A study of the development of the Language Planning and Policy (LPP) Field and English Education Policy in Japan

Sunao Fukunaga
Kyushu Institute of Technology

本論文は、様々な社会的要要素と複雑な関係性を持つ言語政策・計画を、研究分野の発展に注目し考察することを目的とする。時系列的に代表的研究例を挙げながら言語政策・計画研究分野の発展を概観する。また、日本における英語教育政策、特に高等学校の英語教育政策を日本の文脈の中で捉え、政策の変遷を辿る。最後に、今後の言語政策研究（英語教育政策を中心に）では、言語政策を多様な社会的要素との関連性の中で理解し、教師、生徒、学校、地域社会、政策立案者、教員研修実施者といった関係者の実践も研究の対象としていくことが必須であると結論づける。

Key Words: language policy, English education policy, high school

1.1. Overview

The field of language planning and policy (LPP) research has evolved with the development of new social orders and paradigms since WWII (Ricento, 2006b). With the shift of epistemological perspectives on social structure and the idea of agency, the LPP field has extended its analytical scope to understand the language planning and policy process as a social phenomenon in relational terms, not in a fixed and static sense. In other words, LPP research is now being situated in a relationship between a dominant language and a minority language, between contested ideologies and the nuances inscribed in policy texts or in policy as texts as well as practice within the nexus of the contexts in which the policy is situated. This study, which discusses the advancements in LPP research as well as the relationship of LPP to Japan's English education system, aims to provide a chronological overview of the evolution of LLP research, introduce representative literature on LPP, and outline educational language policy studies in Asian contexts with a focus on Japan's English education and policy.

1.1.1. What is language policy?

Contemporary conceptions of language policy underscore the basic understanding that language policy is intrinsically political or ideological, and, thus, language planning is necessarily saturated within politics and various ideologies (Hornberger, 2006). The same can be said for LPP research, which never takes place "in a theoretical and methodological vacuum" (Ricento, 2006b, p. 11)—that is, a researcher undertakes LPP research within the context of his/her own epistemological perspectives. Thus, LPP researchers suggest that language policy is constitutive of the various political and ideological characteristics of given linguistic communities. For example, a language policy of a speech community (Spolsky, 2004, p. 5) consists of three components: 1) "language practice"; 2) "language beliefs or ideology"; and 3) "specific efforts to modify or influence" language practice. The first component refers to "the habitual pattern of selecting among the varieties that make up a community's linguistic repertoire" (p. 5) and stems, in part, from the second component, which addresses the community's beliefs about language and language use. These beliefs, then, inform the third component, creating an implicit intervention into the speech community's language practice that Spolsky terms "language management" [1] (2004, p. 8).

This conception of language policy, however, can be far from regulated as it not only entails "the explicit, written, overt, *de jure*, official, and 'top-down' decision making about language, but also the implicit, unwritten, covert, de facto, grass-roots, and unofficial ideas and assumption" (Schiffman, 2006, p. 112). As such, many countries do not have an official language policy, and, yet, their dominant languages function as a de facto language policy. English in the United States and Japanese in Japan are such examples. This covert form of language policy is sustained by "language beliefs and ideology" (Spolsky, 2004, p. 5), which

---

[1] Researchers in North America (Hornberger, 2006; Johnson, 2013; Ricento, 2006a, 2006b) predominantly use the term "language planning."

Schiffman (2006) coined as "linguistic culture" and defined as "the sum totality of ideas, values, beliefs, attitudes, prejudices, myths, religious strictures, and all the other cultural 'baggage' that speakers bring to their dealings with language from their culture" (p. 112). "Linguistic culture" (Schiffman, 2006), then, or the "beliefs and ideologies of language" (Spolsky, 2004) can "have real effects on language policies and practices" (Ricento, 2006a, p. 9). Language users' beliefs and attitudes toward certain varieties of language amass over time and collectively establish covert rules, becoming a de facto language policy. Such covert language policy is internalized in language users practice and serves as a strong, albeit unregulated form of language policy.

This means that language policy, whether overt or covert, is now conceptualized and understood as a discursive formation of linguistic, ideological, and political practice in which language is used as "a code with various forms (written, spoken, standard, non-standard, etc.), functions (usually expressed in terms of domains and relative status within a polity), and value (as a medium of exchange, with particular material and non-material qualities)" (Ricento, 2006a, p. 3). I personally subscribe to the notion that language policy should be studied in relation to multiple social factors as well as the local contexts in which these particular language policies are situated. My understanding is such that my discussion of language policy particularly attends to the discursive relationships among local agents as language users and language policy implementers. I hold that beliefs and ideologies toward a given language as shared by local agents must be considered in tandem with macrolevel policy as imposed by authoritative control as both are all relevant to studying language, language use, and language policy.

1.1.2. Development of Language Policy and Planning (LPP) field

The LPP field as an academic discipline has significantly developed since WWII (Baldauf, 2012). It underwent three major developmental stages, which were influenced by

"macro sociopolitical," "epistemological," and "strategic" factors (Ricento, 2000, p. 196). The macro sociopolitical factor "refers to events and processes that obtain the national or supranational level, such as state formation, (or deformation), wars (hot or cold), population migration, globalization of capital and communication, and the life" (p. 197). The epistemological instrumental factor "concerns paradigms of knowledge and research, such as structuralism and postmodernism in the social sciences" and the strategic factor refers to the goals of researchers when doing particular research (p. 198).

