

Tochon, F. V. (2009). The Role of Language in Globalization: Language, Culture, Gender and Institutional Learning. *International Journal of Educational Policies*, 3(2), 107-124.

ISSN: 1307-3842

## **The Role of Language in Globalization: Language, Culture, Gender and Institutional Learning**

Francois Victor Tochon\*

*University of Wisconsin-Madison*

### **Abstract**

This institutional project focused on the integration of quality standards in teacher education in a public university that trains English teachers from a region of the Middle East with approximately \$10,000 purchasing power parity (PPP). The institutional change under study consisted of integrating standards through electronic portfolios. Teacher training provides an opportunity for students to enhance their status, as English is an international language. However, language and culture are interconnected, which situates English as a tool for influence, persuasion, and a subtle form of colonization to concepts proper to Western societies. Indeed, language is more than communication: It represents experience and social attitudes and links knowledge with demands for group worth. This article focuses on the dynamics of change. Participatory Action Science (PAS) was used as a design for the study. Participants documented their activity and were interviewed during the collaborative changes. The focus is on the clash between male and female positioning during the innovation process. The article is a reflection on how globalization shakes traditional obedience networks based on gender, how it impacts cultural change, and how it typifies seats of resistance.

**Keywords:** *Participatory action science, Gender, institutional learning, language, culture, educational policy, ELT, foreign language education*

---

\* Prof. Francois Victor Tochon is affiliated with Department of Curriculum & Instruction, School of Education in University of Wisconsin-Madison, USA. Fax: +1 (608) 263-9992 Email: ftochon@education.wisc.edu

## **Introduction**

Language policy making is one of the most productive arenas within which to examine interactions among global, national, and local forces (Spolsky, 2004). It addresses issues as complex and diverse as cultural preservation, child development, global labor markets, and international development education practices. It also addresses the educational realities of a country. Despite a growing acknowledgment that language policies reflect conflicting visions for education, state building, globalization, and economic growth (Edge, 2006; Reagan, 2005), little empirical research has been conducted on the implementation of language policies practices across countries. We need to study the ideological values and purposes of education policy reform in foreign language education. This study is a step towards addressing this gap.

The institutional project studied focused on the integration of quality standards in teacher education in a public University that trains English teachers from a region of the Middle East with approximately \$10,000 purchasing power parity (PPP). Teachers in these areas often lack professional skills to cope with the goals of today's society. Access to English opens a world of communication and new job opportunities. Teacher training provides an opportunity for student teachers to enhance their status. It has an impact on how their own students will be taught in K-12 schools. Nonetheless, there is a side effect to 'Englishization': It brings with it a large baggage of Western preconceptions, ways of living, and ways of knowing, that acculturate second language speakers to a model of society that may antagonize their own tradition and culture. Male and female students and faculty members may react differently vis-à-vis such cross-cultural invasion.

The study was the seat of an international collaboration process. Student teachers and teacher educators documented their activity and were interviewed during the collaborative changes that were organized as an exploratory, PAS project. Data analysis indicated a clash between male and female positioning within the innovation process.

### **E-Portfolios as the Surreptitious Inscription of Western Values in Education**

The institutional change under study consisted in integrating standards through electronic portfolios in English Language Teacher (ELT) Education. The introduction of electronic portfolios and standards had deep cultural impacts as it clashed with local values and ways of interacting among faculty members and students. This article focuses on the dynamics of change rather than the portfolios themselves. Nevertheless, it is useful to remind that e-portfolios play a role in creating learning communities and motivating increased communication among faculty members. Electronic portfolios, performance-based standards, and reflective activities on teaching experience are viewed as efficient ways to practice professionalization (Cakiroglu & Cakiroglu, 2003). Such standard-based instrumentation has a growing importance in the process of globalization.

Okten & Tochon (forthcoming) posit that, in developing countries, educational policies are often considered the most important means of reaching the economic level of Western countries. New policies in mid-Eastern teacher education often resulted from the World Bank push towards educational development, a concept that meets skepticism when it entails obedience towards the market economy. The persisting lack of effectiveness of recent education reforms has led teacher educators to question the sincerity of policymakers, as well as government conceptual coherence across ministries. In such reforms, faculty members often feel that they lack academic freedom. They are not granted enough autonomy in decision-making. Indeed, the concept of educational improvement is a matter of values, even when innovation appears purely technological. This is particularly the case with the implementation of electronic portfolios to evaluate professional standards. The underlying cultural values are implicit; they are embedded in the instrument.

The focus of change was the negotiation and implementation of standards through a new electronic portfolio system. There is an abundant literature on e-portfolios in teacher education (Tochon & Black, 2007), but research on teacher portfolios within ELT internationally is still developing. The positive side of such reform is that portfolios help create a cohesive discourse community (Freidus, 2000); stimulate attitude change (Winzer, Altieri & Larsson, 2000) and promote authentic inquiry (Harland, 2005). However, very few studies bear on the way change is negotiated and organized. To recap such change can create an environment in which the rapport among faculty members morphs due to the specific linguistic and technological needs and input required in the integration of standards, which often represent new territory.

