



Globalisation, Internationalisation and English Language: Studies of Education in Singapore, Malaysia and Australia

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The impetus for this special issue arose from our interest in the ways in which the processes of globalisation and internationalisation influence the organisation and delivery of education in the South East Asian region. A key feature of these processes at all levels of education is the global trend towards English in schooling, teaching and learning and international or global competitiveness. The central interest in the papers is on the relationship between English language (EL) and globalisation, as the two seem to be mutually reinforcing. The common focus of the studies reported in this issue is on language, and inevitably the dominant role of English and its status in post-colonial South East Asia. The contributors are all educators who have taught and researched in the South East Asian region in the past ten years, and whose work has engaged them with the emergence of English as a global language. The interests and concerns of the studies reported in this collection vary in their particular focus, and in the regional scope and educational level.

Globalisation

Discourses of globalisation typically characterise it as mutually dependent networks of activity and power that transcend the nation state through “the flow of technology, economy, knowledge, people, values, [and] ideas ... across borders” (Knight, 1997, p. 6). Globalisation points to accelerated worldwide interconnectedness, development of progressively more integrated structures and relationships beyond the nation states and the “shrinkage of distance and time in communications

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and travel, leading to increasingly extensive and intensive global relations" (Marginson & Rhoades, 2002, p. 288). At a broad level, globalisation refers to activity, often understood as a 'force', that goes beyond the nation state, moving from the local to the global arena (Giddens, 2002).

However, globalisation is not a totalising force. Such a representation ignores the significance of context, agency and micro-level politics and resistance. Global education trends on policy, theory and practice are inevitably mediated at national and local levels, reflecting and resulting in heightened context-specific differences. As Marginson (1999) argues:

Put simply, globalisation is about world systems which have a life of their own that is distinct from local and national life, even while these world systems tend to determine the local and national. This does not mean that the global determines the local in a total or one-directional fashion – but it has the potential to affect every part of the world, including educational institutions and programs, and the subjectivities formed in education (p. 20).

The glonacal agency heuristic proposed by Marginson and Rhoades (2002) offers a means of recognising the complexity of agencies and their influence at every level of the global, national (regional) and local trajectory. The heuristic highlights six types of agency: global agencies; global human agency; national agencies; national human agency; local agencies; and local human agency. Gopinathan (2007), comparing the nation state strategies of the "Asian tiger" economies before and after the 1997 financial crisis, found that the nation states have retained sufficient agency to modify their policies and practices according to changes in the global contexts.

Despite the apparent possibilities of increasing homogenisation suggested by proponents of hyperglobalisation who argue that, in an increasingly global world, nation states give way to the driving force of the global market economy, the sceptic and transformative schools of thought contend that globalisation is far from orchestrating the demise of nation states. Sceptics argue that

globalisation is a myth, with nation states exhibiting a growing power over trade, commerce and politics, in light of what are only surface level global networks (Hirst & Thompson, 1996; Hirst, 1997). By contrast, transformation theory holds that globalisation is a compelling force effecting fundamental socio-political change at the national and local levels. From this position, transformationalists take the view that nation states are able to respond to external pressures generated by changing global contexts to reconfigure their governance models, reform the ways that they manage the public sector, and deploy the global discourses and challenges to justify reshaping of domestic policy and practices (Giddens, 2002; Held & McGrew, 2007; Mok, 2007). Following Dewey (2007), we take the view that the transformationalist perspective is a productive way of thinking about the role of English in South East Asia and, in particular, for conceptualising its role as a lingua franca for the region. The papers in this issue can be read from a transformationalist perspective, recognising the trend towards increasing acceptance of linguistic diversity in the description and discussion of local Englishes as well as the rising significance of other languages of economic power (Graddol, 2006).

Internationalisation

According to Gopinathan (2007), “Globalisation’s effects can be seen in greater internationalisation, of a trend towards the commodification of education, greater convergence in views about how education should contribute to the economy, greater use of choice, competition, deregulation and increasing both the involvement and burdens for parents” (p. 55). Debate surrounds the meaning of the term ‘internationalisation’, which in the context of education normally encompasses the policies and practices of institutions in relation to global trends and issues. Knight’s (1997) standpoint on internationalisation and its relationship to globalisation is in keeping with the transformationalist perspective, and generally accepted as the prevailing view, “Internationalisation ... is one of the ways a

country responds to the impact of globalisation yet, at the same time respects the individuality of the nation” (p. 6).