From about the end of the WWII through the 1960s, the intent of language planning was driven by the desire for modernization of national languages "under the one nation – one language model" due to "the break up of the European colonial empires leading to the emergence of nations in Africa, South and South East Asia" (Baldauf, 2012, p. 234). Language planning, then, attended to what were called language problems in post-colonial nations to create national language policies with a focus on status and corpus planning for a particular language of a particular nation (Baldauf, 2012; Hornberger, 2006; Ricento, 2000). This created an optimistic view of LPP as a scientifically analyzable and evaluative activity, and the field "began to resemble 'the rational choice matrix' of public policy analysis, in which a specialist applies techniques of cost-benefit calculations, to generate compared alternatives for action to recommend to decision makers" (Lo Bianco, 2010, p. 150). According to Lo Bianco (2010), Fishman's version of scientifically measurable language planning (1971) was very ambitious. Fishman himself judged that "language planning as a rational and technical process informed by actuarial data and by ongoing feedback is still a dream, but it is by no means so farfetched a dream as it seemed to be merely a decade ago" (Fishman, 1971, p. 111 quoted in Lo Bianco, p. 151). Similarly, many scholars aspired to a political scientific approach to LPP by specifying

"orderly and systematic requirements for LPP such as the establishment of goals, selection of means and prediction of outcomes" (Lo Bianco, 2010, p. 151). Nevertheless, this highly measurable perspective unwittingly subsumed many ideologies indifferent to actual language practice and failed to appropriately help the language users the field was supposed to serve. As a result, attempts were made to include language practice and language users in LPP research. This led to a paradigm shift in knowledge construction representative of the postmodernism of the field and containing a more dialogic and critical inquiry of LPP research (Lo Bianco, 2010; Pennycook, 2006).

The 1970s and 1980s saw an ideological modernization that critiqued the early LPP inquiry process, which had been largely interested in the role of linguists, who believed themselves capable of providing descriptive knowledge for LPP from a neutral perspective on language (Ricento, 2006b). This new phase, however, started to problematize many of the old, hegemonic ideologies of the past—ideologies such as "diglossia, bilingualism, and multilingualism" (Ricento, 2000, p. 202) which had inscribed LPP work throughout its earlier developmental phases. In the 1970s and 80s, researchers suggested a more theoretically informed LPP framework (Ricento, 2006b). For example, according to Hornberger (2006) and Ricento (2006b), critical LPP scholars such as Cooper (1989) and Tollefson (1991) significantly contributed to the field during this period by examining "ideologies and associated policies in order to bring about social change" (Ricento, 2006b, p. 15). The goals of LPP research necessarily shifted from the description of language as a system distant from actual language use to much more critical examinations of language use in relation to the social world as a means of better understanding the stakes present in planning a language. The field called for new, critical attention to LPP researchers' strategic factors and urged for greater exploration of language,

language use, and language planning, asking that such exploration be carried out in a dialogic fashion rather than through the old lens of seeing the relationship between LLP and the researcher as linear, homogeneous, and monolithic. This meant that the question asked by the researcher shifted from one focused on "how to develop languages" to one which asked about "which languages to develop for what purposes, and in particular, how and for what purposes to develop local, threatened languages in relation to global, spreading ones" (Hornberger, 2006, p. 27).

Now, thanks to the capitalism that developed in the 1980s and the subsequent wave of globalization that has swept across all social contexts, many LPP scholars have turned their attention to the myriad critical issues surrounding the field, in particular those concerned with unequal power relations and the status relationships present among languages. Tollefson (1989, 1991), for example, proposed a critical mode of inquiry called Critical Language Policy (CLP), which was informed by critical theories established by critical theorists including Pierre Bourdieu, Michel Foucault, and Jürgen Habermas. The goal of such inquiry was to acknowledge a researcher's subjectivity and strategic research agenda to highlight "the concept of power, particularly in institutions, such as schools, involved in reproducing inequality" (Tollefson, 2006, p. 43) in order to bring about social justice. Phillipson's work (1992) similarly followed a CLP approach and warned of the danger of the spread of English as a powerful colonial language at a global scale. He argued that the spread constituted "linguistic imperialism" and that the spread of English might move minority languages into extinction. Other scholars, however, opposed his idea, calling it deterministic and prone to ignore other complications and possibilities, including individual agency and local factors (Canagarajah, 1999; Pennycook, 1994, 2006). What remained, though, was how inextricably intertwined the relationships between the global spread

of English, individual agency, and local contexts were and continue to be. Such a view has directed many studies in the field and fostered diverse critical inquiries that focus on individual language users and the operation of power in relation to various societal factors and social contexts.

Currently, LPP is situated in postmodern social orders. Postmodernism, which is representative of the new epistemological orientations, "challenges a modernist and structuralism epistemology" (Pennycook, 2006, p. 60) and "questions the assumptions of modernity, the so-called Enlightenment, the hegemony of Western thought in the world, and concepts that have been used to understand the world" (p. 62). Pennycook (2006) suggests that LPP research should move toward "local, situated, contextual, and contingent ways of understanding language and language policies" through the inquiry of "how power operates in relationship to the nation-states, and in particular how governance is achieved through language" (p. 64). Regardless of whether this happens or not, though, LPP scholars acknowledge the importance of studying how individual actors play a role in given local contexts, experience power struggles, conflicts, and constraints, or transform themselves, their learning, and the language use through policy enactment (Johnson & Ricento, 2013; Ramanathan & Morgan, 2007; Ricento, 2000).