### **The Interaction of Globalization and Culture in Language Teaching and Learning**

Words bring with them inevitable distortions. They are linked to intentionality, metaphorical networks, and connotative meanings. For Smith (1999, p. 24), “the word globalization is substituted for the word imperialism”. Kwame Anthony Appiah notes that the word “globalization” has evolved from its use in marketing strategies to its role in macroeconomics, and “now can seem to encompass everything, and nothing” (2006, xiii). Appiah elects “cosmopolitanism” as the word of choice for an ethics in a world of strangers. While we should remain critical about global forces when they are imposed in a top-down fashion, more grassroot trends based on individual initiatives may target increased communication and be situated on sane and fruitful ground. Situations are often blurred and complex. Behind the innovation analyzed in the present study was the untold story of bilingual, disadvantaged students who need to adapt to two cultures and are in charge of spreading English in the Middle East (Laponce, 2003; Phillipson, 2003). We tried to understand their positioning vis-à-vis the ambiguities they had to face. Language is more than communication: It represents experience and social attitudes, and links knowledge with demands for group worth (Schmid, 2001).

In the field of language policy studies, policies are viewed as influencing and being influenced by ideologies,

values, and language identities, as well as by international and market pressures (Phillips & Ochs, 2004). Language status, in particular, can be understood as reflecting the perceived social utility of a language, which is determined not only by market forces but also by the way specific cultural actors perceive and use language (Fishman, 2006). For example, a language policy may be intended to remove what is claimed to be an inferior or defective language, to provide access to an ostensibly “value-free” major language and lessen linguistic schisms in a nation state or to meet local demands for greater labor mobility. Language identity, political ideology, perceived labor markets, aesthetics, fashion, popular culture, and myths all become key components of language status.

The literature offers varying perspectives on the relationship among economic and political power, policy, and educational and linguistic practices at a transnational level. Neo-institutionalist theorists (Boli & Lechner, 2005) have argued that a convergent global culture, characterized by standardized educational models and policies, is being created around the world. In contrast, system-theory scholars have posited that “the idiosyncrasy of meaning in specific nations, societies, or civilizations . . . brings into relief the persistence of multiple worlds” (Schriewer, 2000, p. 33). The former group has asserted the existence of a worldwide culture that shapes schools’ organization and education policies. The latter has construed cross-national “policy attraction” as “an act of inter-state competition strengthening divergence” (Steiner-Khamsi, 2004, p. 10). Both groups present strong evidence for their arguments, which leads us to believe that both processes are possible and valid.

Parallel arguments are made for the effects on linguistic education policies of external agendas defined by international institutions, such as the United Nations or the global market. Some scholars see a direct connection among (a) the interests of those in power at regional, national, and international levels; (b) languages that are internationally privileged; and (c) the policies that support these developments (García, Skutnabb-Kangas, & Torres-Guzmán, 2006; Phillipson, 2008). From this perspective, language policy can be overt (related to official authorities) or covert (related to persuasive economic promotion of one language) (Shohamy, 2006). Other analysts perceive a relative autonomy of educational actors, communities, and agencies (Pennycook, 1994, 2006). Anderson-Levitt (2003) argued that regardless of the policy level (where there is convergence), educational practices continue to differ significantly around the world. These arguments have been picked up by governments, nongovernmental organizations, development agencies, teachers, and community members to argue for or against language policies in particular settings.

### **The Spread of English and the Growth of International Linguicism**

Likewise, the role of English is questioned as it improves global communication but leads to the inscription of an unregulated market ideology that has created disasters and worldwide injustice. Bourdieu (1991) called power-laden social interactions *social capital*; according to social capital theory, the exercise of power

through language and culture can be considered *linguistic capital* and *cultural capital*, respectively (Bourdieu, 1993; Park, 2008). We will explore language policies as discourse and practice, since “[l]anguage policy debates are always about more than language” (Ricento, 2006, p. 8).

One impact of the internationalization of English in wealthy countries has been a form of language discrimination related with the hierarchizing of languages in terms of their economic importance. Linguicism, a term coined by Skutnabb-Kangas (1984) to designate a form of prejudice against the language of others within nation states, seems now to spread across states to discriminate languages that are not part of the ‘world game’. Linguicism involves judgmental attitudes towards people who do not exhibit linguistic attributes related to economic, social, educational status on the basis of their use of language. Peoples are led to interiorize a form of inner governmentality associated with guilt if they do not develop English proficiency, which is a key attribute of globalization. Pressure is often exercised to enforce the global dominance of English in developing countries. In some cases, parents feel compelled to adopt English at home while they live in a monolingual society to give better economic chances to their children. Whether the trend will last if imperial economies are in shambles is arguable. A survey of the recent percentages of L1 and L2 English speakers worldwide based suggests that the relative percentage of L1 speakers of English is decreasing and the percentage of speakers of English as a second language is stable (Tochon, 2009). The lack of growth in the percentage of English speakers is due to various factors, such as attrition, lack of proficient and well-trained teachers (there are plenty of L1 speakers who teach with no pedagogy and L2 teachers with pedagogy but no proficiency), the bad image of the American and Anglo-world at large outside the Commonwealth, and the growth of populations speaking languages other than English (Skutnabb-Kangas, Phillipson, Panda & Mohanty, 2009). The idea that English will become the world language is a nicely funded myth (Phillipson, 2009). Presently, 85% of the speakers of this planet do not speak English and there is no indication that their percentage might change significantly during the coming decade, despite inflated claims such as Crystal’s (2006), whose perceptions have recently evolved towards more realistic figures. The world will probably evolve towards a basket of regional and continental languages, with a growing distinction between varieties of Englishes that will gain increasing autonomy departing from the British and American linguistic poles.