The internationalisation of education typically refers to strategies by governments, education sectors and individual institutions to position themselves competitively within the global market. There is also the view that the internationalisation of education is realised less through the geographic extension of activity than through the internal transformations of the institutions undertaking the process (Knight, 2003). Internationalisation of education covers, for example: curriculum related activities, such as multicultural or intercultural education; mobility related activities, such as study abroad and student exchange programs; and, most commonly in higher education, trade related activities such as transnational or cross-border delivery of education. In both responding to and advancing global trends, internationalisation is inevitably and increasingly linked to education reform. Hallinger (2007, p. 3) describes the “virtual smorgasbord” of Western education reforms imported into Asia’s economies, with varying levels of acceptance among users at the school level, such as school-based management, curriculum standards, parent participation, student-centred learning, and information and communications technology (ICT).

Key strategies for internationalisation of schooling include: creating links between education and national economic interests; providing greater market choice in education; delegating some levels of decision-making and responsibility to local school sites; and increasing accountability for individual schools. At the secondary level, many schools are internationalising by providing greater curriculum diversity, as growing numbers of private and international schools seek to provide a curriculum with an international outlook or orientation so as to contribute to global citizenship. In the South East Asian region, internationalisation of education can clearly be seen as a proactive response to globalisation, with schools internationalising rapidly, especially through greater use of new communications technologies, and

introducing English as a medium of instruction from the early school level.

The contemporary agenda of national governments, international bodies and universities to internationalise higher education is realised through a broad range of activities, both at home and overseas (Knight, 2004). Internationalisation at home addresses matters such as policy and culture, research orientation and partnerships, curriculum and teaching. Internationalisation abroad involves, for example, international student programs, mobility of students studying abroad, teaching staff mobility, international staff research projects, institutional agreements that recognise the programs of one institution to another, and transnational university networks including mergers of institutions. A major strategy for internationalisation abroad is international trade in educational services, or transnational education. Often used interchangeably with the terms offshore, cross-border or borderless education, the concept of transnational education encompasses “situations where students, teachers, programs, institutions/providers, or course materials cross national jurisdictional borders” (UNESCO/OECD, 2005, p. 9).

Internationalisation of higher education has had a great bearing on student mobility and the proliferation of education programs and providers in the tertiary sector. According to the UNESCO report *Trends in Global Higher education: Tracking and Academic Revolution* (Altbach, Reisberg & Rumbley, 2009), a major trend of international student mobility is that of students from Asia entering the major academic systems of North America, Western Europe and Australia. International branch campuses of foreign universities are a growing means of access to these systems. In the Asia-Pacific region, the creation of ‘education hubs’ as a means to foster social and economic development relies heavily on the import and export of quality education programs (Pyvis & Chapman, 2009). EL delivery features prominently as students seek opportunities to study in English to better compete in the international job market.

English in South East Asia

English is generally accepted as having the status of a global language (Crystal, 2003), with the nature and role of English in the interaction between internationalisation and globalisation well recognised. For example, Warschauer (2000), analysing the emergence of a relatively new stage of global capitalisation termed informationalism (Castells, 1996), predicted three critical outcomes: expansion of English as an international language entailing a shift of authority to Non-Native Speakers (NNS) and dialects; changes in the ways in which English is used, consequent on economic and employment trends; and the impact of information technology on understandings of literacy. Stroupe (2011) notes, in addition to internationalisation and globalisation, the influence of regionalisation in promoting EL learning in Asia. In particular, he identifies the adoption of English as the working language of the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) (Kirkpatrick, 2011), the entry of China into the World Trade Organisation (Nunan, 2003), and the move by the Asia-Pacific Economic Co-operation (APEC) to focus on developing English and Mandarin language skills under the Strategic Plan for English and Other Language Learning to advance economic development (APEC, 2005).

Despite these indications of regional consensus on the role of English as an International Language (EIL) (Nunn, 2005) or English as a lingua franca (Nunan, 2003; Baker, 2009; Kirkpatrick, 2011), different nations within the South East Asian region have different histories of EL policies and practices. Graddol (2006) predicted that, as local capacities increased, dependence on 'Inner Circle' countries (such as Australia, the UK or the USA), for EL instruction would be reduced. Pakir (2010, p. 330) identifies as 'Outer Circle' Malaysia, Singapore, the Philippines, and Brunei, all former members of the British Commonwealth and today members of the Commonwealth of Nations, and as 'Expanding Circle' Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Myanmar, Thailand and Vietnam. Even within Kachru's (2005) revised Outer Circle, nation states do not share the same level of

English-knowing bilingualism (Pakir, 1999), possibly because of alternative pathways to nation building in the postcolonial period (Ganakumaran, 2007).

