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Priorities in English language policy and classroom implementation

Running title: Classroom implementation of policy

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ABSTRACT. This report presents findings from the PPELE study of English language instruction in classrooms in five countries and discusses how those findings relate to stated governmental policies on language and education. Data from classroom lessons and teacher rationale statements show that teachers are aware of policy initiatives related to language education and to the potential longer-term needs of students for English. However, teachers focus on immediate classroom priorities that influence daily lessons and give emphasis to student learning. These findings support a multidirectional interpretation of language policy – derived not only out of structural priorities and classroom priorities, but also influenced by the social and personal dimensions of classroom teaching and by of teachers’ goals and beliefs.

KEY WORDS: English teaching, acquisition planning, assessment, policy implementation, teacher rationale, student needs

ABBREVIATIONS

EL – English Language

PPELE – Pedagogical practices in English

TL – teacher’s log
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Introduction

This study discusses language and education policies in five countries and how these policies link with classroom pedagogy. While referring to governmental policies related to language and education, the study emphasizes the teacher’s perspective by examining data from classroom teaching. An international, comparative approach is used to look for commonalities and differences across pedagogical settings and to investigate the ways that the goals and priorities of different agents interact in language policy implementation. Specifically, we examine the goals and priorities of governmental policymakers and of classroom teachers and consider what it means for teachers to be act as agents of language policy implementation.

Although many studies have investigated implementation of language policies through education (e.g. Barkhuizen and Gough 1996; Barnes 1983; Freeman 1996; Haugen 1983; Lewis 1983; and for overviews see, e.g. Cobarrubias and Fishman, 1983; Corson 1990; Kaplan and Baldauf 1997), few consider language-in-education policy from the bottom up, from the perspective of classroom teachers as central agents of implementation. Two recent papers do. Breen (2002), studying implementation of an Australia primary level foreign language program notes changed roles for teachers. Experienced primary school teachers who had some relevant foreign language proficiency became foreign language teachers through the program. This transformed their social relationships and identities within the school, and modified their interpretation of the foreign language program and what was required for successful implementation. In an exploration of bilingual language planning at Oyster school in the U.S., Freeman (1996) incorporated an insider perspective based on her close association with learners, teachers, school and community members. She found that policy implementation was “dynamic, multilevel, and multidirectional” (p. 558) with governmental policymakers involved at the
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societal level; school policy makers, administrators and teachers at the institutional level, and parents operating at several levels. Her approach helped to account for some specific school practices (e.g. unequal use of code-switching by English-dominant or Spanish-dominant teachers) as well as the overall success of the program which could not be explained by examining only broad-based national or state policies.

These two studies confirm that interactions between language and educational policies and classroom pedagogy can not be understood only by investigations of policy goals and policy implementation from the top. The Pedagogical Practices in English Language Education (PPELE) study, comparing internationally classroom practices and teachers’ statements of pedagogical rationales with governmental policies, attempts to shed further light on policy implementation by examining how policy and classroom practice interact. The overarching research question for this study was: In what way(s) do pedagogical practices reflect and/or influence English language education policy?

Methodology

The PPELE project collected data from three sources: teacher reports (a classroom background survey and a ‘teacher log’ for each lesson taught), in-depth interviews with teachers and policy reports for each country (Grin 1997; Hornberger, Harsch, Evans and Cahnmann 1999; Hu 2002a; Iino 2002; Silver 2002; see also the articles in this issue). The first two sources provided information on pedagogical practices; the third source provided information on governmental policies.

The methodology for the study of pedagogical practices had to be sufficiently general to accommodate differences among the countries but specific enough to allow for using the same framework of analysis with a manageable amount of data. In addition, there were effects from
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the way the study had evolved out of a larger international project, including the selection of participating countries and locales for data collection. For this study, “English language education” was interpreted as second or foreign language instruction because that area of EL education was of interest in all five participating countries. In the U.S., all data were collected from classes designated as “English as a second language” (ESL); in China, Japan and Switzerland, data were collected from classes in English as a foreign language (EFL). In Singapore, data were collected from English classes which did not differentiate between English as a first, second, or foreign language in keeping with Singapore’s bilingual education system and multilingual population.