The issues raised by international linguicism and discriminatory language status may diminish over time, which entails providing wiser forms of education and avoiding propaganda-based textbooks. Language status is a form of language ideology that attributes certain linguistic marks to the worldwide trends that characterize being ‘modern’ and ‘globally educated’. Contrary to cosmopolitanism, whose ideology tends to be respectful of otherness, the perception of language status is hierarchical and is based on the authority conferred by a privileged language. How second language speakers and prospective teachers of English deal with the evolving ambiguities of their language status is an important focus. Such research can inform

national and international efforts to shape language policy and serve as the basis for creating professional development and other tools to help teachers, students, educators, and international partners improve educational depth and quality and reflect on ethics-based educational principles (Osborn, 2006; Skutnabb-Kangas, Phillipson, Mohanty & Panda, 2009). This has been the attempt, as described in this article. To provide much space for conversations on these issues, a participative form of action research was proposed to teachers at the same time as an impetus for the inscription of professional standards in foreign language teacher education.

### **Research Methods**

#### **Setting the Stage for Organizational Learning**

The study was based upon PAS (Argyris, 1997; Kemmis & McTaggart, 2005). Participants analyzed their experiences in the innovation process, to better understand how cultural perspectives and social practices produce effects, so undesirable consequences could be avoided. Because of its constant bottom-up feedback loop, PAS supports sustainable changes over time. There were three stages of participation in the project:

*Stage 1.* Two teacher educators (one male, one female) collaborated with the foreign faculty to coordinate this action among colleagues in the Department of ELT with the help of faculty from the Department of Instructional Technology (IT). We created a limited set of priority standards from the large number of standards proposed by the Ministry of Education and modeled a template portfolio and pre-service development procedures and guidelines, including portfolio supervision training for faculty who were in charge of student teachers.

*Stage 2.* A pool of teacher educators and IT faculty with the aforementioned coordinators organized the student teachers' training. They gave feedback on the standards and proposed improvements, and modeled a template portfolio, pre-service development procedures and guidelines, including portfolio supervision training for faculty who were in charge of student teachers. Portfolio training was organized collaboratively, along with the standards' integration.

*Stage 3.* Thirty volunteer student teachers were involved in this inquiry. The students integrated the standards in their portfolios. The teacher educators met with them twice a week for development workshops. They collected student teachers' feedback on their experiences and proposed adaptations to the model to make it useful. Suggestions for improvements were conveyed to the coordination team.

PAS contributed to institutional learning and was integrated as a way of monitoring change. The framework for this study draws on critical systems theory within a Habermasian orientation (Habermas, 2003; Ulrich, 2003). The formation and negotiation of linguistic identities define a complex dynamic of power, dominance, and hierarchy between languages (Mohanty, 2007; Munck, 2005), which has an impact on how policies

translate into practice. Among the key research questions framing this study, we investigated what issues relate with this integration; what were the obstacles, and what systemic procedures should be set to regulate this change.

### **Methodology**

A vertical case analysis was proposed “as a means of comparing knowledge claims among actors with different social locations in an attempt to situate local action and interpretation within a broader cultural, historical, and political investigation” (Vavrus & Bartlett, 2006, p.95). It involved two levels of description: the stage of the student teachers and the stage of teacher educators and administrators. Data processing was qualitative, exploratory, and hermeneutic.

#### *Participants*

12 teacher educators were met to discuss the innovation proposed to 30 volunteer student teachers.

#### *Data Collection and Processing*

Teacher educators and student teachers documented their activity and participated in two or more interviews during the collaborative changes that were organized as an exploratory, PAS project. The participants were invited to share their experiences, which were analyzed confidentially. Interviews were held with student teachers at different stages of the creation of portfolios during a period of 4 months. The interviews were conducted at different points for every participant as they were met on a weekly basis. As well, notes were taken during staff meetings and during the weekly discussion sessions of the teacher educators’ team, some of which were recorded. A log was kept by teacher educators, which allowed the team to reflect on the ongoing innovation process. The vertical analysis dealt with two “stages”: the stage of the student teachers and the stage of the teacher educators and administrators. We analyzed the meetings and semi-structured interviews, verbal reports from and conversations with the educators involved in the process, conversations with the different partners as sources of personal reflections on the topics under study, and experiential memos on mentoring and coordinating the change. A number of interviews and discussions have been transcribed verbatim and summarized. Themes were analyzed with a grid of criteria related with boundary judgments, an aspect which is too lengthy to be presented here. Data were interpreted to illuminate processes such as power, discourse, and authentic change.