This issue presents studies from Singapore, Malaysia and Australia as three major players in education in the South East Asian region. Despite the differing research agendas and drivers, interesting patterns of symbiosis and competition merge from the studies, suggesting that relationships between each of the countries, as providers and consumers of education, are changing. A transformative perspective offers the opportunity to consider proactive and reactive policy decisions in which education offers a vehicle for consideration of broader nation state agendas.

Part 1: Singapore

The papers from Singapore focus on a range of issues salient to the role of English in Singaporean education under the influence of globalisation and internationalisation, including language policy and multiculturalism, EL as standard or colloquial, and education and training in English for international business. The opening two studies at the early childhood level demonstrate that education in Singapore starts early, with approximately 1200 kindergarten and childcare centres offering a structured three-year education program for children between three and six years of age.

According to the Ministry of Education Singapore (2012), “(pre-school) children will learn in two languages; English as the first language and Chinese, Malay or Tamil as a Mother Tongue language”. The emphasis on formal EL instruction in Singaporean pre-school education resonates with Nunan’s (2003) observation that the age at which EL is a compulsory subject in the Asia-Pacific region has shifted down, and that there is very little recognition of the deleterious effect on vernacular languages.

The argument that “the mother tongue gives us a crucial part of our values, roots and identity ... it gives us direct access to our cultural heritage and a world view that complements the

perspective of the English-speaking world” (Lee, 1999), has been called into question in relation to Chinese and Indian Singaporeans (David et al 2009; May, 2006). Wee (2011) argues that the policy of substitution of Mandarin for Chinese mother tongue dialects has produced Mandarin as a school-based subject rather than a “home language”, and cites evidence from MOE reports of 2004 that English had by then overtaken Mandarin as the principal home language of Primary 1 Chinese pupils (p. 206). The differential standing of the three “mother tongues” has resulted in language shift to English, particularly in the Indian community, as has been previously documented (Gupta, 1995).

We begin therefore with Kadakara’s study of Language Maintenance and Language Shift (LMLS) in the Tamil family domain, from the perspectives of parents of preschool children. This qualitative study examined ongoing variations and change in the language use patterns of Tamils of different socio-cultural and socio-economic backgrounds to provide insights into the socio-cultural processes of LMLS. Kadakara reports that in practice there are relatively few preschool centres which offer Tamil, and given the greater availability of Mandarin, parents frequently opt for centres offering English/Mandarin. The study highlights complex relationships between government policies and support, societal change processes, and parental perspectives on the usage of Tamil in the home domain and contributes to an understanding of various cumulative factors in the process of LMLS.

Alice Tang’s paper reports on her grounded theory study of EL literacy in early childhood education in Singapore. It addresses Nunan’s (2003) call for an audit of the human and material resources allocated to EL instruction and an assessment of the adequacy of these in relation to the needs of the learners. Tang’s research drew on interviews with teachers, classroom observations, lesson plans and children’s artefacts to theorise the ways in which teachers respond to the Ministry agenda for EL literacy in Singapore preschools. The fundamental proposition of the theory generated is that preschool teachers respond through three inter-connected dimensions of influences: the selection and

types of literacy materials; teachers' beliefs and their use of the literacy materials; and the literacy environment of the children.

Education policy in Singapore reiterates the issues of global competition in a globalised world, the need to achieve international standards among the most able, and the necessity to 'start young'. To achieve an International English Language Testing System (IELTS) score of 6.5, generally regarded as adequate for academic study by entry to senior secondary school, it is necessary to start EL learning by the age of six (Graddol, 2006). The constant pressure on educators in Singapore to ensure that their students achieve near Native English Speaker (NES) competence in English was a driver for the research reported by Isabelle Benjamin which addresses one of the major gatekeepers of access to higher education: Cambridge O-Level English. Her study investigated typical textual features targeted in short-answer reading comprehension questions of the Cambridge University 'O' Level English Paper 2. Benjamin's linguistic analysis of examination papers over 15 years is the basis for a taxonomy of typical textual features to supply a supporting framework for test design work. The outcomes provide a substantial base for professional development for EL teachers in addressing the public and private good of EL proficiency to compete in the global enterprise that Singapore has become.