The selection of participating students was also constrained by practical matters. Rather than selecting a proficiency level, such as ‘beginner’ or ‘advanced’ which would be difficult to define equally for the countries, or a particular skill area (e.g. listening or speaking), or some other criteria which might not be relevant to the instructional system in all countries, the researchers decided to investigate a single year of study. Out of concern that early levels would be too basic to provide for comparisons, and since all countries had English language instruction for at least four years, the fourth year of instruction was selected for investigation. This resulted in gathering data from students at different ages (children, adolescents, young adults) and different stages of education (primary, secondary and lower tertiary) (Table 1). While this may have resulted in an emphasis on differences in the educational systems, it also shed light on some similarities in policy goals and reforms within each country.

Table 1 about here
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Geographically, the classroom data came from selected urban areas in each country: Shanghai for China; the greater Tokyo area for Japan; the Geneva area for Switzerland; Singapore; and Philadelphia, Pennsylvania for USA.

The data were collected between February 2000 and May 2001 with the participation of 5-7 teachers in each country (a total of 29 teachers). All of the teachers were volunteers obtained through local contacts. Teacher logs (TLs) were kept by each teacher for one class during one month of instruction, including information about time, lesson focus, materials, activities, interaction patterns and rationales for the specific lesson (See Appendix A.). Teachers decided which 4th year class they wanted to record. Each participating teacher was interviewed for 60-90 minutes were conducted to explain log entries and to discuss relevant issues. These data help to clarify pedagogical practices as well as teacher goals and priorities.

In analyzing the data, we considered areas of EL education that were determined by stated national, local and school policies, targeted for reform (national, local, or school) or repeatedly mentioned by teachers in TLs/interviews. Six key mechanisms for policy implementation related to pedagogy emerged from this initial analysis: they were time allocation, syllabus, assessment, textbooks and materials, lesson focus and teaching approach (Skuja-Steele and Silver 2001; Skuja-Steele and Silver in press). These mechanisms tended to group around two broad areas of priority: those established within and across the system of education, which

1 In some countries, the degree of ‘voluntary’ participation was difficult to assess, notably in China and Singapore were the request to participate may have come from someone higher up in the educational hierarchy. In these contexts, the ‘request’ may not have been interpreted as something that could be refused. Having said that, all of the teachers expressed personal interest in the project and seemed eager to engage in interviews with the researchers.
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we call structural priorities (built into the overall education structure), and those which tend to be integrated into individual classrooms, which we call classroom priorities. In general, structural priorities, since they applied to the system as a whole, were less amenable to classroom teacher manipulation. Classroom priorities were somewhat more flexible, but there was still a surprising degree of uniformity within countries. This uniformity showed the influence of the structural priorities, as expected, but also of teacher’s personal beliefs and instructional goals. These mechanisms, and the way they filtered through policymaking layers, influenced the teaching approach used in each country. An overview of these mechanisms, therefore, is the focus of discussion in the first part of this paper. The latter part of the paper focuses on teacher goals, how these goals are influenced by the social and personal dimensions of classroom teaching, and how these factors, in turn, influence policy implementation at the classroom level.

Structural Priorities

The structural priorities highlighted in our analysis are usually determined by policymakers through legislation or public policy statements. The setting of official languages is one example: In China, Singapore and Switzerland, official languages are set by law; in Japan and the U.S., there are no official languages determined by law but Japanese and English, respectively, are official languages as set by such policies as use of language in courts and in education. These laws and policy statements, as well as the controversies that surround them, are well-described elsewhere (e.g. Crawford 1989, 1997; Honna and Takeshita 2003; Hornberger, Harsch, Evans and Cahnmann 1999; Iino 2002) and will not be taken up here. Central to our discussion is the initial finding that time allocation for English study, syllabus guidelines and standardized assessment are most likely to be set by law or policy in all five countries involved in this study statements rather than by schools or classroom teachers; and that teachers responded
Priorities in policy and classroom implementation to these structural priorities as parameters within which they worked. Mandates related to lesson focus and teaching approach were less universal and were more often seen to be part of the teacher’s responsibility. Textbooks tended to operate as a ‘swing factor’ – more closely tied to structural priorities in more centralized systems and more closely linked to classroom priorities in less centralized systems.