### **Critical Analysis**

#### **The Student Teachers’ Stage**

Many student teachers were coming with a diglossic substrate and spoke at home a language that is not recognized by the education system. They had very few chances to acquire proficiency in English for a

variety of reasons, such as inadequate instruction, a scarcity of authentic materials, a lack of resources and technologies in their schools, and regional resistance towards ideologies associated with the English language. Yet, these students had been selected by annual national examinations, at which they scored high enough to get into the teacher training program. As a part of the role of English language education in most developing countries, these students were seen as the ones who would promote the Anglo-culture and its language in their region of the countryside. Examinations open certain doors, depending on the student's results. Some students wanted to become physicians or architects, but their results relegated them to teaching as a minor achiever profession. These students experienced a certain number of paradoxes. Becoming English teachers, they would be considered the representatives of a language and culture that they had been informally educated to analyze as the emanation of an empire that creates worldwide injustice, war and death, which they could observe everyday on television. In their perception, the Anglo-culture is related to power and money, which are often perceived as non-values in their own traditional culture. Aware of millennia of deep-rooted cultural traditions as their own background—even for the members of the lowest socio-economic stratum among them—and most probably exactly owing to that awareness these students would keep their identities. They would not become the bearers of a non-culture that directed what appeared to them as a nonsensical loss of wisdom, the McDonaldization of their country, the destruction of its coasts with an imported real estate boom, and its subjectification to interests that target the control of central Asia at whatever expense, be it in possibly splitting their nation in two halves, a balkanization that they would never accept.

Their new status was also a reminder of their own lost empire, which was highly civilized and respectful of otherness and emphasized alliances rather than forceful obedience and severe aggression. At one point or another in our conversations, students expressed a feeling of relief and deliverance for being allowed to tell their deep feelings and clarify their historical perspective, which indicated that they had much more knowledge than their often silent, receptive and respectful attitude might have suggested and they had been reflecting a lot on their ambiguous forthcoming position. Among the perceptions they expressed, the national examinations, which dictate future professions, created identity crises that the teacher education setting should deal with. However, the distance that exists between the faculty professor and the student is such that they could rarely discuss views that were deemed inappropriate by the ministry. Ambiguity and identity clashes were reinforced by the strong personalization of national identity around a consecrated figure, which historically enforced the opening of the nation to the Western world. Education was then considered as the seat of sanctification, inherited from this original mission that would place the nation back onto the world stage with a renewed, spiritual and balancing role in the family of nations. Another paradox of this ideological environment was, furthermore, the seat of a strong religious repositioning with invisible



borders within the country, which partly overlapped borders across social classes and genders. It is impossible to be reductive in this profile depiction of a reality, which is blurred and complex.

Each group of students seemed firmly grounded in a specific subculture. Students were in different identity clusters, members of various social networks that rarely met with each other. There were commonalities and shared worldviews, though. English represented a seat of challenge and questionable power to the point that a majority of students were upset with the information and concepts conveyed by their British textbooks. They expressed the need to print national English learning textbooks in tune with the state's ideals, understandings, and culture. All agreed in their conversations that as teachers they would have to censor part of the information that was presented in the British textbook chapters as being simple propaganda for ideologies they did not share at all. Notwithstanding, gender clearly was a factor in the choice of specific life ideals and social connections that were partly determined by family substrates. Patterns of differences were noticeable. When asked to describe the reasons that would motivate them to be English teachers and what kind of teacher they would be in a PowerPoint assignment for their portfolios, while a number of female student teachers shared their view of the sanctity of the educational act and a sense that their mission was sacred, male student teachers were attracted by the prestige of being called a 'teacher', getting a high salary for teaching in poor regions, and ability to travel internationally thanks to their developing language skills. While one female student used a slide background that indicated the sacredness and religious dimension of education, one male student chose a slide background presenting a floor of dollar bills. There was discussion on these clashing perspectives and teacher identities. They expressed that the situation of females vis-à-vis males was changing. Women were tired for having to work twice as hard to get the same level of achievement as men. They were often brighter, but the best positions were most often reserved for the males. Furthermore, their religious positioning was not accepted in public institutions and those who applied their religious rules strictly had to wear a hat they did not like. Despite the willingness of the current "surface" government to be flexible on these issues, the veil was again forbidden because of interventions of, what they called, the deep government which blocked the access of a large number of females who would not modify their clothing to comply with the requirements of public institutions. There was a sense among these young women that a day would come when they would have authority over what to wear and not wear, and that it would come soon, which was considered one of the merits of Western culture. While some of them adopted the liberated attitude of the Western stereotypical woman; including blond hair dyeing, lipstick, occasional décolletage and miniskirt, they too maintained a deep sense of family values and a religious and spiritual attitude towards destiny—an attitude that a number of their male colleagues seemed to have entirely lost and towards which the latter reacted with humor and sometimes what sounded like cynicism. This defined the stage of the student teachers.

### **The Teacher Educators' and Administrators' Stage**

In this vertical case analysis, it was found that the stage of the teacher educators and administrators was equally divided according to gender. There was a clash between male and female positionings within the innovation process. The introduction of electronic portfolios and standards had cultural impacts as it clashed with local values and ways of interacting among faculty members and among students, as well as between faculty and student. At some point in the innovation process, the female 'coordinator-in-practice', who had made most of the connections with the different partners and the international guest, was superseded by the other teacher educator, 'coordinator-in-theory', who claimed paternity on the whole project because he had signed an administrative paper that, actually, would allow him to cancel local funding for the project. While the project was bottom-up and participatory in nature, it was mainly promoted by female faculty members who made the decision to uphold the appearance he wanted of 'authorized' and 'authored' top-down design. They reassured their male colleague who had more political influence than they had of this by acknowledging his superiority. They agreed with the claim that the project had been built on his own initiative, that he had carved it in all its minute details, so he could lose his interest and once again female faculty members would be free to continue the bottom-up process as they wished. In turn, the student teachers took the liberty of innovating on their own by proposing specific structures and activities for the portfolio.