1.1.3. Empirical studies of LPP

LPP research within diverse contexts has long been attending to language in terms of the issues of "secure bounded nations with distinctive and official or at least dominant national languages, and mostly monolingual populations" (Lo Bianco, 2013, p. 145). Due to the global spread of English, however, the research agenda of many LPP studies has recently began to grapple with the linguistic, political, economical, and cultural tension between English as a post-colonial language and the other primary, secondary, or foreign languages instructed in a national

education system as well as between English and dominant languages spoken by the majorities of speech communities and minority languages often underrepresented in both schools and communities (Lo Bianco, 2013). For instance, in the U.S., states such as California, Arizona, and Massachusetts have recently developed state-level language education policies for English language learning students by increasingly shifting to English-only or a subtractive bilingual instruction model, which encourages educating emergent bilingual students in English alone (Gandara & Rumberger, 2009). Critical studies, however, address the multifaceted problems and obstacles surrounding such forms of bilingual education and its policies with a focus on agency (Johnson, 2007; Johnson & Freeman, 2010) and closely record local communities' bottom-up efforts to establish positive and additive bilingual programs in school communities (English & Varghese, 2010; McGroarty, 2012; Valdes, 2005). Other studies, which conduct ethnographies on LPP, work on the revitalization and survival of minority languages through collaboration with speech community members (McCarty, Romero-Little, Warhol, & Zepeda, 2011). The goal is to tackle issues of bilingual education as linked to the three orientations of "language-as-problem, language-as-resource, and language-as-right" (Ruiz, 1984) by focusing on linguistic human rights (Skutnabb-Kangas, 1999). Globalization and the world-wide spread of English on an individual level, however, have caused the conceptualization of "language rights" to be criticized. As May's (2005) summary of criticisms points out,

> the intellectual criticisms have tended to coalesce around three key themes, which might be described usefully as: the 'problem of historical inevitability' (why resist the inexorable forces of linguistic modernisation?); the 'problem of essentialism' (why link language ineluctably to ethnic identity?); the 'problem of mobility and use' (why actively delimit the mobility of minority language speakers by insisting that they continue to

speak a language of limited use and, by implication, value?). (p. 320)

LPP research, then, has more work to do in order to elucidate in what ways, both positively and negatively, the concept and practice of language rights affects language users in a particular speech community so as to guarantee that the minority language speakers will be granted full participation in society as well as full access to language, education, and economic activity.

1.2. English education and policy in Asia

This paper will now turn to language policies in Asia, in particular, the East Asian contexts in which many iterations of European colonialism have influenced language education, creating tension between post-colonial languages, local indigenous languages, and English as a *de facto* international language. Closely linked to national, political, and economic interests, issues surrounding English as a foreign language (EFL) education as well as the use of local varieties of English have become a national agenda in many Asian countries. English education policy in the Asian contexts is inevitably situated in juxtaposition to the tensions present in globalization, national cultural, and ethnic identity with foreign language education being synonymous with English education in Asian regions (Tsui & Tollefson, 2006). Issues of ideology and pedagogy are often reported in literature on English education and its policies in Asian countries (Honna & Takeshita, 2005; Hu, 2005; Hu & McKay, 2012; Nunan, 2003). For instance, many studies examine ideologies surrounding the English language, how English spread its linguistic and cultural hegemony as a post-colonial language, and how this spread of English is linked to political and national ideologies (Hashimoto, 2000, 2009; Kubota, 1998; Morrison & Lui, 2000; Phan, 2013). Other scholars focus on how English as linguistic capital is desired and thus creates an intense market for language acquisition as present in China, Hong Kong, Korea, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, and Thailand (J. Park, 2009; S. Park &

Abelmann, 2004; Rappa & Wee, 2006; Tsui, 2006). According to Kachru's concentric circle

model (1992),[2] these countries are referred to as the expanding-circle countries in which English

is spoken as a foreign or additional language and English learning is zealously cultivated to

allow greater access to new knowledge and the global market. The problem is that such

expanding-circle countries unwittingly promote English education, whether formally or

informally, at the expense of language education in other foreign languages (Hasegawa, 2013) or,

in worst case scenarios, of local languages themselves (J. Park, 2009). Rather than approaching

English language learning with a critical discussion of the global spread of English and its

repercussions in education, effective language acquisition models have been of most interest, and

research in the region has centered on how English can be taught effectively and

communicatively for the purposes of communication. The English education boom or "English

fever" (J. Park, 2009) in the region has been at its peak since the beginning of the 21st century,

and there is no sign of decline.

English fever has shaped and reshaped the English Language Teaching (ELT) industry in

which English proficiency is considered a valuable linguistic resource the competent user of

which can exchange for materials or money in the global market. Market-driven discourse on

English, then, regards the acquisition of English as linguistic capital (Heller & Duchêne, 2012)

that enables one to become an active player in the global market. And although such a view is

merely discourse and not an empirical claim, it has become a given that the suppliers of this

linguistic capital are native speakers of English from inner-circle countries and the consumers are

---

[2] Kachru's concentric circle (1992) model categorizes countries in three circles based on the roles the English
language played in each country. The inner-circle countries are the UK, USA, Canada, Australia, and New
Zealand, where English is predominantly spoken as a first language. The outer-circle countries are countries
with a colonial history such as India, Singapore, Philippines, and South Africa. The expanding-circle countries
include many countries of Asia where English is spoken as a foreign language.

English language learners from expanding-circle countries (Kachru, 1992). Such a hierarchical

relationship has created the native speaker/nonnative speaker dichotomy as a long-standing

problem addressed in the field of Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL).

This ideological separation prioritizes native speakers as the linguistic and cultural model for

both English language teachers and learners, questions the legitimacy of varieties of English

spoken by *nonnative* speakers and disadvantages Nonnative English Speaker Teachers (NNEST)

despite NNESTs' professional advantages and the legitimacy of their teacher qualifications

(Braine, 1999; Llurda, 2005; Medgyes, 2001). Furthermore, the influence of the ELT industry

model of English language instruction in Asian contexts is apparent in the Medium of Instruction

(MOI)[3] policy present in South Korean higher education. According to Piller and Cho (2013), the

ideological nature of the recent development of English as a MOI has put much pressure on

college instructors and professors. Regardless of their expertise, professors are required to teach

their course content in English, and two newspapers publish college rankings in South Korea

using the proportion of English-medium classes as an index item that assesses a university's

internationalism. English MOI, then, covertly promotes the global spread of English at the

expense of the Korean language in the form of competition among universities through such

university rankings. Piller and Cho (2013) highlight how the economic principle of

neoliberalism[4] functions as a covert form of policy that informs the English-as-the-medium-of-

instruction policy and fuels competitiveness among South Korean universities by treating them

---

[3] In a simplest sense, Medium of Instruction (MOI) refers to a language of education used to teach academic subjects in classrooms. With a critical perspective, however, an MOI policy is so powerful that it "determines which social and linguistic groups have access to political and economic opportunities, and which groups are disenfranchised" (Tsui & Tollefson, 2004, p. 2).

