



## ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING POLICIES AND PRACTICES

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### **Abstract:**

The ELT programs' need to enable enhanced to improve delivery of language programs in local contexts conflicts with other competing agendas by both the government and aid agencies. The goal of policymakers is often concerned with factors other than ELT and associated with political and ideological issues. ELT is to empower local communities by engaging with globalization and providing them access to global resources, then it must answer questions about the relevance of teaching English, and in particular about what variety of English is taught and for what purpose. Again, consultation with local experts is key to ensuring that ELT practices are locally and contextually relevant. ELT policy might have a effect on local languages. The economic and social value that English carries with it as well as the cultural aspects of ELT may be linked to notions of Westernization and can be perceived as a threat to local cultures. In addition, the public may speak a variety of the language that is not officially endorsed by the government but reflects their sociocultural identity in an empowering way. The development of a principles based to influencing and enhancing successful and effective ELT practices and policies. They need for using different effective delivery and successful outcomes of ELT practices and policies. Identifying the impact of social, economic, and political forces on policymaking decisions on a macro level and the needs of students, teachers, and community members within particular contexts on a micro level, can enable policymakers, practitioners, and researchers to identify and engage with a range of issues that affect policymaking decisions.

### **Introduction:**

Language has been rightly cited as a principal tool for learning. When the language of education is not the mother tongue, the role of the teacher as facilitator of this learning demands that the teacher possesses specific second language teaching competencies, skills and a very high sense of personal linguistic proficiency in the language of education. However, when language teachers are also learners of that language, and not native speakers, the responsibility placed on Language programmes is to transform the process of language teacher preparation into a never-ending quest for quality. Indeed language teaching plays a vital role in the entire education system. Adegbija (1994) echoes the powerful influence of language (read English language) for national development in these words:

Chimbganda & Kasule (1999) observed that English Language Teaching (ELT) plays a pivotal role in bringing about the overall 'good health' within an education system that is conducted in a non-native language, as is the case in English-as-a-Second-Language (ESL) countries in Africa. Within ESL countries there can never be good schools without effective ELT, and whatever instructional experts may say about the learner being the focus of attention in the classroom, the notion that ELT is the kingpin in the educational systems of such countries, remains valid.

Three problems associated with teacher preparation and ELT practice in schools, namely:

- ✓ Lack of balance between theory and practice in ELT preparation programmes.
- ✓ A mismatch between teacher preparation and what happens in the classroom.
- ✓ Admitting poorly qualified entrants into teacher preparation programmes.

### **Effective English Teaching:**

Effective teaching in this study focuses on the development of teachers of English, and how intervention programmes can contribute to this process of development. According to Husen & Postlethwaite (1994) teacher development is marked by four types of growth: growth in knowledge; growth in skills; growth in judgment; and growth in the contributions teachers make to a professional community. Effective English language recognizes the societal influences (such as the language policy, language attitudes, the domains of use for the TL, the status of that language, and so on) that impinge on effective education in general, and on language learning in particular. They also seek to find the best ways to overcome limitations to effective teaching arising from these influences. Effective teachers also recognize that their task in ELT is influenced by factors at whole-school level that dictate what happens at the classroom level.

### **Specifying the Role of the ELT Specialist:**

ELT specialists in the primary school are pioneers within the primary school system in several other ESL countries, specifying their new role helps in the effectiveness and efficiency with which they perform their duties. Information available on the Internet on the Norms and Standards for Educators makes reference to

seven general roles defined by the education policy. The following roles below bear certain similarities but they have been proposed specifically for ELT specialists in the primary school:

- ✓ To keep abreast of developments in second language teaching theory and practice as a researcher and reader.
- ✓ To act as a teaching/learning process manager who evaluates the effectiveness of specific teaching procedures and materials for the class and the whole school.
- ✓ To make informed decisions about approaches, methods, and techniques for the whole school so as to fulfil the role of resources organiser.
- ✓ To act as a counsellor who evaluates pupils' progress in English; identifies their weaknesses and strengths, and adjusts instruction appropriately; develops pupils' other language skills such as reporting, storytelling, literary appreciation, vocabulary, creative writing, and so on.
- ✓ To act as a guide who contributes to the pupils' social, emotional, intellectual growth, and who they are through exposure to local and foreign folklore, history, and literature.
- ✓ To act as a facilitator of the communication process between the pupils' real and perceived interlocutors through the mastery of both the receptive skills (listening and reading) and productive skills (speaking and writing) in English.
- ✓ To provide exemplary leadership as a needs analyst in the school and classroom, so as to promote modernisation of ELT and of English learning across the curriculum.

#### **Identifying the Personal Qualities of an ELT Specialist:**

Personal qualities that distinguish a generalist from a specialist teacher must also be imparted to the ELT specialist trainees.

- ✓ Demonstration of proficiency in spoken and written English at a level befitting the language teacher's role as a model, and comparable to other ELT professionals; combining accuracy, fluency, and wide acquaintance with writings in it.
- ✓ Appreciation of the sophisticated nature of English as an international language with spoken varieties that are characterised by social, regional, national differences, and yet globally intelligible in their written form.
- ✓ Understanding of the processes of language acquisition, and that of the subsequent learning of a second language, and the factors that influence these processes at different age levels.
- ✓ Reflection on the principles of second language pedagogy gained by actual teaching experience as well as from theory, and reflection on the application of these principles to various classroom situations and instructional materials.
- ✓ Demonstration of competence in designing tests and in interpreting the results of second language assessment of student progress and proficiency; and consequently, in the ability to evaluate the effectiveness of second language teaching materials, procedures, and curricula.
- ✓ Demonstration of appropriate skill and attitude in responding to pupils' English language errors in their speech and in their written work.