The efforts reported in the previous studies focused on meeting the official agenda of acquisition of Standard Singapore English (elsewhere identified as a New English), at a level which allows students access to international universities, supports Singapore's status as a regional hub, and recognises continuing global economic influence of EL. However, the majority of Singaporeans speak Singlish, a colloquial dialect, the emergence of which creates tension with official policy on Standard Singapore English. Although Singlish, or Singapore Colloquial English, has been attacked as a threat to Singapore's economic viability, it has emerged as a badge of identity (Stroud and Wee, 2007), with many Singaporeans shifting easily between colloquial and standard English. Singaporean writers have experienced a

dilemma of cultural ambivalence in choosing English as it has carried a culture and history alien to Singapore, and was never intended as a medium of cultural self-expression; according to Loh (2001), choosing to write in English was seen almost as an act of betrayal. The contemporary Arts culture of Singapore celebrates literature in English equally with mother tongue languages through the Singapore literary awards.

Against this background, Rozita Dass explores the status of Literature as a subject in Singapore secondary schools. Dass' analysis of students' and teachers' perspectives on literary studies in Singapore secondary schools theorises the ways in which they deal with Literature in English studies. The tensions and ambivalences Dass identifies support her call for further research into continued development of the Literature curriculum in the Singapore education system, such as exploring the role of local literature, as articulated in the vision of Singapore as a world-class city:

In order to strengthen Singaporeans' sense of national identity and belonging, we need to inculcate an appreciation of our heritage and strengthen the Singapore Heartbeat through the creation and sharing of Singapore stories, be it in film, theatre, dance, music, literature or the visual arts. (Ministry of Information and Communications, 1999, p. 4)

Mitaka Yoneda takes up the issue of EL proficiency for “doing business” in Singapore. Globalisation, demanding a broader outlook in an interconnected and interdependent world with free transfer of capital, goods, and services across national frontiers, coupled with Singapore's agenda to become an international hub, has encouraged the location of branches of international companies in Singapore. In this commercial environment where English is the lingua franca (or as Phillipson might term it, lingua economica [2009, p. 10]) international businesses might be expected to thrive. However, as Yoneda notes, despite the best efforts of companies to enhance EL competency in their employees, Japanese businesses were falling behind, and Japan's economy had been losing its competitive edge since the early

1990s. In some quarters this was attributed in part to the level of EL proficiency. Yoneda's study explored the EL proficiency of Japanese professionals located in Singapore. The study sought to identify strategies to ensure that education and training offered in Japanese schools and businesses targeted the EL skills that Japanese professionals required for international business, such as in Singapore.

In the case of Singapore, it is possible to observe the interaction of language policy, particularly in respect of the role and status of English with the processes of nation building, regionalisation, globalism and internationalisation. The mantra that "Singapore's only resource is its people" took an explicitly strategic turn in its agenda of "harvesting the talents":

Singapore must aspire to be one of the great global centres where people, ideas and resources come together to spark new opportunities. Every great city has a hinterland from which it naturally draws in talent. Singapore, with only three million people and no natural hinterland, needs to look beyond its shores for the human talent that can help generate the extra spark. Only in this way can more opportunities be created for us all to enjoy ... Foreign talent are to Singapore what brooks are to the river: they help to make it stronger and flow faster. Many things which we take for granted would not have been possible without them. (Singapore 21 Report, 2004)

Ng (2011) identifies the "war for talent" as a potential test for Singapore's practices of "governmentality", balancing economic advantages to attract the talent against maintaining a strong sense of ownership and loyalty to Singapore amongst its citizens, who perceived that the "incomers" were given opportunities at the expense of Singaporean citizens. One strategy for welcoming the foreign talents and absorbing them as citizens is through education and training, including EL communication skills. The National University of Singapore (NUS), in keeping with the national aspirations and its mission statement to be a "globally-oriented university", recruits talented students from across the region, including the Peoples' Republic of China. Its Centre for English

Language Communication (CELC) was established in 1979 for the purpose of enhancing the EL and communication skills of both local and international undergraduate and graduate students. In particular it offers EL courses for the “talents” recruited from PRC, who must pass the EL course to progress to their undergraduate degree, and the potential opportunity of citizenship.