[4] Neoliberalism is a market principle that moves globalization forward in various fields, including economy, technology, and communication. According to Harvey (2005), "neoliberalism is the first instance of a theory of political economic practices that proposes that human well-being can best be advanced by liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills within an institutional framework characterized by strong private proper rights, free markets, and free trades" (p. 2).

as corporations, not higher education institutions. It also urges them to compete against each other for their share in the global market–a market in which English is used as an index to indicate who has a greater share. Proficiency scores, such as the TOEFL[5] or TOIEC[6] for individuals, are examples of such. As further studies (J. Park, 2009; Piller & Cho, 2013) have suggested, English education in Asian contexts is never free from neoliberalism or late capitalism discourse, which views English as a consumable supply of linguistic capital in the age of globalization. English education policy within the neoliberal world economy, then, covertly directs English instruction to market economic principles.

1.2.1 English Education and Policy in Japan

The situation of Japan's English education resonates with those present in other Asian contexts. It has been in tension with a neoliberal mode of English education circumscribed within multifaceted discourses of globalism and nationalism. A discourse of inferiority has condemned schoolteachers' inabilities to teach communicative English. Yet, English is desired more than ever for access to new knowledge and the global market. In the rest of this paper, I will attempt to locate Japan's English education and its policies in the nexus of domestic and global contexts in order to better understand what contextual factors come into play. In doing so, I will use two terms interchangeably, "Japan's English education policy" and the "Courses of Study (COS)" unless I specify otherwise.

1.2.2 Current State of English Education in Japan

Japan's English education reform has been a pressing national agenda. Not only teachers,

---

[5] TOEFL is an abbreviation of Test of English as a Foreign Language and the average score was 215 points in the Computer Based TOEFL (CBT) between July 2002 and June 2003. 215 on the CBT is equivalent to around 550 on the Paper Based TOEFL (PBT).
[6] TOEIC is an abbreviation of Test of English for International Communication, and the average score was 500 in 2005.

scholars, and educators in teaching English as a foreign or second language (TEFL/TESL) but also publicly well-known figures in fields such as politics, economics, business, and sport have been actively participating in the discussion of the improvement of English education.[7] English as a school subject has drawn a good deal of attention from both inside and outside the education system. English education policies have been under constant revision in response to various factors despite the fact that "in general, most [Japanese] students have little opportunity to have contact with English in their everyday lives outside of the classroom except through activities such as browsing the Internet" (Samimy & Kobayashi, 2004, p. 24). Such nationwide urgency and desire for English education reform has been robust and prevalent, but, at the same time, disappointedly, it has not borne much fruit according to the low average scores of TOEFL taken by Japanese people. Nevertheless, when closely looking into Japanese English education, one finds a mismatch between the abundant resources available for English education and the unsuccessful outcomes. Thus, one may ask a question: why has Japan's English education not been successful with all those resources, the government policies, the national curricula, and the institutional apparatus that can implement such policies for the betterment of English education across the board?

1.2.3 Two sides of the same coin: Discourse of failure

For decades, Japan's English education has been the target of criticism for its failure both outside and inside Japan (Gorsuch, 2000; Seargeant, 2008). While English education is indeed situated at the intersection of national interests that exist within a neoliberal world

---

[7] This phenomenon is optimized in the demographic diversity of members of Educational Rebuilding Council (*Kyōiku saisei iinkai*) under the supervision of Japan's Cabinet Secretariat (*Naikaku kanbō*). None of the members hold their expertise in language-related fields such as language education, language policy, or TEFL/TESL. The list of the members is available through the link: http://www.kantei.go.jp/jp/singi/kyouiku/about.html.

economy, it has been stigmatized by a discourse of failure and desire (Seargeant, 2008). It fails

to help students attain sufficient English proficiency for daily conversation despite the mandatory

six-year secondary school English education. Indeed, Japan's English education has been a

struggle in spite of a number of initiatives led by the government (Kobayashi, 2013). One of the

initiatives has been the many revisions of the Japanese post-secondary English curriculum, the

Course of Study (COS), which aims for Communicative Language Teaching (CLT)[8] **(**Gorsuch,

2000; LoCastro, 1996; Oda & Takada, 2005; Samimy & Kobayashi, 2004). The most historic

initiatives are the two English education policies: *The National Strategic Plan to Cultivate*

"Japanese with English Abilities" (*The Strategic Plan*) and *The National Action Plan to*

Cultivate "Japanese with English Abilities" (*The Action Plan*) formulated in 2002 and 2003,

respectively, as *a national strategy* by Japan's Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, and

Technology (MEXT). In addition to such policy and curriculum changes, Japan's education

system always has hardworking English teachers (Sato & Kleinsasser, 2004). All those efforts to

reform Japan's English education, however, have not yet seen any success. The relatively low

TOEFL average score of Japanese test takers is a frequently cited example of the undesirable

outcome of English education. According to *An Interim Report of The Council on Promotion of*

Human Resource for Globalization Development published by Japan's Ministry of Economy,

Trade, and Industry (METI) on June 22, 2011, "in the 2010 TOEFL scores ranked by country,

