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Ideology in language policy and educational practice: An afterword

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The chapters in this book as a group provide a number of perspectives on ideology as it influences language policy and educational practice in the teaching and learning of English in the contemporary world. The idea that English in education is ideologically laden is not a new one, and aspects of this were powerfully articulated by Philipson (1992) in his critique of linguistic imperialism. The study of the imperialistic ideologies that shape English language teaching and learning has continued since Philipson's early work, especially in work focusing on the colonial legacy of English in the contemporary world (Pennycook, 2000a, 2000b). However, as these papers show, the critique of linguistic imperialism addresses only part of the ideological weight that English carries. They demonstrate too, that given the increasing awareness of ideology and its impacts on English language teaching and learning (e.g. Coleman, 1996; Hu & Adamson, 2012; Kubota, 1998; Liddicoat, 2013; Sonntag, 2000; Tollefson, 2000), much teaching and learning of English takes place in contexts where ideologies are little acknowledged problematic ideological positions still shape much of what happens in classrooms and in societies more broadly.

Unacknowledged ideologies can be present even in academic contexts where some aspects of language ideology are being contested but where the broader ideological framings of language and languages is not also taken into consideration. For example, Sewell's examination of the ideological framing of English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) research argues that current discourses within the field reflect the same ideologies that ELF scholars wish to counter, showing the pervasiveness of ideologies as ways of framing thinking. She examines the ways in which scholars in having named ELF as a field have established boundaries for delimiting EFL and other varieties and she sees evidence in these reproductions that some key ideologies that have shaped the field of language education have remained intact. In ELF's initial concern to describe and codify EFL as a variety, she sees strong echoes of the prescriptivist orientation in language education which seeks to fix language varieties and use such fixing as a way of identifying the focus of teaching, learning and assessment. In ELF's focus on processes of interaction, she sees a continuation of the idea that languages exist within hierarchies. ELF scholars, rather than levelling the playing field between language forms, have often done little more than invert the existing hierarchy giving dominance to ELF rather than to native-speaker varieties using a new set of criteria for establishing dominance, such as demographic superiority or frequency of use. Sewell sees this hierarchical view of languages persisting in emerging ways of thinking about ELF as multilingual and arguments that multilingual communication is superior to monolingual communication. The emerging focus on English as a Multilingua Franca (Jenkins 2015) is an especially interesting ideological construction as defined by Jenkins (p. 73): "multilingual communication in which English is available as a contact language of choice but is not necessarily chosen". In such a framing English is seen as a defining feature of language use *even where English is not used*. English thus comes to be seen as more or less equivalent to multilingualism and as present in communications even when it is not used. While this thinking stems from a desire to take on the idea of complex linguistic repertoires in which languages are seen as always potentially present (García & Li Wei, 2014), the naming of this phenomenon as 'English' is a totalising discourse that normalises English as the international means of communication, whether it is present or not in any act of communication. It can thus be seen as a reinforcement of the hegemony of English in current

thinking about language education and international communication and as an invisibilisation of all that is not English, that is, the very ideological position that the focus on multilingualism was intended to challenge.

Sewell also points out that in any attempt to engage with ideology, such as in the advocacy work that is undertaken by many proponents of ELF, there is ultimately a tension between the ideology of research as an objective domain and the subjectivities involved in politically engaged activism. There is thus a problem in maintaining that research is by its very nature objective in contexts where the aims of research are to change thinking and practice and that there is a corresponding need to acknowledge the inherent subjectivities involved in research. This is essentially a recognition that scholarly work contains subjectivities and that such subjectivities are inevitable. As Voloshinov (1929) argues, language at its base is fundamentally ideological and any act of communication is influenced by the ideological underpinnings of the language used in the communication. Ideologies are not simply impositions of ideas upon realities, but the resources used to construct and understand those realities (Althusser, 1976). Ideologies can thus restrict thinking about the world and alternative possibilities, which is Sewell's main argument, but they are also involved in representing and bringing about alternatives (Gramsci, 1975). Thus, in Sewell's chapter, we see both problematic and productive aspects of ideology. Ultimately, the issue is not whether or not ideology is present in academic debates, but rather the awareness that those participating in debates have of the ideological underpinnings at play.