One of the most difficult features for EL learners to acquire is the phenomenon of collocations, or word patterns, in EL. Word pattern recognition is significant to learning language and attaining fluency. Yang Ying’s collective case study of English collocation learning and the development of learner autonomy engaged a group of 20 PRC students learning English in Singapore to investigate perspectives and practices of learners of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) in their learning of English collocations under a recommended AWARE approach. The AWARE approach is a multifaceted process-oriented learning approach that integrates practices grounded in Chinese traditional beliefs of learning and recent English Language Teaching (ELT) developments and recommendations such as language awareness and learner autonomy. Major patterns of differences between the collocation learning perspectives and practices of students were linked to their EL proficiency development. Outcomes include: a collocation learning trajectory for the development of learner autonomy; identification of six factors affecting task motivation, suggesting possible paths for conversion from extrinsic motivation to intrinsic motivation; and a differentiated teaching model.

Part 2: Malaysia

The papers from Malaysia address various educational challenges associated with the shifting status and role of English in this multi-cultural and multi-linguistic nation, including MOI policy and practice, EL teacher preparation and employability of university graduates. With longstanding opposition to English as the official language in colonial Malaysia, and following independence in 1957, Bahasa Malaysia was reinstated as the national language in

1967, and fully as the MOI by the mid-1980s. MOI remains a highly contested issue, with the introduction of two major language policies in the last decade. The first policy involved the abrupt shift from Bahasa Malaysia to English for Mathematics and Science (PPSMI or EteMS) in 2003. This was reversed in 2012 with the introduction of the policy, ‘To Uphold Bahasa Malaysia and to Strengthen the English Language’ (MBMMBI) (Phan Le Ha, Kho & Chng, 2013).

Pratheepa Mohandhas’ study of implementation of the PPSMI policy investigated its impact on the rural Federal Land Development Authority (FELDA) scheme children, as an extremely disempowered group of Malay speakers who are least exposed to English. The study explored the implementation trajectory of the policy from the international, national level (Macro), to the Education Ministry level (Meso) through the school level (Micro). The findings highlight some of the key issues that informed the reversal of the English language decision in 2009, effective from 2012. Reversal of the PPSMI policy has proven almost as controversial as the original implementation. Since the announcement by Minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin, various lobby groups supported retention of ETeMS (Soong, 2012), with the result that a “soft landing approach” was taken to the introduction of MBMMBI. From 2010, the teaching of mathematics and science was conducted in English and/or Malay in national and secondary schools, English and/or Mandarin at the Chinese national-type vernacular schools, and English and/or Tamil at the Tamil national-type vernacular schools. Soft landing enabled teachers and pupils to adjust to the change in the policy and provided continuity for primary and secondary school pupils who had learnt mathematics and science in English in or before the year 2010 to continue to do so until they completed Form 5. With the “soft landing approach”, the teaching and learning of mathematics and science in Malay would be carried out fully by 2016 in primary schools and 2021 in secondary schools.

Educational development for capacity building is a central platform of the Malaysian government’s Vision 2020 policy

announced in 1991. The policy highlights the need for knowledge-based education and human capital development to build a skilled workforce with the capacity to compete in today's globalised economy (Mustapha & Abdullah, 2004; Chapman & Pyvis 2013). The Malaysia Education Blueprint 2013-2025, launched in 2011, cites bilingual proficiency as one of the key attributes needed by every student to be globally competitive;

Every child will be, at minimum, operationally proficient in Bahasa Malaysia as the national language and language of unity, and in English as the international language of communication. This means that upon leaving school, the student should be able to work in both a Bahasa Malaysia and English language environment. The Ministry will also encourage all students to learn an additional language. (Ministry of Education Malaysia, 2011)

Systemic shifts to meet the aspiration for bilingual proficiency include introducing a standard Bahasa Malaysia curriculum at primary level, intensive literacy screening in both Bahasa Malaysia and English from the first year of schooling, and upskilling English teachers to international standards of proficiency. However, the Blueprint does not explicitly address the decision on the PPSMI. The Malaysian government's response to the sense of crisis derived from the PPSMI policy and subsequent revision of education policy can be read as an instance of transformative response, reforming management of the education sector, and deploying the global discourses and challenges to justify reshaping of domestic policy and practices. The studies by Mohandhas, Kayad and Wahi exemplify the kinds of pressures which influenced these changes.