#### **Planning Goals:**

Often the ELT programs' need to enable enhanced English proficiency and to improve delivery of language programs in local contexts conflicts with other competing agendas by both the government and aid agencies. As Ricento (2000) points out, language policy is determined by the ideological and political agendas of governments and other organizations, which create LPP strategies. Therefore, the goal of policymakers is often concerned with factors other than ELT and associated with political and ideological issues. To ensure that the goals of LPP support the best interests of local communities, policymakers should ensure that their policies and practices are transparent and the public is given information regarding policy to allow them to participate in the policymaking process. As Kaplan (2009) states, this includes getting the general public to buy-in to LPP ideas so that LPP can be smoothly implemented and the general public can enter into a dialogue with policymakers regarding policy implementation and relevance. Transparency of LPP objectives will enable various stakeholders to engage with ELT practices that policymakers advocate. It will also enable researchers and policymakers to capture (and critique) local ELT practices to ensure that LPP decisions are made based on evidence of successful and empowering practices from local communities.

ELT is to empower local communities by engaging with globalization and providing them access to global resources, then it must answer questions about the relevance of teaching English, and in particular about what variety of English is taught and for what purpose. Whether it is to enable proficiency for global or local purposes, and whether it is for predominantly written or oral communication. Policymakers should also ensure that ELT teaching practices are suited to the needs of the particular context in which they occur. Again, consultation with local experts is key to ensuring that ELT practices are locally and contextually relevant. Consulting with local experts and practitioners will enable policymakers to assess and respond to issues that may arise when (foreign) experts promote a particular teaching practice that might be at odds with local sociocultural practices. As Rajgopalan (2005) states, "global, specialist knowledge" needs to be readjusted "to

suit local circumstances” which will ensure that language programs are suitable to a particular context. When programs are suited to local contexts, they will be well received by the public and implemented successfully by practitioners and other stakeholders.

**Practice:**

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

**Policymakers and Other Stakeholders:**

Language in education policy has implications for industry in that it informs the training of a population that will join the workforce in various capacities. This input can be direct and indirect. Direct input refers to consultation with the industry whereas indirect input can be based on an analysis of the language needs of the industry (including linguistic study of the industry’s discourse practices). Consultation and collaboration with industry can help policymakers meet industry requirements and result in training a population that can succeed in their future jobs. Key policy decisions have been made, protests by the public demonstrate that these decisions are not favorable to the local context for a variety of reasons. For example, ELT policy might have a negative effect on local languages. The economic and social value that English carries with it as well as the cultural aspects of ELT may be linked to notions of Westernization and can be perceived as a threat to local cultures. In addition, the public may speak a variety of the language that is not officially endorsed by the government but reflects their sociocultural identity in an empowering way. Ultimately, for a language policy to be successful, its acceptance by the public is extremely important. Therefore, policymakers should make policy initiatives transparent and visible and disseminate them through the press. Doing so will enable policymakers to gain the consent of the public and ensure that the policy is successfully implemented.

**Production of Materials:**

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

**Alignment:**

One of the key elements of determining success in policy and practice is ensuring that project outcomes are aligned with the goals of ELT policy and that the knowledge policymakers draw from is relevant to the goals of the policy. To determine whether policy goals are achieved, it is necessary to design outcomes that are realistic to the particular project setting and to ensure that monitoring and evaluation practices take into account the sociopolitical and other elements that influence the project’s progress. The larger goals of the project also need to be translated into and aligned with the design of curriculum and textbook materials, which in turn need to be aligned with classroom practices. These practices must then be assessed according to whether the students demonstrate the required level of proficiency and skills in the language as determined in relation to their particular context.

**Empowerment:**

The principle of empowerment means that the ultimate objective of any ELT project should be the empowerment of local communities, teachers, and students through collaborative, relevant, evidence-based, and transparent practices. To ensure that policy and practice is empowering, consultation with experts should provide initial scaffolding for the projects, and the projects themselves should be sustainable within the sociopolitical, economic, and cultural environment in which they function. Empowerment is difficult to ensure because policymakers and teachers will have to take into account the politics of ELT and how this affects their communities, cultures, and language in positive or negative ways. The six principles outlined in this paper are not mutually exclusive. In fact, as presented, they relate to each other in a variety of ways. The principles are applicable in a range of contexts and have a number of implications. These positions will be shaped by the context in which a policy is developed and by the participants, experts, and organizations that contribute to it. We believe that such heterogeneity of responses is healthy as long as the principles are engaged with in an ethical and judicious manner. As noted earlier, it is also important to remember that these principles themselves will need regular reevaluation and updating to maintain their relevance, validity, and applicability across a variety of contexts.

**Implications for Policymakers:**

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

**Conclusion:**

Language policy and planning is a complex task with a long list of stakeholders and factors that shape it and an even longer one of things that it influences in turn. In recognizing these complexities and realizing that it may not be possible to take all these variables into account in developing a language in education policy. Ultimately, a set of standards developed to enhance ELT in one context cannot be applied to other contexts. The unique sociocultural, political, economic, and historical aspects of each individual country or setting need to be taken into account when developing language policies and ELT programs and standards appropriate to these contexts. In this respect, local consultants working and developing research in these countries are best suited to determine what constitutes effective practices within those countries. The development of principles based to influencing and enhancing successful and effective ELT practices and policies. They need for using different effective delivery and successful outcomes of ELT practices and policies. Identifying the impact of social, economic, and political forces on policymaking decisions on a macro level and the needs of students, teachers, and community members within particular context on a micro level, can enable policymakers, practitioners, and researchers to identify and engage with a range of issues that affect policymaking decisions. In addition, it can enable policymakers to predict any possible challenges in relation to implementation and to ensure that the process of policymaking takes into account these issues when developing ELT initiatives and interventions.

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