Allocation of Time to English Language Lessons

In all five countries, allocation of classroom time for instruction is set by governmental policy. In general, in countries where English is considered to be a foreign language, the amount of time devoted to English is less and the age at which English study starts is higher, reflecting the priority of English in the overall curriculum. However, as English is seen to be a crucial part of economic development, current reforms have targeting increased time and lower starting ages for English study (see in this issue the articles by Butler & Iino, Grin & Korth, and Hu). In Singapore and the U.S., where English is considered to be a primary language of education, the hours devoted to English study are greater and the starting age for English study is lower (Table 2). The amount of time spent on English and the starting age are not areas of major controversy in these two countries.²

TABLE 2 ABOUT HERE

In addition to variation across countries, variations within countries were also found. In general, the more academic programs had a greater number of hours of English instruction than less academic programs. This was evident in Japan and Switzerland and is in keeping with the

² However, see the article by Evans and Hornberger in this issue for changes in number of years allowed for ESL study in the U.S.
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view of English as an academic pursuit in these countries, despite policy reforms that highlight English as a language of communication.

Syllabus

Another structural priority across all five countries relates to syllabus. Despite the potential involvement of teachers in syllabus design (e.g. Nunan 1989; Richards 2001), this is rarely left up to the individual teacher or school. Instead a syllabus (or syllabus guidelines of some type \(^3\)) is prepared at the national or regional level. In all three Asian countries, a national syllabus is established by the Ministry of Education and is expected to act as a guide for teachers. When changes are made to the syllabus, they are intended to be nation-wide, and teachers are expected to implement them at the classroom level. In sharp contrast to the Asian countries, neither Switzerland nor the U.S. has a national syllabus.\(^4\)

Syllabus reform is underway in all three Asian countries, and for very similar reasons: greater emphasis on the functional aspects of English and its perceived importance in a global economy. Reforms have been implemented quickly in China’s large, industrial cities such as Shanghai but putting the reforms into practice throughout rural areas is more problematic, as the article by Hu in this issue discusses. In Japan, although calls for reform have been frequent, actual changes have been slow. Syllabus guidelines to date have been implemented through required textbooks, and the required textbooks make extensive use of translation and fill-in-the-blank exercises with only one right answer. Current reforms under the ‘Action Plan’ seem to be

\(^3\) The distinction between curriculum and syllabus is not made here.

\(^4\) Current reforms in the U.S. such as the ‘No Child Left Behind’ Act, however, imply more educational centralization; see the article by Evans and Hornberger in this issue.
more flexible, as the article by Butler and Iino in this issue discusses, but it is not clear how syllabus reforms and textbook selection will be linked. Singapore underwent curricular reforms in the 1998-2000 period and implemented a new syllabus for EL in 2001. That syllabus is intended to emphasize functional language use and to make grammar teaching more perceptible through a ‘genre-based approach’ (Ministry of Education, Singapore 2001: 6). At the time of our study, this syllabus had not been implemented at the Year 4 level; teachers were still following the older 1991 syllabus. However, the new syllabus was being used in lower primary classes and had been introduced to all teachers. Thus, it was a topic of the on-going conversation about syllabus reform and the purpose of English in education with the Singapore teachers.

In reference to establishing a syllabus, Switzerland and the U.S. differed not only from the Asian countries but also from each other. Depending on the type of school in Switzerland, there are different syllabi in place or none at all. Most teachers in Switzerland did have a textbook which might have been set by school policies and thus acted as a sort of syllabus, as discussed below. In Philadelphia, the school district had set ‘benchmarks’, or ‘standards’, which indicated what students should be able to do at the end of each year. All of the Philadelphia teachers stated that they were familiar with the benchmarks although there was variety in how much this influenced their teaching. As one teacher explained, “…I don't have those spread out on my desk all the time….What I did when I came out was I pulled out the benchmarks and typed them up for myself and I have those in plastic sheets somewhere in a binder. But you know, I feel like I'm doing them all the time” (Lowell5 interview).

5 All teacher informants are identified with pseudonyms.
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In general, teachers seemed to see a syllabus as a structural mechanism that set parameters on their teaching but had only an indirect influence. Frequently, syllabus guidelines were re-interpreted through textbooks and assessments which seemed to have a more direct impact on classroom pedagogy.

Assessment

In all five countries, assessment acted in tandem with the syllabus influencing what was taught and how much time was devoted to which language aspects. In most countries, unified assessment of one form or another (especially national, standardized tests) was not only a purpose for instructional focus but also a part of classroom instruction. The exception was China. All of the teachers in China noted that there were tests at the end of each term. However, unlike the other four countries, test practice and preparation for examinations were not given as a rationale for class activities, perhaps due to the grade level used in this study (see the article by Hu in this issue).