PAS worked in a motivational way across departments. The faculty members of the IT Department wanted to learn about the ongoing innovation process expressed the willingness to start their own collaborative process. IT faculty wanted to know what the ELT Department was doing and what process and software were used to create portfolios. Each of them had heard two months earlier that a new project involving new technologies was starting in the other department. Many of the IT faculty had experience with portfolios but had not found any appropriate software to achieve their goals. They were doing mini-portfolios on PowerPoint and Word files. Some were teaching about learning portfolios. They knew they would start doing e-portfolios for IT student teachers at some point, but did not know how or when. Many were surprised to see that things would get started in a department that appeared less knowledgeable than they were in information technologies. ELT faculty had been cautious enough to get some of IT students involved in the portfolio project. IT students served as IT tutors to ELT student teachers. Thus, information leaked through the grapevine. Even so, some faculty members complained to the dean that the ELT portfolio project had been executed clandestinely. The dean suddenly decided to organize a large meeting for all the School of Education faculty members about the ELT portfolio project with a presentation by the international guest. The international guest learned about it when the invitation letters had been printed and placed on the office desks of all faculty members.

A discussion ensued with the project-coordinator-in-practice—the one having formally invited the international guest, having organized the PAR with her ELT peers, having worked hard to make this adventure possible, and having informed her colleagues quite a few times by e-mail or otherwise that they were welcome on board as this was an open project. There had been no apparent reaction at that time in the IT Department. Everybody was very busy, and maybe they did not want to disturb or interfere with a process they felt might be slightly private. They had much travelling to do everyday from their home to the university on the other side of the city and perhaps feared that participation might imply some additional work. The easy way for them to manifest both their desire to know about the project without having really to become involved was to respond to the dean's questions about their lack of involvement in terms of not being informed. The project of the ELT Department, they had suggested, seemed to be held privately such that they did not want to interfere with what seemed to be a personal matter, the matter of the faculty who was the direct collaborator and coordinator of the foreign invitation. Although, when things were ripe and started being organized in the name of the ELT Department (even though the ELT male department chair was not involved but for signature) and no formal meeting was organized that they knew or wanted to know, then some complained to the dean.

On that pretext, the dean got involved; she knew that this project, which had been organized by the female coordinator-in-practice, had been signed for funding purposes by the male colleague, superior of the said female coordinator due to his seniority yet usually working in another department. Because of his lack of English proficiency, the male faculty had found good reason to keep a distance and was not directly involved while he could claim to both his hierarchy and the hierarchy of a private university where he had an office, that he was leading the whole project, which could help the private university take advantage of his leadership situation in the public university. Yet, he had to leave for a few days to the capital for administrative purposes. The dean used these few days to organize the ad hoc presentation of the project to the entire school. The coordinator-in-practice was told that the portfolio project was *her* project and it should not be stolen by either a dominating male or another university. Things had to be done quickly. The young assistant professor, taken between two powerful administrative agents, was the one to prepare the meeting and buy the treats for the faculty meeting. She was in a difficult situation because of her forthcoming tenure deadline, with one male department chair who did not want to be involved and the other male administrator who served as project leader and claimed authorship of the bottom-up initiative. The school meeting with an overwhelming female participation went well and was quite relaxed. Consequently, the IT faculty members expressed sincere interest, which led to organizing a couple of organizational meetings with their department.

The alpha male came back from the capital and indicated who would write which chapter of his edited book on the portfolio process. The international guest was not informed about it but learned through the grapevine. The alpha male then proposed to the international guest to expand the project to a private university, which

would act faster and instrumentalize portfolios with more resources to control in-service teachers in a highly profitable network of private schools. Principals in private schools were eager to increase effectiveness and control through portfolios, and would make it mandatory for any teachers to keep up with web portfolio design every month. The international guest declined the offer for reasons that he directly clarified with the private institution. Indeed, the public university had precedence in this initiative and deserved to be recognized as the initial place of such innovation; moreover he didn't agree with the way the portfolios would be reduced to an instrument of control.