Language ideologies are not always covert or unacknowledged and education can be a field in which actors may compete to control the production of beliefs about languages and their speakers. Mirhosseini's chapter reveals the ways in which language spread policies used in public diplomacy are ideological constructs. External language spread policy is an attempt to influence language teaching and learning outside the nation developing the policy. In external language spread, policy actions cannot be implemented directly and so policy needs to work at the level of influencing beliefs and attitudes about languages and about nations that use them (Liddicoat, 2013). This chapter examines a corpus of language policy statements from the US government about English language teaching over a number of decades to identify the ideological positions that are explicitly articulated. These statements show how the US government has sought to use support for English language teaching overseas as a way of reinforcing the nation's soft power and to promote a particular set of beliefs about and attitudes to the US, its values and its culture among language learners.

Mirhosseini finds that policy statements show a concern among US policy makers to access a diverse range of audiences, usually outside the policy makers of the targeted nations, especially young people, but also language teachers and (Islamic) religious leaders. These texts thus show moves either to leverage prevailing ideologies about the value and utility of English to support additional ideological goals or to target those stereotypically associated with anti-US ideologies. The statements thus take an activity that policy actors themselves articulate as neutral, English language teaching, and use it as a vehicle for disseminating particular ideological messages. The assertions made in the texts that English language teaching is a neutral activity reflect a view of education as an ideologically free zone, seeing education simply as a knowledge building process and intervention in education as simply a matter of enhancing the quality of educational experiences (Apple, 2001). However, such discourses obscure the profoundly socialising functions of education as manifestation of schools and other educational institutions as ideological state apparatus (Althusser, 1976) that specifically function as sites of ideological reproduction. External language spread policies can thus be seen as attempts by nations to use aspects of the ideological state apparatus in order to influence the ideological production of

other societies. While this chapter focuses specifically on the external language spread policy of the USA, it is important to note that similar processes are to be found in many countries that use the teaching and learning of their national languages to bolster, maintain or create soft power, see for example Liddicoat (2013) on the UK, France and Japan or Paradise (2009) on China. In some cases, such external policies have framed their interventions in terms of generically positive ideologies with implied mutual benefits, such as the discourses of ‘intercultural dialogue’ of the British Council, ‘*dialogue des cultures*’ of the Alliance Française or ‘international harmony’ of the Confucius Institute, but in other cases can be more narrowly nationalist as in the case of the Japan Foundation or the US policies analysed by Mirhosseini.

These two chapters have focused very much on the ideological discourses that shape how English is constructed as the object of teaching and learning. Sewell’s chapter emphasises the ways that ideologies can shape thinking in unconscious ways that mean that even reactions to particular ideological positions may often incorporate within themselves elements of the very ideologies that are being resisted (c.f. Gramsci, 1975). Mirhosseini’s chapter examines the conscious articulation of ideological positions as ways of disseminating ideologies through educational programs and practices. The chapters show how ideologies work as elements of structure that can constrain agency (Liddicoat, 2019), other chapters, however, examine agentive responses that show how ideologies can be contested by teachers through their approaches to teaching practice.

Doecke and Yandell focus on practice in response to policy and how teachers, in this case teachers of English literature, can find agency for new forms of action within even restrictive policy frames. Doecke and Yandell focus on teaching English literature within the English national curriculum. They argue that curriculum policy constructs literature learning according to two dominant ideological framings. The first of these is that the purpose of literature study is to socialise students into docile and uncritical subjectivities that submerge class and other social differences and the inequalities that they represent beneath a sense of an all-encompassing national community. The second is the construction and uncritical reception of a particular type of Britishness as a shared national identity through the reproduction of an accepted literary canon of works created solely in English. These ideological macro-level framings of literature learning are further reinforced by local practices of schools that emphasise conformity to curriculum goals, assessment regimes, and the paraphernalia of neo-liberal education. Within this broader over-arching ideological framework, teachers also have to negotiate the ideologies of the canon itself and of who is represented in or absent from this canon and how these representations are constructed. In their work with four early career literature teachers, Doecke and Yandell reveal that, in what appears to be a confining and suffocating set of educational policies and school practices, teachers are able to develop creative responses and develop insightful pedagogical practice drawing on their literary knowledge to move education beyond the reception of the canon and its ideological framing to a critical engagement with literary texts and a radical aesthetic. In particular, the teachers recognise the inherent pluralism of interpretations that are shaped by the experiences, values, beliefs and pre-understandings that interpreters bring to the act of understanding a text (Gadamer, 1960). By drawing on the wealth of contextual and cultural resources that students bring to their reading, they are able to construct meaningful ways for students to engage critically with a rigid curriculum in which they may not find themselves represented. Nonetheless, the agency of teachers in such contexts is not unlimited and the culture of education shaped by policy and school practice can ultimately constrain what teachers can achieve (Liddicoat, 2019) and shape their responses to events that deviate too far from official requirements and expectations.