In Japan and Singapore, on the other hand, it was clear that examinations drove pedagogical decisions to some extent. In Japan, although practice tests and activities during class time were not common, examinations were given as a rationale for some activities – especially those concerning grammar teaching. In Singapore, examinations were a motivating factor for some activities, and were referred to in explaining how certain activities were done. In addition, complete lessons were devoted to practicing for future standardized assessment or reviewing the results of test and examinations.  

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6 Standardized in this case can mean standardized across the school for all students at that grade level. This was true of the semestral examinations. Standardized can also mean across the nation as in the Primary School Leaving Exam which all primary school children take before going on to secondary school.
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The teachers in the U.S., like those in Singapore and Japan, showed great concern for assessment. All but one of the teachers mentioned the SAT9, a test that helps evaluate how students are progressing toward their preparation for the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT). The fact that data were collected just before the test was a factor in the prevalence of SAT9 preparation that we found in the U.S. One middle school teacher noted “...had I done this earlier in the year [the TL] it would look like it was all reading and discussion” (Baiul interview).

Switzerland showed the most variety in terms of the influence of examinations. Predictably, courses that prepared students for national (Maturité) exams tended to have more activities oriented toward test preparation; those in the less unified systems tended to have fewer activities oriented toward test preparation, echoing what was found in other countries that made use of unified, standardized examinations.

Across all countries, teachers felt the influence of assessments, which clearly helped to determine class content. When assessment matched closely with syllabus guidelines, the combination was particularly influential. In addition, assessment sometimes influenced how teachers taught, encouraging them to include more assessment-oriented activities.

Textbooks/Materials

Textbooks and materials might appear to be more closely aligned with classroom priorities in that teachers make use of these on a daily basis and, at least in theory, adapt them as needed for a particular class. However, remarks by teachers showed that these are often most closely connected to structural priorities. In all countries, teacher comments about textbooks and

7 The SAT is used by most universities in the U.S. as part of their college entrance selection procedure (see http://www.collegeboard.com).
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materials revolved around whether these books were required or not required and available or unavailable. These comments were also closely connected with time, syllabus and assessment. When required textbooks were included in the mix with a prescribed syllabus and standardized assessment, the combination had a powerful funnelling effect, providing support and direction for what teachers should teach, but at the same time constricting teacher choices.

In Japan, Singapore and China, approved textbooks are written to align with the mandated syllabus. They are also tied to national and school assessment. As a result, even when teachers are allowed to use other materials, they may decide not to do so. This is one area in which different agents may have different priorities, resulting in dilemmas for implementation. Policymakers may see a unified syllabus and approved textbooks as means to ensure similar content and high quality instruction across schools: all students receive the same materials and, therefore, the same opportunities for learning. However, teachers sometimes find that they can not address individual student needs when there are too many pre-established constraints (syllabus, assessment, textbooks). Japan was a clear example: all three Japanese technical school teachers would have preferred to discard the approved textbooks and use other materials. In contrast, the two teachers at public high schools felt that the textbooks were satisfactory – perhaps because they were teaching courses which emphasized reading, as did the textbooks.

In Shanghai, textbooks were approved locally, not nationally (see the article by Hu in this issue for discussion). Teachers reported that many schools in Shanghai were using the same basic textbook, but each school might proceed at a different pace. In fact, five teachers out of the six who participated in China used the same textbook, even though they were at different primary schools. In Singapore, policies for textbook use were in flux along with the implementation of the new syllabus. With the old syllabus, a required textbook series was used;
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in the new syllabus, schools could choose from among several approved textbook series (as in Japan).

In contrast to the Asian countries, teachers in Switzerland and the U.S. chose their own textbooks for the most part. In Switzerland, selection of materials was partly influenced by the types of examinations students would face. As one teacher said, “I am free to use the materials I want as long as my students reach the required level at the end of the 160 periods I have with them” (Schuster, class background questionnaire). In the U.S., the overall policy was one of open choice for each teacher; however, there were practical issues that interfered with implementation. In some cases, textbooks could not be ordered due to lack of funds or textbooks were ordered but did not arrive until after the school year had started. Thus, in contrast to complaints from some teachers in other countries that required textbooks were limiting and unsatisfactory, teachers in Philadelphia sometimes felt the lack of textbooks was problematic.