When he came back from his visits with the 'higher ups', the male colleague of the assistant professor was very upset with the school meeting having been organized in his absence by the dean. Moreover, the international guest had clarified with the private university that the actual project coordinator-in-practice of that project was the female assistant professor and had declined the offer to help create portfolio systems and office hours twice a week for a high salary in that private setting. A stormy meeting occurred. What transpired through the grapevine was that the (male) coordinator-on-paper reminded the (female) coordinator-in-practice that in universities a hierarchy does exist and any action can have grave consequences as she was preparing for tenure. During the same week, he had to remind one of his assistants who had brilliantly implemented an international meeting with an English-speaking audience for him that she was not allowed to take the lead as he was the boss and, in the university, a hierarchy exists that must be respected. He gave this assistant the task of translating during the weekend 40 pages of conference papers into English. Then he asked the international guest whether this one wanted to leave office or simply wanted that he cancel the grant, which he could do since he had signed the funding request for the assistant professor at the time she was abroad. While it sounded dubious that he might have had any role in obtaining the award, nonetheless, he claimed it was his contacts in the Ministry that had made the project possible and so he deserved to be considered THE actual project initiator, author, and coordinator. Stopping the project was for him the matter of one phone call. Actually, the project methodology had first been proposed in English by the international professor and had been adapted to local realities by the assistant professor who consulted her peers for that purpose. She had translated the project for the grant agency and then forwarded it for ratification. The said alpha male had clearly some temper and expressed his negotiation in terms that he probably did not really mean to enact. He was acting from the standpoint of the old logic of the hierarchical society in which he was born with its micro-cultural elements as well, a logic that could not shoulder closer and closer contact with the Western culture, a culture that transformed the way women perceived their own importance.

A conflict climax had been reached. The coordinator-in-practice used a strategy to pacify the situation, which was to appease him with many compliments on his achievements. She indicated that she was aware he had and always had had the leading role. And now he would have to take care of the project because she had to

devote her time to other matters. There were two meetings a week with student teachers that had to be prepared in advance with the international guest and he would be required to have his assistants involved for consecutive interpretation. Also, he would have to be brought up to date on the work already done and take the leadership as to what decisions should follow, what software would best meet the goals, how the software should be adapted, and with what personnel.

The coordinator-on-paper took the fore for a week. He explained that things had to be administered the right way. He demanded that from then on every Wednesday morning at 10 am there would be a report session at which time everything should be explained and clarified, as he did not understand English. From then on his two (female) assistants who were perfectly bilingual would have to follow closely any project-related activity and report directly to him in his native language. They were nice enough that the ELT team could count on their active involvement. One IT faculty joined to help explore different software and examine the best choices. Another IT faculty who was giving the applied technology course in ELT wanted to join as well, but the coordinator-on-paper declared that he would leave the project if she joined. He meant that he might stop the project's funding as he did not agree to include a (female) IT faculty who was a close friend of the (female) dean.

Afterward came the organizing of a couple of IT department meetings without the (male) coordinator-on-paper really knowing or wanting to know about it. The climate had been smoothed by the peaceful declaration of the (female) coordinator-in-practice, who took the liberty not to come to the IT Dept meeting as she was in ELT and they would start their own participatory action research with invisible, undeclared but effective connections with the first PAS group. The narcissist bubbles had exploded and things had settled down. The IT faculty members had many questions. Almost everyone had seen unconvincing examples of portfolios and they were intrigued to see much better versions. However, they were seeing portfolio use from a technical viewpoint, rather than a reflective practice. The ontological and representational challenges of defining artifacts as showcases of performances and evidence of competence did not trigger much critical reflection; however, the IT professors were sensitive to the risks of possibly standardizing human behavior. We are not mechanics, they said. Professionalism is reflective and should be "individualized", they added, meaning that professional growth should be differentiated to match particular profiles. They understood the dangers of standardizing education. While observations related with this single case study have a reflective purpose and no pretense for generalization or claim that it might apply to a larger number of cases, it was noted that there was harmony among the faculty, male and female, under the direction of a female department chair.

### **Conclusion**

We currently witness a push towards a convergent global culture that establishes standards and technology-based policies around the world. Regardless, idiosyncratic and complex dynamics react in subtle and less subtle ways to such impulses and operate to maintain the divergent aspects that characterize the local culture. Critical systems theory inherited from Aristotle and Kant the notion that instrumentality has to be superseded by practical reasoning and theoretical wisdom (Fuenmayor, 1991). This project satisfied to this higher goal. Through PAS, the institution could develop ways that permitted meaningful—life-related and empowering—assessment of teacher learning, as well as the self-sustainable capacity to learn from experiences. Such projects have the potential to increase communication among parties. As Habermas (2003) demonstrated, more truthful interactions can contribute to lessen inequality in the representation of the diversity of voices, as contradiction can be democratically expressed. It can expand the social opportunities available to a variety of partners in a period of change. Of course, the government wants quality teachers for the difficult regions. The development of teachers' voices, identity, and their democratic involvement may enhance the quality of their personal lives. PAS as a training context can influence the ability of teachers to shape social outcomes. Such work can help identify ways to change investments in the interests of a more just society.

Language policies play an important role in current international reforms (Toleffson, 2002). Therefore, their enactment implies that issues of fairness and respect for others be thoroughly examined (Tochon & Karaman, 2009). This study is a first regarding language education policy: most studies have concentrated on policymaking, not policy enactment (Ricento, 2006). It sheds light on an interesting and often ignored aspect: language skills give power to women as they often are the ones who specialize in languages and are, *de facto*, the most skilled in cross-linguistic communication. In the project, gendered-related differences were noticeable. Some places of resistance could be deciphered as well as their likely rationales. Proficiency in the targeted language placed these speakers into new seats of power as translators of the Westernization process. This is not to say that this process was, a priori, good or bad, but it happened. In this particular setting, female speakers seemed to have an advantage, which might have stimulated strong reactions from some of their male counterparts less proficient in English, who struggled to keep power positions both in the process of change and in taking the institutional lead while constantly depending upon translations to keep up with innovation. This situation of possibly entrenched dominant males—along with some dominant females who adopt the same behavioral model—may create a backlash towards traditional stands. The clash between male and female faculty deserves a detailed study, as neglecting to consider its implications may lead to failure in any innovation process. Participatory Action Science appears a particularly crucial strategy in such environment, in which words of empowerment may be brought into line and taken over by particular interests. The definition of cosmopolitanism does not escape a form of discursive abuse related to the paradox of organized autonomy. Various authors such as McLaren (2001) or Phillipson (2009) have