Florence Kayad's study explored the issue of teacher preparation for teachers of English and Literature in secondary schools in this culturally and linguistically diverse context. Literature in English was re-established in EL education in Malaysia as a tested component weighted at 20 percent of the English Language subject in secondary schools. The expectation that all English teachers would teach literature was assumed to be reasonable as

literature training was part of their teacher education at university. Kayad's study sought to develop substantive theory on the literary of Malaysian English teachers from the experiences and perspectives of pre-service and "conversion" teachers enrolled in university literature courses at a Malaysian public university. The study investigated their attitudes towards learning and teaching literature, to examine and compare the ways in which these two different groups learn in university literature courses, and to identify the teaching and learning practices in literature classes that they considered useful for their professional development as future English and literature teachers at secondary school. Findings show that the participants' diverse experiences in learning literature and their perspectives on literature education were more complex than previous studies indicated. The variety of factors and complex interplay between them helped to account for the diversity of perspectives and experiences in learning literature, but emphasised the disparity between theory and practice in literature education.

By 2005 Malaysian universities were required to deliver science and technology subjects using English as the MOI. Reintroduction of English as a subject in pre-university classes after a gap of 20 years and the requirement for pre-university students who wished to enter local universities to sit for a compulsory Malaysian Universities English Test (MUET) (David et al, 2009, p. 160) appeared to have made little difference for many graduates. Wahiza Wahi's study sought better comprehension of undergraduate students' perspectives and practices in dealing with the EL demands of their university program and the expectations of prospective employers. Key findings of Wahi's study centre on the complexities of students' EL academic literacies constituting a rich blend of multiple literacy practices, encapsulating a variety of academic discourses and assorted choices of language used to serve a wide range of learning purposes at the tertiary level. The findings illustrate the students' technical adversities with English and their pessimistic outlook on their marginal academic literacy practices and competencies in English. The findings also demonstrate significant disparity between the students' English

literacy competencies at completion of their compulsory EL program and prerequisites set by prospective employers.

The findings of both Kayad's and Wahi's studies resonate with the view of Singh and Choo (2012), who call for a long term plan, starting from infancy, and overhauling the quality of EL teaching and learning at all levels of education, including the quality of pre-service teachers and their preparation for EL teaching. Malaysia Education Blueprint 2013-2025 plans to make teaching a profession of choice, by selecting only the top 30% of candidates, an ambition which seems at odds with the previous practice of conversion teacher programs described by Kayad, and the numbers of EL competent teachers required in the system. Although then Deputy Education Minister Datuk Dr Wee Ka Siong was reported as recognising that it would take at least five years to train some 60,000 teachers (The Star, Nation, 26/2/2013), the same policy foreshadowed making English a compulsory pass subject in the Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia (SPM) Examination by 2016. Wedell (2008) highlights the tensions between policy aspiration of English for everyone (EFE), the supply of appropriately trained teachers and pressures of high-stakes examinations. The studies included in this issue demonstrate clearly the challenges for a CALD country such as Malaysia in working towards its goals of national development and participation in the global economy and promoting equality of opportunity for all citizens while retaining their national language and identity.

Part 3: An Australian perspective

Australia is a key player in the internationalisation of education in South East Asia, most noticeably through transnational, or cross-border, higher education. In addition to the financial imperative for universities to deliver their courses offshore, Australian transnational education is increasingly oriented towards the national capacity building strategies of its Asia-Pacific partners. Contemporary education reforms in Singapore, Malaysia, Hong Kong and, more recently, mainland China, to promote the creation

of regional hubs of international education have provided opportunities for Australian universities to expand their presence overseas. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) report *Cross Border Higher Education for Development* noted that “education has a unique privilege as a built-in feature of any capacity development strategy. Whatever the sector, capacity building relies on the strengthening of individual capacity through training and learning, in order to raise the domestic stock of human capital in a specific field” (OECD, 2010, p. 12).

Engagement in capacity building in the region has compelled Australian universities to improve their own capacities for intercultural engagement and expertise both to deliver programs in the region and to service the needs of international students within Australia. Some credit the revitalisation of Australia’s interest in Asia to the Keating government of the 1990s. The report, *Australia in the Asian Century* (Commonwealth of Australia, 2012), released by the Gillard government, and the announcement by Julie Bishop, Minister for Foreign Affairs in the Abbott government, that students, under the New Colombo Plan, will be encouraged to undertake part of their studies in universities within the Asian region highlight wider and deeper significance attributed to Australia’s connection with Asia. The New Colombo Scholarship Program provides opportunities for high-achieving Australian undergraduate students to undertake studies, participate in an Internship/Mentorship course and receive intensive language training in an eligible Host Location in the Indo-Pacific region. Earlier policy attempts to promote the study of Asian languages in schools and universities (Department of Education Employment and Training 1990, 1991) achieved minimal long-term change. Resurgent interest in promoting the acquisition of regional languages other than English suggests that Australia, similarly to the UK and the US, has realised that “English is not enough” (Graddol, 2006, p. 119).