Japan scored very low, at 135th out of 163 countries, and 27th out of 30 countries in the Asia

region"[9] (p. 8). Unlike many of their counterparts in Asia, the Japanese are perceived to fail at

---

[8] Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) is a controversial term as it has different meanings and interpretations to different teachers (Spada, 2007). In the most general sense, it emphases language acquisition by communicating messages and meanings rather than exclusively focusing on accuracy in grammar or pronunciation.
[9] Translation is mine.

attaining a working command of the language. The discourse surrounding Japan's English

education agrees that Japan has been struggling unsuccessfully to improve the quality of English

instruction **(**LoCastro, 1996) and the English proficiency of its citizens (Seargeant, 2008). The

idea that the Japanese cannot speak English pervades society and has become a national stigma

that has created a discourse of failure (Terasawa, 2012). In her foreword regarding the

formulation of *A Strategic Plan* (MEXT, 2002), the then Minister of Education Kyōko Tōyama

acknowledged that, due to their lack of English competency, many Japanese had difficulty in

communicating with speakers of other languages or experienced having been unable to receive

high evaluations in their respective fields.[10]

In addition, some studies highlight the influence of Japan's economic prosperity as a

factor behind its ineffective English education. Because of Japan's economic super-power status

without English in the 1980s through the early 1990s, EFL learning was not seen as necessary.

Japan's citizens believed its business partners should learn Japanese if they wanted to engage in

trade and commerce with Japan (Matsumoto, 2009) and an environment of unsuccessful foreign

language education was created. Similarly, Japan's affluence was not seen to entail English until

it had been through two decades of prolonged economic recession beginning in the mid-1990s.

The incongruence between its economic success and its citizens' low English proficiency

delayed ELT restructuring both in the school system and in society (Kobayashi, 2013).

As such, the discourse of failure often rationalizes why the Japanese do not have to learn

English in order to justify the failure of learning English itself (Kawai, 2007). As Seargeant

---

[10] The paraphrased translation is mine. The original text in Japanese is as follows; 現状では、日本人の多く
が、英語力が十分でないために、外国人との交流において制限を受けたり、適切な評価が得られな
いといった事態も生じている. Retrieved on April 12, 2014 from
http://www.mext.go.jp/b_menu/shingi/chousa/shotou/020/sesaku/020702.htm

(2008) argues, many studies on Japan's English education and policy discursively construct a stigmatized discourse of the Japanese being unable to speak English. This means that the discourse has been naturalized and the public has taken it for granted without critically questioning the validity of such a discourse, which inadvertently pardons Japanese incompetence in English. There is no shortage of media, books, and academic articles that have given myriad explanations for the failure of Japan's English education. Although today English is aspired to and strongly desired for Japan's internationalization in tandem with economic globalization, nobody seems to want to bear the responsibility for the failure of English education or take actions on a personal level (Morizumi, 2012).

1.2.4 Two sides of the same coin: Discourse of desire

This discourse of failure, then, when coupled with the criticism that has been leveled against Japan's English education, is indicative of a strong desire and aspiration for English not only from students and parents but also from the public. While the discourses of desire and failure are two sides of the same coin, the prevalence of the discourse of desire for English in Japan has not yet successfully brought any evident investment in English from the majority of the population. Even so, the slogan "internationalization" or "*kokusaika*" proclaimed in the COS and the English education policies: *The Strategic Plan* and *The Action Plan* hope to promote English language learning among citizens by "[allowing] Japan to communicate with its international (=English-speaking) economic partners" (Gottlieb, 2012, p. 13).

Scholars, however, problematize that the Japanese government policy and the national curricula casually link internationalization to English education, suggesting that the unsuccessful English education can be partly due to the difference in the level of commitment to ELT between the policy as text and as discourse. Many studies argue that the term *internationalization* as used

in the policy texts is conflated with tacit and competing agendas. As Gottlieb (2012) states, "[Internationalization] encourages Japanese people to communicate with outsiders in the outsiders' language without themselves experiencing any intrusion into the comfortably monolingual Japanese-language environment surrounding them, thereby subtly reinforcing a sense of cultural nationalism" (p. 13). She argues that Japan's internationalization is, in fact, the promotion of the idea of monolingual Japan through English as an international language, which can be interpreted as a covert form of cultural nationalism (Gottlieb, 2012; see also Kubota, 1998).

Similarly, Hashimoto's (2000, 2009, 2013) critical discourse analysis (CDA) of Japan's language policy texts including *The Action Plan* (MEXT, 2003) and the COS (MEXT, 2008), finds the conflation of contesting ideologies present in the macrolevel English education policy, COS, to be far less straightforward then they sound. An overt goal within the COS is to improve students' intercultural communicative competence in the name of internationalization while a covert goal is to promote to the world Japan as a nation with unique citizens and ethnic and cultural identities through "'Japanized' communication in English" (Hashimoto, 2013, p. 188). Furthermore, COS denotes that students should be able to better understand their own nation, culture, and language by comparing English to Japanese through a contrastive language learning process. English education, then, is the linguistic catalyst used to promote Japan as a nation by disseminating "Japaneseness" to the world while simultaneously implementing a "Japanization" policy by which students internalize national ideological values (Hashimoto, 2000).

Another study by Kawai (2007) has similarly found links between ideologies, such as internationalization and neoliberalism, and English policy as expressed by the public in media discourse. Kawai (2007) examines readers' online posts on a newspaper website, *The Mainichi*

Shimbun, which comments on the Japanese government proposal for English to be the second official language[11]. Her CDA reveals conflicting discourses toward English and the proposal as expressed by the commenters. The themes of the comments include "English as the international language" (p. 45), "English as a tool" (p. 46), "English as a cultural force" (p. 47), and "English serves Japan" (p. 48). Those themes suggest the commenters' have a desire for English and indicates that their desires depend on what English language learning costs and how it benefits Japan and its citizens. The theme "English serves Japan" in particular, as pointed out by Hashimoto (2013), epitomizes the argument made in governmental policy. Compared to the global dominance of English, the purchase of the Japanese language is small. The use of English is thus seen as more effective and efficient in promoting Japan in the international economic, cultural, and political spheres. In this sense, then, English language learning is viewed as beneficial to Japan's economy in the global market as long as it does not threaten the cultural and linguistic identity of Japan.