emphasized that globalization can be a Trojan horse for a new form of colonization, which implies economic take-over by the bank cartels, pharmaceutical industry, and military complex. Uncovering the background and the new rituals of present society as it tries to cope with accelerating change and increasing diversity clarifies the locus of control of socially constructed selves. Simultaneously, something new is happening globally that cannot be ignored: new forms of communication transform the world towards a rebalancing of our societies in ways that can be respectful of the variety of viewpoints, world languages and cultures, rather than representing economic pushes for capital in favor of the self-serving and the power-hungry. If globalization were to be reconceptualized as a postcolonial move, it would be important that change be considered a space of dialogue and mutual influence between languages and cultures, not the unilateral imposing of views and ways of organizing society, as if there were 'ones and best ways'.

Participatory Action Science is a process that is respectful of the positioning of different partners. It initiated dialogue. The faculty members got a better sense of the difficulties tied to tasks required by international policies and of their potential while accessing international standards. Through PAS, the departments studied were able to meaningfully integrate the change within their educational culture in their own terms and to develop integrated approaches that went beyond mere technology uses. This experience may serve as a pilot test for the university. Increased knowledge of the role of action science in supporting institutional change in different cultures can expand our understanding of the complexity of cross-cultural and cross-gender interventions.

### **Acknowledgements**

The institutional support for the project was provided by Tübitak and the University of Wisconsin-Madison. The transcriptions and data analysis were supported by a small grant from the Spencer Foundation (#38723) on issues of globalization and organizational learning. The usual disclaimer applies. We are most grateful to the Dean of the School of Education, the department chairs, teacher educators, colleagues and assistants who participated in the project. Thanks to Nancy Kendall, A. Cendel Karaman, Kelly Kingsbury, Jaime Usma, Hyu-Yong Park, and Elizabeth Miranda for their feedback on an earlier version of the literature review and Erica Walker for linguistic revision.

### **References**

- Anderson-Levitt, K. M. (2003). A world culture of schooling? In K. M. Anderson-Levitt (Ed.), *Local meanings, global schooling: Anthropology and world culture theory* (pp. 1-26). New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Appiah, Kwame Anthony (2006). *Cosmopolitanism. Ethics in a world of strangers*. New York: Norton.
- Argyris, C. (1997). Learning and teaching: A theory of action perspective. *Journal of Management Education*, 21(1), 9-27.

- Boli, J., & Lechner, F. J. (2005). *World culture: Origins and consequences*. Malden, MA: Blackwell.
- Bourdieu, P. (1991). *Language and symbolic power* (J. B. Thompson, Ed.; G. Raymond & M. Adamson, Trans.). Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press. (Original work published 1982)
- Bourdieu, P. (1993). *The field of cultural reproduction* (Randal Johnson, Trans.). Cambridge: Polity Press. (Original work published 1971)
- Çakıroglu, E., & Çakıroglu, J. (2003). Reflections on teacher education in Turkey. *European Journal of Teacher Education*, 26(2), 253–264.
- Crystal, D. (2006). English worldwide. In R. Hogg and D. Denison (Eds.), *A history of the English language* (pp.420-439). Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Edge, J. (2006). *(Re-)locating TESOL in an age of empire*. Basingstoke, England: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Fishman, J. A. (2006). Language policy and language shift. In T. Ricento (Ed.), *An introduction to language policy: Theory and method* (pp. 311–328). Malden, MA: Blackwell.
- Freidus, H. (2000, April). Fostering Reflective Practice: Taking a Look at Context. ERIC Document ED441787.
- Fuenmayor, R. (1991). The roots of reductionism: A counter ontoepistemology for a systems approach. *Systems Practice*, 4(5), 419-48.
- García, O., Skutnabb-Kangas, T., & Torres-Guzmán, M. E. (2006). *Imagining multilingual schools. Languages in Education and glocalization*. Buffalo, NY: Multilingual Matters.
- Habermas, J. (2003). *Truth and justification* (B. Fultner, Transl.). Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Harland, T. (2005). Developing a portfolio to promote authentic enquiry in teacher education. *Teaching in Higher Education*, 10(3), 327–337.
- Kemmis, S., & McTaggart, R. (2005). Participatory action research. In N. Denzin & Y. Lincoln (Eds.), *Sage handbook of qualitative research* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed., pp. 559–603). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Laponce, J. (2003). Babel and the market: Geostrategies for minority languages. In J. Maurais & M. A. Morris (Eds.), *Languages in a globalising world* (pp. 58–63). Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- McLaren, P. (2001). El sentido de la pedagogía crítica en la era de la globalización después del 11 de septiembre de 2001 (The Role of Critical Pedagogy in the Globalization Era and the Aftermath of September 11). Interview by L. C. Aguirre Muñoz. *Revista Electrónica de Investigación Educativa*, 3(2), 1-19. <http://redie.ens.uabc.mx/vol3no2/contenido-coral.html>
- Mohanty, A. (2007, September). *Multilingual Socialization and Negotiation of Identities in Contact between Multilingual Adults and Communities: Social Psychological Processes*. Paper presented at the Fifth International Conference on Third Language Acquisition and Multilingualism. 3 - 5 September 2007. University of Stirling, Scotland, UK.