Steigertahl's chapter also examines the interface between policy and practice, in this case in the monolingual English language education system of Namibia, but focuses more on how ideologies can limit teachers' agency in developing their practice. In Namibia, English was chosen because it was perceived as being 'neutral' when compared to the former colonial languages, German and Afrikaans; that is, it is neutral in the sense that it carries none of the colonial baggage of the others. However, here, as in Mirhosseini's chapter, the assertion of neutrality obscures the ideologically laden nature of all language-related decision-making. Some of this ideological burden is obvious in the rationales that underlie the selection of English as a national language; ideologies associated with internationalisation, scientific communication, modernity, etc. Namibia's monolingual language policy creates a challenge for teachers in Namibian schools, which are highly multilingual and where English is not likely to form a part of the language repertoire of students entering schooling, with a result that failure and dropout rates are both high. Steigertahl reveals how teachers have adopted translanguaging practices (García & Li Wei, 2014) to deal with the linguistic complexities of their classrooms, but these practices tend to be ad hoc responses to linguistic complexity rather than a systematic pedagogical strategy. Teachers thus have a resource that can be used to develop pedagogical practices that could promote learning, but the policy and ideological context appears to constrain their use. In part, it would seem that using local languages lacks legitimacy as an educational practice in a context where policy mandates the learning of English as the core language goal of schooling and reinforces a monolingual habitus within the educational system (Gogolin, 1994). The use of local languages would seem to be further constrained by other local language ideologies that have emerged as the result of the selection of English as the official language and which close spaces for local languages in educational contexts (Liddicoat & Curnow, 2014). For example, Steigertahl reports that English connotes being educated, while knowledge only of other languages is a marker of uneducated status. The perception that the use of local languages marks uneducated practice would seem to be in conflict with their legitimate use in education. This ideology would seem to be further reinforced by an ideology of language hierarchy which places English in the dominant position and local languages in the most subordinated position. Thus, ideologies that connect languages and social status can work to delegitimise particular linguistics practices in educational contexts.

The next two papers move from focusing on the ways that ideology interacts with practice to examine the ideological construction of English teachers' professional identities and how teachers and students are positioned by ideologies that in turn shape their agentic possibilities.

Burton's chapter shows the ways that ideologies frame English language teaching for individual teachers, how these ideologies position teachers within their professional worlds, and the consequentiality of ideologies for their professional lives. Burton's analysis of her own experience is a presentation of how ideologies have created privilege for her as a white, female English native-speaker working in Korea. Burton's chapter inevitably reflects on the issue of native-speakerism (Holliday, 2006, 2015) as a most pervasive ideology in the field of language teaching and shows how this ideology is not simply a language ideology but is also fundamentally an ideology of race, as non-linguistic elements, most especially appearance construct perceptions of the embodied native-speaker. Burton also shows how ideologies relating to gender and sexuality further construct the embodied language teacher. She contrasts her experience of femininity as a resource in teaching male Korean bodyguards with Appleby's (2013) observation that English language teaching in Japan is masculinised. However, she does not really draw out what these two superficially differing contexts have in common. Appleby notes that Japan's commercial English language schools (英会話学校) 'cater to an overwhelmingly female clientele' (p. 123) and the masculinisation of English language