To summarise, most lessons, across all countries, were closely tied to textbooks whether selection was determined by national requirements, school policies, or individual teachers. Most teachers relied on textbooks, feeling that commercial materials were adequate and that preparation of their own materials was too time-consuming.

All of the structural priorities discussed in this section were found to influence classroom pedagogy, especially in the ways that they offered support for or constraints on classroom teaching. These influences tended to be indirect, but they were no less strong for their indirectness. For example, in none of the countries studied was the syllabus used as a direct guide to classroom teaching; however, where a set syllabus was in place (e.g. Singapore), it affected a variety of other factors (e.g. use of time, coverage of materials) that influenced classroom pedagogy. The impact on classroom pedagogy was strongest when several structural
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Priorities combined (e.g. assessment and syllabus), an effect that seemed to be not merely additive but exponential.

**Classroom Priorities**

Classroom priorities, as defined in this article, are those which relate to the specific contexts of teaching rather than to the broad goals of the educational system. Two areas, lesson focus and teaching approach, are examples of classroom priorities that directly influence pedagogy. Textbooks, tend to be a ‘swing factor’ – more or less a part of structural priorities depending on how centralized the educational system is and how closely they are connected to syllabus and assessment, as discussed above, but also having a close connection to classroom pedagogy to the extent that textbooks influence the lesson focus.

*Lesson Focus*

In our study, the lesson focus was identified in the TL by each teacher for each lesson. The choice for designating the lesson focus was up to each individual and, in theory, individual teachers could re-interpret a lesson focus given in the textbook. However, clear within-country similarities for lesson focus were found, especially when mandates for textbook selection were in place. Across countries there were considerable differences, although we found some similarities among countries where English was little used in daily life: Lessons in China, Japan and Switzerland tended to emphasize formal aspects of language, especially grammar and vocabulary. Among these three, China used extensive oral work to present and practice grammar and vocabulary at the primary level; reading and writing were used but de-emphasized as a focus of instruction. Japan and Switzerland, on the other hand, tended to rely on written work for
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grammar and vocabulary practice, with only limited speaking, despite policy reforms which emphasize use of English for communication.

The two countries where English is most likely to be part of daily life and where it is used as the language of education and business, Singapore and the U.S., covered a broad range of language skills in EL classes. In Singapore there was some tendency to emphasize written language, both reading and writing, with little opportunity for extended discussion or collaborative learning. In the U.S., unsurprisingly, there were distinct differences according to level of education: two primary classes emphasized basic literacy skills whereas the middle and high school classes made greater use of discussion activities.

Teaching Approach

In discussing approach, we consider not only the method, techniques and procedures used by teachers, but also their theories and beliefs about language, teaching and learning; their attitudes toward classroom practices; and their views of teacher and learner roles (Richards and Rodgers 1986, 2001). Within each country, teaching approaches showed remarkable similarity as did teacher expressions of their attitudes toward classroom practices and their beliefs about teaching/learning.

In China there was a striking similarity across teachers and across TLs; some lessons were almost identical though the TLs came from different teachers. Oral work was highly structured. Drilling was included but hidden in the sense that the focus pattern was contextualized and presented in the form of a very short dialogue which the class memorized as the lesson progressed. English was the dominant language of the classroom.
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In Japan, whether in the two high school ‘reading’ classes or the three technical school classes, students proceeded through textbook exercises in a systematic fashion with textbook and teacher as the main sources of information. The teacher’s role was to provide extensive explanation, especially on grammar points and vocabulary, although this was not dictated by the textbook or the syllabus. Even though communication in English was a stated goal, the dominant language was Japanese. Although teachers were not always satisfied with their approach, they seemed to be unable to imagine changing their own teaching practices without systemic change to support them. Re-interpreting textbook exercise, for example as role-plays or through group work, was seen as nearly impossible.

As in China and Japan, lessons in Singapore were heavily textbook-based; teachers felt they needed to make use of all of the textbook materials and associated worksheets. In Singapore, the concern for covering all text/workbook materials was based not only on the use of required textbooks but also social forces outside the classroom: teachers noted that parents expected all materials to be used. Other key features of the teaching approach in Singapore included skill-based teaching, explicit instruction, use of structured activities and teacher-fronted classes with attempts to incorporate structured pair or group work. This approach was in keeping with Singaporean teachers’ view of their classroom role in the classrooms: effective teaching meant keeping control of the class and getting through the designated textbook pages for the day.