- Munck, P. (2005). *Globalization and social exclusion: A transformationalist perspective*. Bloomfield, CT: Kumarian Press.
- Okten, C. E., & Tochon, F. V. (forthcoming). *Organizational learning for the development of national and European Union standards in Turkish teacher education*. Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin-Madison.
- Osborn, T. A. (2006). *Teaching world languages for social justice: A sourcebook of principles and practices*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Park, H.-Y. (2008). *Linguistic minority children's heritage language learning and identity struggle*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation. University of Wisconsin-Madison.
- Pennycook, A. (1994). *The cultural politics of English as an international language*. New York: Longman.
- Pennycook, A. (2006). Postmodernism in language policy. In T. Ricento (Ed.), *An introduction to language policy: Theory and method* (pp.60-76). Malden, MA: Blackwell.
- Phillips, D., & Ochs, K. (Eds.) (2004). *Educational policy borrowing: Historical perspectives*. Oxford, England: Oxford University Press.
- Phillipson, R. (2008). The linguistic imperialism of neoliberal empire. *Critical Inquiry in Language Studies*, 5(1), 1-43.
- Phillipson, R. (2009). *Linguistic Imperialism continued*. New York: Routledge.
- Reagan, T. (2005, September). *Critical theory, globalization and international language education*. Paper presented in the University Lecture Series, University of Wisconsin-Madison.
- Ricento, T. (2006). *An introduction to language policy: Theory and method*. Malden, MA: Blackwell.
- Schmid, C. L. (2001). *The politics of language: Conflict, identity, and cultural pluralism in comparative perspective*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Schriewer, J. (Ed.) (2000). *Discourse formation in comparative education*. Frankfurt am Main, Germany: Peter Lang GmbH.
- Shohamy, E. (2006). *Language policy: Hidden agendas and new approaches*. New York: Routledge.
- Skutnabb-Kangas, T. (1984). *Bilingualism or not: The education of minorities*. Clevedon, England: Multilingual Matters.
- Skutnabb-Kangas, T., Phillipson, R., Panda, M., & Mohanty, A. K. (2009). Multilingual education concepts, goals, needs and expense: English for all or achieving justice? In T. Skutnabb-Kangas, R. Phillipson, A. K. Mohanty, & M. Panda (Eds.), *Social justice through multicultural education* (pp.320-344). Buffalo, NY: Multilingual Matters.
- Skutnabb-Kangas, T., Phillipson, R., Mohanty, A.K., & Panda, M. (2009). *Social justice through multicultural education*. Buffalo, NY: Multilingual Matters.
- Smith, L. T. (1999). *Decolonizing methodologies: research and indigenous peoples*. London: Zed.

- Spolsky, B. (2004). *Language policy*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Steiner-Khamsi, G. (Ed.) (2004). *The global politics of educational borrowing and lending*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Tochon, F. V. (2009). The key to global understanding: World languages education. Why schools need to adapt. *Review of Educational Research*, 79(2), 650-682.
- Tochon, F. V., & Black, N. J. (2007). Narrative analysis of electronic portfolios: Preservice teachers' struggles in researching pedagogically appropriate technology integration. In M. A. Kassen, R. Z. Lavine, K. Murphy-Judy, & M. Peters (Eds.), *Preparing and developing technology-proficient L2 teachers* (CALICO Monograph Series Vol. 6, pp. 295–320). San Marcos, TX: Computer Assisted Language Instruction Consortium.
- Tochon, F. V., & Karaman, A. C. (2009). Critical reasoning for social justice: Moral encounters with the paradoxes of intercultural education. *Intercultural Education*, 20(2), 135-149.
- Tollefson, J. W. (2002). *Language policies in education*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Ulrich, W. (2000). Reflective practice in the civil society: The contribution of critically systemic thinking. *Reflective Practice*, 1(2), 247–268.
- Ulrich, W. (2003). Critical systems thinking for citizens. In R. L. Flood & N. R. A. Romm (Eds.), *Critical systems thinking: Current research and practice* (Rev. ed., pp. 165–178). New York: Plenum.
- Vavrus, F., & Bartlett, L. (2006). Comparatively knowing: Making a case for the vertical case study. *Current Issues in Comparative Education*, 8(2). Retrieved March 17, 2009, from [http://www.tc.columbia.edu/cice/Archives/8.2/82vavrus\\_bartlett.pdf](http://www.tc.columbia.edu/cice/Archives/8.2/82vavrus_bartlett.pdf)
- Winzer, M., Altieri, E., & Larsson, V. (2000). Portfolios as a Tool for Attitude Change. *Rural Special Education Quarterly*, 19(3-4), 72-81.