practices, through training and ongoing teacher development, that enable their students to achieve better proficiency rather than to focus on promoting a particular method (Kumaravadivelu, 2006). To ensure that policy is informed by effective practices, the knowledge teachers gain through their classroom experiences needs to be understood, theorized, and presented to policymakers so that decision making is based on evidence of local practices and to give teachers a stake and voice in the policymaking process.

Language Testing and Evaluation

In addition to identifying practices that are more suited to the local classrooms, it is also important to ensure that the goals of language programs are assessed through monitoring and evaluation of classroom practices and student achievement. The monitoring and evaluation of language proficiency within the classroom must be carefully aligned with the

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goals of the original ELT program. Policymakers and practitioners must also be aware of the power of testing and understand the ethical issues involved (Shohamy, 2001).

One of the major issues in language testing is administration of these tests to large cohorts of students. In many countries, written tests are the only form of evaluation that students receive in relation to language competence, and these evaluations prescriptively test grammar rather than testing students' control of genre and discourse strategies. The testing of grammar itself is highly problematic in many contexts because of the varieties of English that function within these contexts. These varieties are often viewed as substandard in educational settings. Because of the complexities involved in language testing, policymakers should consider collaborating with teachers in creating tests that are relevant to the context in which they are administered. Students should be tested on their levels of achievement within the classroom itself as well as on a larger scale in relation to national standards. One way to achieve a balance, one that empowers the students and measures their development within the classroom, is to equip teachers with appropriate knowledge about assessment so that (a) a variety of different types of assessment practices are used to measure achievement, (b) students are trained to succeed in national and/or standardized assessments, and (c) students and teachers have access to transparent evaluative approaches used by administrators.

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Language Theory

Language theory's influence on LPP and ELT is rarely acknowledged, in part because curriculum and textbooks incorporate knowledge about language (KAL) as discrete grammar lessons (based on traditional or pedagogical grammars) with little focus on how language creates text and meaning. In this section, we discuss issues related to a lack of KAL by policymakers and teachers, which filter down to students. In addition, we discuss the ways that *invisible pedagogy*, where the curriculum and pedagogy is hidden from the students, disadvantages students. We also explore the notion of cultural sensitivity in relation to how language in textbooks extends and promotes particular cultural values and norms and ideological content.

Knowledge About Language

For many teachers around the world, access to resources and a lack of suitable teacher training means that their KAL is fairly limited. In addition, the opportunities for in-service training are not always reliable and depend on the type of the schools in which teachers are working. Many teachers, then, have to rely on textbooks for structured and well-presented language instruction. As a result, the quality of the textbooks often determines the extent to which students receive adequate KAL for English language proficiency.

To respond to this issue, policymakers should integrate KAL into teacher education programs. This is true for many parts of the world—including the West—where courses on language (and linguistics) are often limited and insufficiently detailed. The so-called technical aspects of language are also often considered too complex and difficult and are therefore left out of (or minimized) in teacher training curricula. This is an odd belief.

In training to teach other subjects, such as science, mathematics, and history, technical and academic knowledge of the discipline is considered critical, but an in-depth study of language and linguistics is often not considered as crucial for language teachers. This belief is linked to the *native speaker fallacy* (Phillipson, 1992), the notion that being a native speaker (or an expert user of the language) provides sufficient understanding of language for teachers of their native language. In many contexts, the native speaker is also the exonormative standard of proficiency that teachers and students strive toward. Increased understanding of and access to KAL would enable teachers in varied contexts to understand regional varieties of English and focus less on native speaker competence and more on adapting effective discourse strategies that enable students to communicate intelligibly, effectively, and efficiently in a variety of contexts.

Visible Pedagogy

As discussed earlier, policies must be made accessible and transparent to practitioners. Simultaneously, classroom practices and pedagogy should also be made visible and should aim to enable students to create discourses appropriate for communities of practice. In *visible pedagogy*, the structuring of texts used within specific communities of practice are made visible for students so that they can learn and effectively use these discourses in the relevant context (J. Martin, 1999).

Explicitly and visibly teaching discourse strategies and structures through analysis and deconstruction of text through approaches such as genre-based pedagogies can enable students to access powerful genres and reproduce them effectively, empowering them in the process. Visible pedagogy recognises that texts are produced within contexts of culture and contexts of situation, and that certain texts are more privileged and more powerful than others; thus, mastery of these text types can enable students to access opportunities for employment, education, and research at a local as well as an international level.