Another discourse of desire is the discourse of English-for-economy. Kobayashi (2007) problematizes how such discourse is transformed into the discourse of English-for-élites, which has a negative impact on gender disparity in the Japanese professional context. Drawing on secondary data, she analyzes the rhetoric of *The Action Plan* (MEXT, 2003) and discusses how male professionals or job seekers, regardless of their qualifications, tend to covertly be offered more opportunities to improve their English skills. In a male-dominant society such as Japan's, Japanese companies may dispatch men to study English abroad, believing male workers will play a leadership role in business throughout the world. Kobayashi concludes that this language policy, contrary to its ultimate goals, "helps to legitimize men's and women's segregated roles

---

[11] The then Prime Minster Keizo Obuchi and his private advisory body proposed English to be the second official language in January 2001, but the proposal did not become a concrete plan.

already entrenched in Japanese society" (p. 568) and thus exacerbates the chasm between the current favored status of men as élites and women as subordinates in the Japanese professional fields.

Furthermore, Kobayashi (2013) argues that the series of MEXT initiatives of English education and its policies are a national response to a worldwide phenomenon of ELT; supporting ELT is believed to support national interests at a time when ELT failures are not. In contrast to trends in educational migration from China and Korea, since 2006 the number of Japanese college students studying abroad has been declining. In 2004, it was 82,945, but it dropped to 60,183 in 2013 (MEXT, Feb. 2015)[12]. The government as well as the public is concerned about inward-looking youth reluctant to go abroad for education and see such a trend as a possible herald of decline which may drive Japan into an economic corner in the global market. With the unprecedented urgency for ELT reform, however, Kobayashi foresees the potential for Japanese companies to open doors to qualified non-Japanese prospective employees who are multilingual in Japanese, English, and their heritage language.

By comparing the discourses of internationalism and nationalism represented in the Japanese government-endorsed high school English textbooks, Schneer (2007) deconstructs how cultural representations in the textbooks "bring the ideologies of ethnicity and cultural difference into the English language classroom in Japan" (p. 601) and cautions that the textbooks can be strong mediators for patriotic education by linking them to the notion of "*Nihonjinron*" (the ideology of Japaneseness focusing on Japanese national and cultural identity) (Kubota, 2000 quoted in Schneer, 2007). Liddicoat (2007) similarly conducts a textual and discourse analysis of Japanese language-in-education policies arguing that

---

[12] It is notable that the decline in the number of Japanese college students studying abroad might have been due to the worldwide economic crisis in 2008.

the ultimate purpose of internationalization coded in the Japanese policies is not conceived

as developing abilities among the Japanese to adapt and accommodate to others, nor is it an

attempt to explore questions of Japanese identity in intercultural contexts.

Instead, Japanese interculturality focuses on the inculcation, maintenance and

entrenchment of a particular conception of Japanese identity, associated with the discourses

of *Nihonjinron*, and its communication to others. (p. 41)

Nihonjinron, which comprises "theories of what it means to be Japanese" as "a highly influential

ethnocentric and essentialist. . . genre" (Gottlieb, 2012, p. 17), "heavily stress[es] the

equivalence of Japanese language with Japanese identity, at the same time portraying the

Japanese language as somehow different from other languages … and insisting on Japan's

linguistic homogeneity" (p. 17).

  With the global dominance of English as the language for economy, though, Japan's

English education is trapped within the competing discourses of failure and desire and is

interlocked with ideologies of Japan's linguistic, cultural, and ethnic identity as a nation. Much

CDA work examining Japan's language policies elucidates how these varied ideologies are

intermeshed with the multifaceted discourses present in scholarship, the policy texts, and the

media. The key finding is that the ideological nature of Japan's English education policy

attempts to craftily tie English language competence among Japanese nationals with economic

prosperity at both the national and individual level while promoting Japan and Japanese culture

to the world and Japaneseness among its citizens. However, the research results also suggest that

the influence of the international economy and the influx of immigrants and

globalization/internationalization have started to challenge Japan's language education policy

(LEP) and its implementation in relation to the long-held falsehood of Japan being a monolingual

and ethnically homogenous nation (Gottlieb, 2012). This conflation of ideologies constitutive of competing discourses has been fueling the current "tumultuous" situation of Japan's English education. As I will highlight in the next section, English education policies and empirical studies on them in the context of local schools and teachers in Japan have much to offer.

1.2.5 English Education Policies in Japan

In response to the global spread of English in the nexus of the neoliberal world economy, MEXT has been taking stronger measures to improve English language instruction across the board since the late 20th century. MEXT has revised the Courses of Study (COS), *Gakushū shidō yōryō*, the national curriculum guidelines for K-12 schools across the nation, seven times since the first COS was enacted in 1947 (Ishida, Jimbo, Hisamura, & Sakai, 2011). Nevertheless, the revisions of the COS between 1947 and 1998 were unable to bring about substantial improvement in English language instruction (MEXT, 2002) and failed to equip secondary school students with communicative competence. The 8th version of the COS (MEXT, 2008/2009) was announced and enacted in 2012 in junior high schools and in 2013 in senior high schools. For the first time in its history, the new version of the COS proclaimed English as a medium of instruction (MOI) in all English language classrooms at the senior high school level [13].