teaching and the forms of masculinity that it promotes are linked to the clientele and to particular sexualisations of both teachers and students. In Burton's specific situation, the clientele is masculine and the practices of sexualisation of both teacher and students are inverted in her description of her recruitment for her teaching position. In both contexts, a particular ideological framing of desire is central to employment practices in commercialised English language teaching. The framing in both contexts is explicitly heteronormative and ideologies of heterosexual desire play a role in shaping the recruitment, and the subsequent self-presentation of teachers. Burton is told to wear make-up and short skirts when teaching, evidencing an assimilation of the teacher to ideologies of hegemonic femininity (Schnurr, Zayts, & Hopkins, 2016). While privilege unsurprisingly has advantages for those who are privileged, especially in obtaining jobs in language teaching, such privilege also constrains subject positions, for example in Burton's case in how she was required to present herself as a woman. Also, Burton shows how her privilege status as an English-speaker meant that she was enabled to have little investment in learning Korean and so could remain to some extent outside the language and culture of her learners. She shows that it was only when she seriously engaged with Korean language learning that she came to understand the complex cultural dynamics involved in teaching English in Korean classrooms and was able to open her practice to new linguistic and cultural ways of working.

Rudolph's chapter continues the theme of how ideologies position teachers and students focusing on the ways that Japanese ideologies of education for globalisation influence policy and practice in English language teaching. His study demonstrates how concepts such as globalisation or intercultural awareness, with an implicit focus on pluralism and diversity, can become fixed in binary ways when confronted by other ideological positions. Rudolph shows clearly how the practices of an English language department construct a world in which language learning and intercultural development are essentialised as an engagement between 'Japanese' and 'Westerners', each understood in quite stereotypicalised ways. The practices described intersect closely with native-speakerism and its racialisation as described in the chapter by Burton and reveal that such categories have an impact on how teachers are positioned and what teaching they are considered capable of carrying out. The binary categories constructed in the department thus have a strong impact on the professional lives of individuals. These binaries also work to position students, who as members of the Japanese category are expected to enact their Japaneseness in particular ways, especially in interactions with Western others. The Japanese identities and behaviours they are expected to adopt may be different from their own personal understandings of being Japanese; being Japanese is thus an identity that Japanese students need to learn (Liddicoat, 2007) in order to be viewed as successful participants in the institution's (and government's) ideological construction of globalisation.

In Rudolph's chapter, it is interesting to observe that the teachers in the department do not seem to perceive themselves as ideological actors but rather as recipients of ideological positions which constrain their agency within educational contexts. Ideological positions are presented as coming from students in the form of students' expectations, complaints or demands about their education, or from the society more generally. There seems to be little sense that the teachers themselves and their practices are fundamentally implicated in the production and reproduction of ideological positions. This again raises the issue of the ways that perceptions of neutrality shape understandings of education. In this case, it would seem that the teachers view themselves as acting neutrally in the ideological field and there is little acknowledgement of their role as (re)producers of ideology through their own enactments of it and their conformity to discourses that they perceive as external to them.

Kırkgoz moves away from teachers and learners to focus on the materials used for teaching and the ways that these transmit ideologies to learners. This chapter is a useful pendant to that of Mirhosseini, who also shows how ideologies are planned into aspects of language programs but does not look at how they are realised in particular contexts of teaching and learning. Kırkgoz examines the ideological influence of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) on Turkish educational policy for teaching English and on the textbooks that have been produced to implement this policy. The CEFR has had a significant influence on language education policy through processes of policy borrowing in which the provisions of the CEFR have been adopted into policies both within Council of Europe member states and beyond (Byram & Parmenter, 2012). Such policy borrowing cannot however be seen simply in terms of the borrowing of educational models; policies are inherently ideological constructs (Liddicoat, 2013) and borrowing involves the borrowing of ideologies, which may be overtly or covertly expressed in the documents. Kırkgoz identifies some ideological positions that have entered into Turkish educational policy and from there into textbooks, showing how ideologies are disseminated from the top down reaching wider audiences as they are transmitted. Kırkgoz largely sees this process as positive, in that she views consistent alignment between the ideologies at all levels as a form of success. However, such an analysis does not take into consideration the nature of the ideologies themselves, how they construct the phenomena they deal with, what discourses they draw on and normalise or the ways that those discourses are consequential in their transmission to new contexts (Liddicoat & Zarate, 2009). One of the key ideological constructs that Kırkgoz documents but does not critique is a nation-centred construction of culture; the examples she cites the impact of ideologies on textbook content show a strong influence of culturalism (Bayart, 2002) as the central ideological construction of *globality*. For Kırkgoz, globality is enacted in textbooks by representations of national cultures beyond the USA and the UK but there is little sense that it involves a critique of national constructions of culture or of native-speaker models of cultural targets. The chapter thus reminds us that any account of ideological transmission through policy borrowing needs not only to describe the processes through which ideologies are transmitted and the sites in which they are presented to new audiences but also requires a critical engagement with ideologies and the ways that they shape practices and understandings through their instantiation in new policy texts.