Cultural Sensitivity

The manner in which textbooks are designed to promote a particular culture, ideology, and nationalistic sentiment has been repeatedly discussed in research. In some international textbooks, the focus has now shifted from promoting British and European culture to creating and promoting textbooks that are regionally situated in terms of cultural content or that, alternatively, have a global focus. As opposed to international textbooks, the production of local textbooks by ministries of education or curriculum/textbook boards around the world often focuses on promoting national cultural ideals. On the one hand, this seems a positive move because it draws on cultural motifs that students are more familiar with and celebrates and protects the national culture from Westernization resulting in a more empowered engagement with globalization. This empowered engagement is evident from examples such as Korean textbooks resulting in the dissemination of Korean values and culture through the appropriation of American culture and language (Sungwon, 2006). At the same time, however, the promotion of a national culture may sometimes be strongly linked with religious and ideological content which promotes one ideology above others (Mahboob, 2009), and often, cultural content is limited to the culture of dominant

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groups within the country, with little focus on the minorities and other competing cultures. Ultimately, a focus on culture shifts the emphasis from teaching language proficiency to teaching national and cultural values. Therefore, while remaining respectful of local cultures, it is important that the teaching of culture is aligned with the initial goals of language programs and does not subsume them. Inclusion of local material should not exclude global texts and discourses, which currently form the dominant discourses in which knowledge is constructed and which the students need to be able to understand and engage with to contribute to these (global professional) communities.

The Principles

In the previous sections, we hinted at some of the principles that should be considered in developing language policies. In this section, we draw on the earlier discussion and explicitly identify six principles that we are advancing as an initial conceptualization of PBA. The six principles are collaboration, relevance, evidence, alignment, transparency, and empowerment (CREATE). Before presenting these principles, however, we must point out that these principles are an initial set of ideas presented to begin a discussion on what PBA might eventually look like. This discussion needs to be undertaken through the critical analysis of best practices and cases of ELT program implementation in a variety of contexts from the perspective of the proposed principles. These principles are by no means prescriptive or unchangeable; they should be evaluated through regular feedback and consultation and revised as needed over time.

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Collaboration

In the development of policy and its implementation, we advocate the principle of collaboration. Collaboration should take place at various levels and domains and give voice to local teachers, experts, students, and other stakeholders (e.g., parents, industry, etc.). These stakeholders should be given power to influence the design of policy, curriculum, and textbooks so that these policies are understood, accepted, and translated into appropriate practice. We see three key areas in which cooperation can further enhance ELT policy and practice.

Policymakers and Local Teachers

A key component in policymaking should be the understanding of the students' and teachers' needs gained by the sharing of knowledge from the grassroots level. With their access to key stakeholders within the communities and often being community members themselves, teachers have a clearer idea of what practices will work most effectively within a particular sociocultural context. Collaborating with teachers will ensure that policy can be implemented and that it will be well received by the public. Therefore, it is important to collaborate with teachers in determining key aspects of policy.

Policymakers and Experts

Policy decisions should be informed by an understanding of current theories in a range of disciplines. From a PBA perspective, we believe that consulting with experts in the areas of linguistics, pedagogy, and language development (and also economics, sociology, and anthropology) is as important as consulting with policy experts. As stated earlier, policy decisions are sometimes made without an expert understanding of what language and language teaching is and how it relates to socioeconomic development (including knowledge construction). Both local and international experts in these disciplines need to be engaged in the policymaking processes in order for the policy to be well informed in terms of its theoretical foundations.

Policymakers and Other Stakeholders

Policymakers should not only consult with teachers and experts, but also engage with other stakeholders such as the public (including parents) and industry.

In some instances after key policy decisions have been made, protests by the public demonstrate that these decisions are not favorable to the local context for a variety of reasons. For example, ELT policy might have a negative effect on local languages. The economic and social value that English carries with it as well as the cultural aspects of ELT may be linked to notions of Westernization and can be perceived as a threat to local cultures. In addition, the public may speak a variety of the language that is not officially endorsed by the government but reflects their sociocultural identity in an empowering way. Ultimately, for a language policy to be successful, its acceptance by the public is extremely important. Therefore, policymakers should make policy initiatives transparent and visible and disseminate them through the press. Dissemination of policy should encourage public debates about the relevance of the policies. Doing so will enable policymakers to gain the consent of the public and ensure that the policy is successfully implemented.