In Switzerland, following the textbook was also a prominent part of classroom pedagogy; however, the teachers’ choice in selecting which textbooks activities to do and determining how to do them was more apparent. Unlike China and Singapore, where lessons using the same textbook pages across teachers were immediately identifiable, teachers who were using the same textbook in Switzerland might interpret the activities differently. Most of the classes in
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Switzerland included some group or pair work, and these activities tended to be more open-ended than the structured pair or group work found in China and Singapore.

Lessons in the U.S. relied less on highly structured activities. There was an emphasis on integration of skills, although use of reading and teaching of reading was prevalent. Discussion and group work were common features across all grade levels, though open discussion was less frequent at primary level. At that level, discussion tended to focus on reading comprehension. The medium of instruction in all classes was English except in a designated “Bilingual Special Education”\(^8\) class in which the teacher intentionally used both English and Spanish.

Influence of policy on classroom priorities (lesson focus and teaching approach), then, is filtered through structural priorities (time, syllabus, assessment and textbooks). However, reinterpretation of policy via these filtering mechanisms does not completely explain how pedagogical practices reflect or influence EL education policy. How do teachers’ classroom goals interface with broader policy goals? A better understanding can be gained by examining teacher statements of rationale, looking at the ways that teachers see student interests being served in the classroom, and the larger social context in which teachers live their professional lives.

**Understanding Teacher Priorities**

Teacher goals at the micro-level of the individual classroom are strongly differentiated from policy goals at the macro-level. In our data, this was most evident in the statements of

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\(^8\) This class was part of a bilingual program. Students who had special learning needs were ‘pulled-out’ of their regular classrooms for several hours of ‘Special Education’ each day. For the most part, the class focused on basic literacy skills and math.
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rationale elicited by the TLs. Key phrases which described the purpose for the various learning activities were identified, for example, “review work from previous lesson.” From these key phrases, the principal verbs (e.g. “review”) were extracted and tabulated. These verbs were then clustered into thematic groupings that reflected the main reasons teachers gave for including the activities in their language lessons. Table 3 summarises the major themes, including a selection of descriptor verbs illustrating each cluster. The ten major themes and their associated keywords reflect teachers’ perceptions as to why particular activities were included in their lessons.

**Table 3 About Here**

The ten themes appeared in rationales across all five countries. The themes can be thought of as features of teacher practical arguments or implicit theories that drive teacher pedagogical decision making. Restated in terms of these rationales, the teachers’ view of learning appears to include general goals of providing support (F) to help internalize (B) what is being taught in order to improve (G) the language learning of the students. Language skills are mentioned as a generalized means for achieving this (D), as well as more specific techniques (C). Past learning has to be revisited (A) and evaluated (H), while new learning must be introduced (E) as part of the classroom process. Teachers are also concerned about addressing affective factors (I) and about including authentic language use opportunities (J). These rationales are in line with Marland’s assertion that “practical knowledge is credited with forming a large part of the knowledge base which shapes the classroom activities of teachers … which have been crafted by individual teachers from their own experience of teaching to suit their own particular work setting” (1998: 16-17).
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Notably, none of the rationales related directly or indirectly to stated language and education policies. In addition, they rarely referred to the structural priorities which policymakers put in place to enable policy implementation. Overall, the rationales show how teacher priorities are shaped by their perceptions of immediate learner needs and school expectations. This is in keeping with prior research on teacher cognition, in particular research related to practical knowledge and pedagogical reasoning (Calderhead 1987; Elbaz 1983; Feiman-Nemser and Floden 1986; Marland 1998; Morine-Dershimer 1988).

Policy Goals and Teacher Goals

Despite awareness of, and to some extent agreement with, larger language policies in each country, the teacher rationales and classroom pedagogy rarely reflected a direct linkage with the policy goals. Lack of a direct connection is not surprising given the many layers that policy moves through in the process of implementation. As Ricento and Hornberger (1996) have discussed, policy is reinterpreted and modified as it moves through layers of legislation and political processes, states and supranational agencies, institutions and classroom practitioners. To understand this reinterpretation and modification, we compare teacher rationales and goals with common policy goals in this final section.