In regard to the COS, all public schools in Japan are required to follow its national curriculum guidelines, which are published in a book form called *Gakushū shidō yōryō*. Each school level from kindergarten through senior high school has COS volumes that target grade appropriate educational goals: *General Provisions*, *Subject in General Instruction*, *Subject in*

---

[13] Please note that the use of English is applicable only to English language classes not to other subjects such as Math, Physical Education, or Music.

Specialized Instruction, *Moral Education*[14], and *Special Activities*. Subjects in Specialized

Instruction has multiple volumes dedicated to individual subjects such as Japanese or *Kokugo*[15],

math, physical education, etc. The most influential volume for English teachers' teaching

practice is one such volume of *Foreign Languages*, which treats the English language as if it

were the only foreign language taught in schools. In fact, there is no volume for other foreign

languages, which must refer to the volume on the English language. When the COS goes under

revision to whatever extent, three major elements go through change: textbooks, school

curriculums, and in-service teacher training.

Prior to the enactment of the new COS (2008), MEXT formulated a policy initiative

called "*A Strategic Plan*"[16] in March 2002 along with a long-term strategic plan, "*The Action*

Plan" in 2003. These two English education policies called for extensive improvement in

instructional methods, teachers' instructional qualities and proficiency, and the college admission

system (Honna & Takeshita, 2005; Okuno, 2007). The significance of these polices is great

because English education policies at the national level had not previously existed, and these

polices reveal MEXT's unprecedented urgency to carry out Japan's English education reform.

The Action Plan (MEXT, 2003) recommended five instrumental goals be achieved by

2008 (Honna & Takeshita, 2005). One, it suggested English as an MOI. Two, it started a

program called Super English Language High School (SELHi)[17] in 16 senior high schools[18] to

---

[14] The senior high school level does not have a Moral Education volume.

[15] The Japanese language is called as *Kokugo* in primary and secondary education. In Japanese, *koku* means a country or a nation and *go* means language. *Kokugo* literally means the nation's language.

[16] 「英語が使える日本人」の育成のための行動計画の策定について [Regarding the Establishment of The National Action Plan to Cultivate 'Japanese with English Abilities']. Retrieved from http://unpan1.un.org/intradoc/groups/public/documents/APCITY/UNPAN008142.htm

[17] The SELHi Program ended in 2009.

[18] Prior to the official announcement of *The Action Plan* on March 31, 2003, the SELHi program had already started in fiscal year of 2002. Japan's fiscal year starts in April and ends in March.

improve English language instruction and increase research into effective English instruction. Three, it targeted an increase in the number of senior high school students studying abroad, setting a goal of 10,000. Four, it set the appropriate proficiency level of junior and senior high school English teachers at 550 on the TOEFL or 730 on the TOEIC while giving advanced English teachers an opportunity to attend a study-abroad in-service training. And five, it aimed to increase the number of Assistant Language Teachers (ALTs) across the nation. One element of *The Action Plan* that particularly targeted reform was the attempted shift to a more student-centered and communication-oriented system of teaching and learning at the high school level. In accordance with the national implementation of the plans, Prefectural and Municipal Boards of Education offered in-service trainings for experienced Japanese English teachers with a goal of improving the quality of the instructors and the classroom instruction by emphasizing CLT methods.

Along with the enactment of the two policies, MEXT, meanwhile, urged the establishment of well-defined standards of Japanese English teachers' English proficiency by enacting *Five Proposals and Specific Measures for Developing Proficiency in English for International Communication* (*Five Proposals*, 2011a). Keeping the same standards set in *The Action Plan*, *The Five Proposals* set as a goal a score of 550 on the Paper Based TOEFL and 730 points on the TOEIC. MEXT then conducted a survey on *The Five Proposals* from August through October in 2011[19] in order to understand the situation of English education in secondary schools. With respect to junior and senior high school English teachers' English proficiency, the survey reported that 52.8% of all English teachers had either obtained an Eiken Pre-1st level[20]

---

[19] The survey result was retrieved from the *Monbukagaku-shô* (MEXT) website: http://www.mext.go.jp/a_menu/kokusai/gaikokugo/1318779.htm
[20] EIKEN (The EIKEN Test in Practical English Proficiency) is an English proficiency test conducted by a Japanese non-profit organization, the Society for Testing English Proficiency, Inc. (STEP), and backed by the

(i.e., a score of 550 in TOEFL PBT, a score of 213 in the TOEFL CBT, a score of 80 in the

TOEFL IBT[21]) or a score of 730 in the TOEIC. Although both *The Action Plan* (MEXT, 2003)

and the survey report (MEXT, 2011b) stressed the importance of the teachers' abilities to

perform well on English proficiency standardized tests such as TOEFL, TOEIC, or IELTS[22], it

has not yet clearly addressed how these standardized test scores correlate to the teachers'

effectiveness in English instruction. As of March 2015, there are very few in-service training

opportunities available for teachers to improve their English communicative competence even if

they wish to do so (e.g., Ishida et al., 2011). Teachers have to pay fees out of pocket if they want

to go to private English conversation schools, and few schoolteachers have the luxury of spare

time for professional development. Their average work day contains working hours as long as 10

hours and 26 minutes[23] (with the 26 minutes spent on the work they bring home) (MEXT, 2015).

Besides formulating *The Action Plan* and *The Five Proposals*, MEXT has been

promoting people-to-people exchanges in local schools. Since 1987, the Ministry of Education,

Science and Culture (*Monbushō*)[24] and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan (MOFA:

Gaimushō) have collaboratively recruited thousands of young native speakers of English as

assistant language teachers (ALT) in the Japan Exchange and Teaching Programme (the JET

Programme)[25] in order to help students acquire communicative competence in English by

---

Japanese Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT).