Language in education policy has implications for industry in that it informs the training of a population that will join the workforce in various capacities. As such, policy decisions need to be taken with input from local industries. This input can be direct and indirect. *Direct input* refers to consultation with the industry whereas *indirect input* can be based on an analysis of the language needs of the industry (including linguistic study of the industry's discourse practices). Consultation and collaboration with industry can help policymakers meet industry requirements and result in training a population that can succeed in their future jobs.

In addition to the stakeholders just identified, it is also crucial to engage with and draw on discussions with syllabus designers, (local) textbook writers, administrators, and others who translate policies into concrete materials and procedures that teachers and students will use and experience. These professionals provide a link between the teachers and the policymakers, so it is crucial to engage them in policy-building processes.

>>> Ultimately, for a language policy to be successful, its acceptance by the public is extremely important.

Relevance

The principle of relevance ensures that the practices, beliefs, and material that the policy encourages attain the goals for which they are developed and accord with the particular context. The principle of relevance can be understood in relation to the key areas of policy, practice, and production of materials.

Policy

Although most policy aims to increase language proficiency, the outcomes of a particular ELT project are more difficult to determine, but the project's outcomes must be determined to ensure its success. Identifying the particular goals of a policy will enable policymakers to determine the relevance of proposed changes or lead to more relevant policy. In addition it will ensure the materials designed to support the policy will achieve the desired outcomes.

Practice

In creating relevant practice, it is necessary for the government to clearly outline the purpose of the English language policy and then create materials that translate this policy into practice. If teachers are not aware of the policy goals, they will create their own goals within the classroom (many of which are aimed at increasing student success on exams). If teachers create goals that are not aligned with policy, when schools are assessed to determine whether policy has been successfully implemented, the outcomes of the project may not match the policy's intentions. Practices also need to be relevant to the needs of the local communities and should be developed in consultation with them. When the purpose and outcomes of the policymaking are determined in collaboration with local ELT professionals and local communities, the practices can be designed to better enhance the skills that the policy has prioritized.

Production of Materials

The production of materials that translate policy goals into practice must also be relevant to the sociocultural practices within the context. Policymakers should determine the extent to which ELT will have an intra- or international focus and whether the teaching of language should also include the teaching of global cultural practices in addition to engagement with local practices. The production of material also needs to reflect the diversity of the local cultural cohort and sensitivity to the religious and cultural practices of all ethnic groups within that particular context.

Evidence

Basing policy on evidence shifts it from being an experimental endeavor to one that is supported by analysis and best practices (Banks, 2009). However, gathering a large quantity of quality evidence can be a costly and time-consuming challenge. In addition, evidence-based policymaking has been criticized for its quantitative methods of assessment focused primarily on accountability (Sanderson, 2002). Undoubtedly, the

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quality and quantity of evidence will depend on the resources available within the context, which will be varied. As result, it is not always possible to supply a large amount of evidence to support successful practices. The strength of evidence-based policy in ELT is that it can safeguard against developing policy based on best practices from a variety of contexts and implemented as a one-size-fits-all solution without consulting local practitioners or considering cultural sensitivity.

In relation to teaching, then, teachers must share evidence of effective practices with policymakers, and that evidence must be translated back to practice through the production of texts that provide the necessary framework and scaffolding and that enable teachers to learn from and adapt these practices in their classrooms.

Alignment

One of the key elements of determining success in policy and practice is ensuring that project outcomes are aligned with the goals of ELT policy and that the knowledge policymakers draw from is relevant to the goals of the policy. To determine whether policy goals are achieved, it is necessary to design outcomes that are realistic to the particular project setting and to ensure that monitoring and evaluation practices take into account the sociopolitical and other elements that influence the project's progress.

The larger goals of the project also need to be translated into and aligned with the design of curriculum and textbook materials, which in turn need to be aligned with classroom practices. These practices must then be assessed according to whether the students demonstrate the required level of proficiency and skills in the language as determined in relation to their particular context.