García and Alonso take up this issue of critical engagement with policy in their study of the impact of the standards movement on assessment regimes in the USA. They examine how the neoliberal framing of education in the US, beginning with the No Child Left Behind policy has increasingly marginalised Latinx students and has negatively affected their educational outcomes and opportunities. Most significantly, they demonstrate how attempts to mitigate the negative effects of No Child Left Behind have not actually changed the educational realities for Latinx students because they have focused only on technical issues of identifying and assessing standards but have not tackled the ideological constructions of languages, cultures and learners that are at the heart of the problem. Thus, policy change, conceived as a change in recommendations for practice, has not been effective in resolving the problems identified with the original policy because assessment practices cannot be decontextualised from the ideologies in which they are elaborated. If ideologies remain fixed, technical changes articulate the same ideological positions but in different ways. Drawing on the scholarship of *geopolítica*, they demonstrate how practices in standardised assessment have perpetuated or augmented the minoritisation of Latinx students in education in a number of ways that reflect findings from other chapters in this book. Latinx students are minoritised through the increasing invisibilisation of their bilingualism that results from a focus on learning English as the normative goal of education and a lack of consideration of how students' whole language

repertoires are engaged in processes of learning at all levels. By emphasising only their status as English Language Learners as the relevant identities for understanding their participation in education, policy discourses have constructed students' language identities in deficit terms only; they are understood as people who have not yet developed an adequate command of English and these discourses have worked to close off ways of understanding of bilinguals' other languages as part of their social and educational repertoire and as resources for action. In this way, policy reproduces an overwhelming monolingual habitus (Gogolin, 1993) that marginalises those for whom monolingualism is not a usual communicative repertoire. In this normalisation of the monolingual habitus, being able to speak other languages – Spanish in García and Alonso's study – is represented either as a problem to be overcome or at best a scaffold for early development in reproducing the linguistic behaviours of an idealised monolingual group. More complex language repertoires can thus be given little place in understanding students' abilities, achievements or lives.

These chapters show the ways in which ideology is a constituent part of the social realities of English language education in the contemporary world. They reveal clearly, as has already been said, that English teaching and learning is never a neutral activity but is thoroughly shaped by ideological positions that privilege some participants and marginalise others. These ideologies may not be explicitly articulated although, as has been shown, they may be. It is not central to the nature of ideology to be explicit; such a view is something that grows out of an unnuanced understanding of ideology as individuals' or groups' committed political positions or as false consciousness, with its attendant beliefs in ideological falsehood and objective truth (Marx & Engels, 1932 [2011]). This early Marxist view captures well the idea that ideologies work to privilege some and to marginalise other and also shows that ideologies do normalise patterns of domination because those who dominate can do so through their power to produce the ideologies that rationalise their domination for themselves and for those they dominate. Ideology is, however, more usefully understood as shared understandings that shape perceptions of the world and which gain their power when they move from being seen as beliefs to become articulations of the way the world is (Gramsci, 1975). This is what gives ideologies their hegemonic power and enables the entrenchment of existing relations of power. As Gramsci argues, hegemony is produced through ideology and can ultimately only be overcome through ideology. That is, the alternative to ideology is not replacing false consciousness with objective truth, but requires elaboration of another ideology that works to realign power relations. This is because ideology is not something that is imposed on the social world but rather something that constitutes it as meaningful for those who live within that world (Althusser, 1965, 1976). To understand the social world, then, we need to know the ideologies that bring it into being in the way that it is lived and experienced by those living within it. This book provides a contribution to this endeavour by deconstructing the ideologies that shape the lived experiences of teachers and learners of English in the contemporary world and by challenging these ideological constructions in ways that reveal the patterns of dominance that exist within the field of English language education.

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