Hornberger (1994) pulls together years of prior scholarship in language planning9 to propose a framework for language and literacy planning with six dimensions. A complete discussion of that framework is not possible here. However, of importance for our discussion are the interconnections drawn between types of planning (status, acquisition and corpus) and

9 Hornberger (1994) references a host of scholars including Cobarrubias, Cooper, Ferguson, Haugen, Heath, Kloss, Nahir, Ruiz, and Stewart.
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approaches to planning (policy and cultivation) yielding a matrix of policy goals. In our study, all teachers in all countries echoed some awareness of and concern for the types of policy goals presented in Hornberger’s framework. For example, teachers noted policies about learning to use English for interlingual communication (especially in Japan and China), about standardization (both status and corpus) and about areas of acquisition planning (Cooper 1989), especially as related to foreign and second language learning and use. However, these were not given as rationales for pedagogy (e.g. not for lesson focus, classroom activities, nor teaching approach). Specifically, the increasing functional role of English for future employment, and thus the importance of English acquisition, was mentioned frequently by teachers (also connecting economic justifications given for EL policies in these countries). However, acceptance of this functional role varied by country and was mitigated by teachers’ practical experiences. In Japan, for example, one teacher noted, “I’m not so sure … if they have to go to other Asian countries and if English is used there and if English is used for in the manual or in instruction manual then they should be able to understand English….but of course there are many situations where they don’t need English at all” (Hori interview).

Similarly in China and Switzerland, reference was made to future utility of English if the students had jobs in international companies, had to travel to other countries to work, or had to cooperate with citizens of other countries using English as a *lingua franca*. Thus, even the most obvious, utilitarian policy goal for EL acquisition was seen as an ambiguous instructional goal. In the U.S., on the other hand, EL acquisition for future employment was of paramount importance; teachers noted that the students would be successful in the future “once they learn English” (Barton interview). Likewise in Singapore the need for English was considered to be obvious for both future education and jobs. Nevertheless, this was a distant
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goal that teachers hoped students would reach rather than an immediate goal of classroom instruction.

Conclusion

The classroom data – emphasizing what teachers did and why they did it – shed light on differences between teacher and policymaker goals and offer some explanation for how these different goals affect policy implementation at the classroom level. The data support Ricento and Hornberger’s (1996) contention that language planning and policy is multilayered and that reinterpretation occurs at every layer: policies were reinterpreted into structural priorities which indirectly influenced classroom priorities and so filtered through to classroom practice. The data also indicate that immediate student needs and practical concerns of classroom teaching are often more relevant to pedagogy than broad, long-term policy reforms. Thus, social and personal dimensions of classroom learning impact pedagogical decisions as much as structural priorities which are based on policy initiatives. Whereas policy goals relate most directly to issues such as the status of English in the society; the standard of English that is used, taught and learned; the educational systems that support English acquisition; etc. (see, again, Hornberger 1994), teacher goals are more closely tied to how to manage the class of students, teach this day’s lesson and help students learn the material.

The teaching approaches and teacher rationales highlight the social and personal dimensions of classroom pedagogy. Prabhu (1992) has pointed out that a lesson is not only a curricular event nor the implementation of a particular method (and, we would add, not only the employment of a mechanism such as syllabus or textbook); it is also a social event and a forum for interaction on a personal level. In order for the social event to move forward smoothly, expected roles are taken up and routinized events are enacted. Thus students learn, listen and
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_warm up_ while teachers _help, check and stimulate_. This also helps to explain why the rationale themes are relevant to broad classroom pedagogy rather than being specific to language pedagogy: classroom teaching is a routinized event across subject areas. Thus, these findings also support Ricento and Hornberger’s interpretation of language planning and policy as multidirectional – derived not only out of top-down structural priorities nor of more closely held classroom priorities but also from the bottom up, out of the social and personal dimensions of classroom teaching and out of teachers’ goals and beliefs. The social and personal nature of classroom lessons can constrain policy implementation if policies are seen to be in conflict with the social roles and routinized events. For example, social expectations of teacher and student roles can constrain implementation of so-called communicative activities (Pica 1987). Language and education policies find it difficult to allow for this social and personal dimension; however, the immediacy of these social factors may have a more direct and pervasive influence on classroom teaching than policy statements or reforms.