Transparency

The principle of transparency requires that policy objectives, goals, and outcomes be visible, easily accessible, and justifiable to all stakeholders. Transparency will ensure that policymakers are able to (a) get the support of the various stakeholders in the implementation of projects; (b) get input from teacher trainers, administrators, and teachers on the perceived success of the program; and, (c) prevent corruption, hidden ideological agendas, and political motivations that may hinder the success of the program. Therefore, in all levels of policymaking and implementation, information must be disseminated to the public through the media and other channels.

Empowerment

The principle of empowerment means that the ultimate objective of any ELT project should be the empowerment of local communities, teachers, and students through collaborative, relevant, evidence-based, and transparent practices. To ensure that policy and practice is empowering, consultation with experts should provide initial scaffolding for the projects, and the projects themselves should be sustainable within the sociopolitical, economic, and

cultural environment in which they function. Empowerment is difficult to ensure because policymakers and teachers will have to take into account the politics of ELT and how this affects their communities, cultures, and language in positive or negative ways.

The six principles outlined in this paper are not mutually exclusive. In fact, as presented, they relate to each other in a variety of ways. The principles are applicable in a range of contexts and have a number of implications. However, before outlining the implications of PBA, we should note that these principles can be operationalized in different ways and may yield different answers and lead to different positions. These positions will be shaped by the context in which a policy is developed and by the participants, experts, and organizations that contribute to it. We believe that such heterogeneity of responses is healthy as long as the principles are engaged with in an ethical and judicious manner. As noted earlier, it is also important to remember that these principles themselves will need regular reevaluation and updating to maintain their relevance, validity, and applicability across a variety of contexts.

Implications of PBA

>>> These principles can be operationalized in different ways and may yield different answers and different positions. These positions will be shaped by the context in which the policy is developed.

The principles outlined in this paper have implications for a diverse range of stakeholders. We have enumerated some of these implications below for policymakers, teachers, and researchers.

Implications for Policymakers

- Identify policy that works and policies that balance the complex needs of the public with national interests.
- Formulate policy that takes into account national interests while considering the interests of the funding bodies and international agencies.
- Provide policy suitable for the context in relation to the capacity, training, and expertise of local teachers and the availability of resources.
- Set reasonable goals and use approaches to measuring achievement that are suited to the local context.
- Provide access to quality language education in English while maintaining the position and prestige of local languages within the country (including minority languages).
- Ensure that ELT issues do not take priority over other, more immediate educational and social concerns.

Implications for Practitioners

- Increase understanding of the principles behind the policy.
- Increase understanding of how to translate policy into curriculum, textbooks, and practice through case studies and other accessible resources.
- Increase understanding of how to maintain a balance between teaching international languages such as English and international culture through access to English.
- Increase understanding of how to measure achievement according to the standards outlined locally.
- Increase KAL, best practices, and understanding of how to adapt methodologies to suit the particular context and objectives of the ELT program.

Implications for Researchers

- Identify case studies and best practices that focus on the formulation of macro-level policy and its implementation at the micro level.
- Produce context-informed research and theory that can be used by policy developers and practitioners.
- Draw connections between national, regional, and international policy frameworks to identify best practices for use by policymakers and practitioners.
- Critically evaluate existing, proposed, and past ELT programs to determine what is culturally and contextually suitable and develop methodologies relevant to the context in which implementers practice.

Summary

Language policy and planning is a complex task with a long list of stakeholders and factors that shape it and an even longer one of things that it influences in turn. In recognizing these complexities and realizing that it may not be possible to take all these variables into account in developing a language-in-education policy, a PBA recommends that policymakers instead consider a set of guiding principles that can inform the process and give a principled orientation and structure to the resulting policy. Thus, instead of setting standards or specific guidelines, PBA outlines a set of principles that lead us to ask critical questions and take appropriate measures in developing a contextually relevant and socially responsible language policy. PBA also draws our attention to the importance of working across disciplines and interest groups, and suggests that policymakers need input from economists, educationists, linguists, and sociologists, among others, to identify and work out the issues that need to be addressed through a language-in-education policy (and the best ways of achieving these). PBA outlines six broad principles that can help guide this process of consultation and policy development: collaboration, relevance, evidence, alignment, transparency, and empowerment. These principles raise questions that can guide the policy development process and result in a language policy that is robust, responsible, implementable, and sustainable.

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