Many Australian tertiary institutions have longstanding international programs, some of which offer courses both onshore

and in transnational mode. Dobinson's study sought to understand how university academic staff and students in two locations, Vietnam and Perth, made sense of their academic interactions as teachers and learners in a Master of Arts in Applied Linguistics for Asian postgraduate students. One research site, an EL training centre in Vietnam, offered the program for Vietnamese EL teachers. The second site, the home campus in Australia, provided the same program for Asian postgraduate students. All but one of the participants (lecturers and students) are, or have been, EL teachers.

Vietnam's entry to global organisations (ASEAN in 1995, APEC in 1998 and WTO in 2006) and as a temporary member of the UN Security Council cemented the place of English as the main means of communication (Phan, 2009). English, now regarded as a vital requirement for employment, particularly in the international labour market, has facilitated economic co-operation and development, influenced higher education (Thin, 2006) and is in widespread use in print and electronic media (Phan, 2009). An explosion in the teaching and learning of English, now commencing from Year 3 of primary school, stretched capacity to resource the demand (Baldauf et al, 2007); Parks (Guardian Weekly, 08/11/2011) reported that an estimated 80,000 EL teachers would be required in Vietnam's state schools. Phan Le Ha (2005) expressed concern about the impact of English language in Periphery countries (Outer and Expanding Circles), including Vietnam, as an educational, social and economic gatekeeper, and the tension created between desire to communicate with the world and the will to preserve one's identity. Despite concerns of this kind, the demand for English language opened opportunities for Australian providers to contribute to capacity building in Vietnam, while simultaneously internationalising their curricula and generating income to support onshore programs.

In this context, Dobinson's study explores perspectives of both postgraduate students and their lecturers on the influences of Orientalism, Western views, Asian backgrounds and research reporting Western educational discourses such as the 'good'

teacher/learner and ‘Asian’ approaches to learning. The role of intercultural competence and the extent to which the lecturers occupy what has been referred to as ‘The Third Space’ emerges as a factor in the perceived efficacy of both teachers and learners.

The rapid growth in the numbers of international students studying in Australian universities since the 1980s has been an important part of the internationalisation process in Australian universities. While it might be argued that universities have always participated in the international exchange of information and ideas across national boundaries and cultures, being “international” now makes far more demands on educators than it did in the past. As intercultural objectives are now included routinely in university policy statements, and increasingly diverse cohorts of CALD students enter the universities, requirements on university educators for intercultural competence have grown.

Conclusion

Singapore is increasingly a significant regional education provider, in competition with countries like Australia, New Zealand, the UK, USA and Canada, not only in ASEAN countries, but across the globe (Sanderson, 2002, p. 97). Under the World Class University (WCU) program, the Singapore Government strategically invited world top universities to operate education and research programs (Yonezawa, 2007; Ng, 2011), frequently jointly with existing Singaporean universities, initially at postgraduate levels. Gopinathan (2007, p. 65) argued that Singapore’s actions in a climate of global entrepreneurialism were “responses of a strong state acting with a view to strengthening the local and the national in order to deal better with the regional and international”. Malaysia, through its program of partnerships with international universities to develop campuses in-country engages in capacity building towards its Vision 2020 policy. Mok (2007, p. 8) observed that universities in East Asia have begun to shift their paradigms to include a third mission of promoting economic and social development, and concluded that “pursuit of academic entrepreneurship and the transformation towards the

'entrepreneurial university' have started in East Asia". Huang (2007, p. 244) extended this argument, observing that emerging countries and some special regions such as Singapore and Hong Kong have engaged in both importing higher education from Australia, the UK and USA, but exporting it to other Asian countries. The articles in this issue show the transformative potential of the role of EL in globalisation, internationalisation and regionalisation as nation states adjust policy settings and practices to address pressures and opportunities in the marketization of education and to maintain or enhance their regional and global competitiveness.

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