**Acknowledgements**

Our greatest thanks to the many teachers and educational administrators who volunteered their time, recorded information about their classes and facilitated data collection for this project. Our thanks also to Guangwei Hu and Masakazu Iino for help with translations and clarifications on documents related to China and Japan, respectively. Finally, our gratitude to the National Institute of Education, Singapore, which provided funding for this project through the Academic Research Fund Grant (Grant number, N44050001 R44206001 RP12/97RS).
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Appendix A

GUIDELINES FOR COMPLETING THE TEACHING LOGS (TL)

1. Please use one form for each lesson throughout the month of teaching.

2. Fill in the information at the top of the form to help us sequence your lessons.

3. It would be good if you would fill in the form as soon as possible after each lesson.

Information to include in each of the columns:

Activity/tasks

What were pupils doing during this time? In brackets after each task write the estimated time that pupils spent on each activity or task.

IP

Write the following symbols to describe the type of interaction used during the activity. Please use the symbols given below:

Participants: T Teacher, C whole class, 4 group, 2 pair, 1 individual

Type of interaction:

multi directional talk such as discussion or question and answer

one directional talk such as teacher instruction, or pupil presentation to class

Examples: T+C, T>C, 1>C, 4, 2, 1 etc
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Rationale or Learning Purpose

We are interested in your thoughts as you planned the lesson. For example: Why did you choose this activity? Were you reinforcing earlier learning or extending a previously learnt concept or introducing something new? Was the activity intended to be motivational or to prepare for a test or to practice something? Include any other points that relate to your planning.

Reflections/Comments

After teaching spend a short time thinking about the lesson. Did everything go as planned? What did you note about the pupils or their learning? Please include any other points that you would like to mention.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher Name:</th>
<th>School:</th>
<th>Date:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Time Lesson Began:</td>
<td>Time Lesson Ended:</td>
<td>Lesson Focus:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity/Tasks [time]</th>
<th>Rationale or Learning Purpose</th>
<th>Reflections/Comment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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Tables and Figures

**TABLE 1.**

**LEVEL OF EDUCATION AND AGE RANGE OF PARTICIPATING CLASSES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Stage of Education</th>
<th>Age&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>China</td>
<td>primary</td>
<td>9-10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>secondary</td>
<td>15-16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Singapore</td>
<td>primary</td>
<td>10-11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Switzerland</td>
<td>tertiary</td>
<td>19-21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U.S.</td>
<td>primary and secondary</td>
<td>varied</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<sup>a</sup>Ages are approximations based on information from teacher interviews.
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**TABLE 2**

**INSTRUCTIONAL TIME COMPARISON**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Average Lessons/Month</th>
<th>Average Hours/week</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>China</td>
<td>16.5</td>
<td>3.11(^a)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japan(^b)</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Singapore</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>6.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Switzerland</td>
<td>9.5</td>
<td>3.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U.S.</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>5.75(^c)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^a\) Lessons in China tended to be 30 or 40 minute periods while they were usually one hour or longer in other countries.

\(^b\) For the ‘reading’ class at high schools and the ‘English’ class at technical schools. If all three English classes at the high school were included, the average hours for English would be higher, as much as 6 hours per week.

\(^c\) Average taken without the extended hours of a participating bilingual special needs class.
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### Table 3

**Major Themes and Descriptors for Teacher Rationale Statements**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>Descriptor examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Connect with previous learning/knowledge</td>
<td><em>Review, reinforce, consolidate, revise, recall, activate prior knowledge</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internalise lesson</td>
<td><em>Learn, understand, know, see, be able to</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use particular learning/teaching strategy</td>
<td><em>Practise, elicit, use, share, discuss, answer questions, describe, match, locate, analyse, complete exercise/worksheet</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus on language skills or language aspects</td>
<td><em>Listen, read, write, say, speak, express</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prepare for lesson or subsequent activity</td>
<td><em>Warm up, introduce, tune in, get ready, focus, input, brainstorm</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide learning support</td>
<td><em>Help, aid, assist, guide, facilitate, enable, show how to, encourage, promote, demonstrate, model</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Augment/</td>
<td><em>Develop, extend ideas, increase, improve, strengthen,</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Increase Learning</th>
<th>Enhance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Evaluate Learning | *Check, assess, test, give feedback, correct, monitor,*  
|                  | *ascertain gaps, find out if know* |
| Consider Affective Factors | *Stimulate/ generate/ create/ sustain/ arouse interest,*  
|                  | *create good/ happy environment, motivate, take pride in work* |
| Consider Context and Interaction | *Create life-like situation, relate language learning to real life,*  
|                  | *give opportunity to use real English, work cooperatively/ in teams/ in groups/ in pairs,*  
|                  | *provide chance to communicate with each other* |