[21] TOEFL IBT refers to the Internet Based TOEFL offered by an educational testing organization called Educational Testing Service (ETS) in the United States of America.

[22] IELTS refers to International English Language Testing System sponsored by three organizations: the British Council, IDEP IELTS Australia, and Cambridge English Language Assessment.

[23] This was the first national survey in 40 years; it was conducted with teachers in 360 schools across the nation only for two weeks between October and December in 2008. Therefore, the results may not reflect the accurate working hours of teachers throughout the year.

[24] *Monbu-shô* [The Ministry of Education, Science, and Culture] were merged with *Kagakugijyutsu-chô* [The Science and Technology Agency] in 2001 and became *Monbukagaku-shô* [Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, and Science (MEXT)].

[25] "The Japan Exchange and Teaching (JET) Programme aims to promote grass roots internationalization at the local level by inviting young overseas graduates to assist in international exchange and foreign language

exposing them to the kinds of English spoken by native speakers.[26] The Council of Local Authorities for International Relations (CLAIR) administers the JET Programme in cooperation with MEXT, the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communication (MIC), and local government organizations. *The Strategic Plan* (2002) targeted hiring 11,500 ALTs nationwide and deploying them in English language classrooms in primary and secondary schools (Kato, 2009). As of July 2014, the JET Programme homepage stated the programme had over 60,000 participants from 63 countries, though the number of ALTs was only up at 4,101. The top five countries producing participants were the USA 2,364, the UK 366, Australia 296, New Zealand 242, and Canada 478 (JET Programme, n.d.).

On December 13, 2013, in order to promote further English education reform between 2014 through 2020, MEXT introduced a new policy initiative, *English Education Reform Plan Corresponding to Globalization*. This initiative looked ahead to the Tokyo Olympics and Paralympics in 2020 with the overarching goal of the reform to be to comprehensively create a streamlined national English education framework from primary through secondary education by 2018 which will then be put it into full practice in the Tokyo Olympic year. In elementary schools, English activities are to be offered once or twice a week from Grades 1 through 4, and English instruction will be offered three times a week from Grades 4 through 6. In junior high school, "[c]lasses will be conducted in English in principle" (MEXT, 2013) and in senior high school English "[c]lasses will be conducted in English with *high-level linguistic* activities (presentations, debates, and negotiations)" (italics added) (MEXT, 2013). The plan, however,

---

education in local governments, boards of elementary, junior and senior high schools throughout Japan." Retrieved on April 10, 2012 from the website: http://www.jetprogramme.org/e/introduction/goals.html

[26] It is noted that the JET programme was established under the reign of then Japanese Prime Minister Yasuhiro Nakasone and then U.S. President Ronald Regan to compensate Japan's trade surplus with the U.S. in 1980s. (Tsuido, 2007)

continues to contrast English education with Japanese identity issues. It is written in Japanese (MEXT, 2013a) and reads "[i]n accordance with globalization, we discuss an education model that helps develop Japanese identity among children and reflects the results in revising the COS, in order to educate children to be cognizant of their sense of being Japanese who live in the world community."[27] The term "internationalization" as originally used in *The Action Plan* (MEXT, 2003) has been replaced with "globalization". Thus, a recurring rhetoric has been inscribed in the statement quoted above: it juxtaposes English, globalization, and *Japaneseness* or Japanese identity as if they were mirrored reflections.

Along with *The English Education Reform Plan* (MEXT, 2013), MEXT has consigned English teachers' in-service training with the British Council (MEXT, 2014). This training is called *English education promotion leader central training*[28] and is designed to train secondary school English teachers with at least five years of teaching experience who are selected and nominated by designated Municipal Boards of Education. The MEXT target is to train 500 teachers across the nation every year for five years with MEXT providing two sets of training. The first half includes pedagogical training with a teaching practicum and the second half incorporates leadership training with a leadership practicum. Both trainings are to be held in Tokyo. The teachers who receive this central training or *chūō kenshū* are then to be certified by MEXT as English promotion leaders. They will be expected to play a leadership role in their schools and school districts by facilitating future workshops and training sessions. This is particularly notable because MEXT has never previously consigned a non-Japanese organization to be responsible for teacher training, and the scale of the in-service training is the largest ever

---

[27] Paraphrased translation is mine. The original text in Japanese is as follows; グローバル化が進む中、国際社会に生きる日本人としての自覚を育むため、日本人としてのアイデンティティを育成するための教育の在り方について検討し、その成果を次期学習指導要領改訂に反映させる。

[28] This is called "*Eigo kyōiku suishin chuō riīdā kenshū*: 英語教育推進中央リーダー研修" in Japanese.

attempted.

As of 2015, MEXT has announced that it will revise the current senior high school COS (2009) and carry out the full enactment of the next version of the COS in 2020. This indicates the government's sense of urgency regarding English education reform.

1.2.6 Issues of language policies in Japan: Strong policy (COS) but weak planning

Along with the aforementioned policies and institutional initiatives, the most influential classroom English instruction in Japanese public schools is the COS. In fact, the COS is not a language policy in a strict sense; it constitutes the national curriculum guidelines for public K-12 schools. Private schools are not constrained by the COS; they are instructed by MEXT to follow the COS for their curriculum development, but they are not required to officially report their curriculum to their designated Board of Education (PBE). On the other hand, reporting their curriculum and receiving official approval from their local Board of Education is mandatory for all public schools. In this context, scholars examining Japan's English education policies have posed a critical question (Gottlieb, 2012; Kato, 2009; Matsumoto, 2002): Does Japan have English education policies at all? And if so, how can they be called language policies?

Studies agree that Japan historically has not had a consistent policy on English education let alone an overarching national language policy. Matsumoto (2002) points out the essential absence of the national vision of what to do with its language planning and policy, claiming Japan is so shortsighted that it is only concerned with how to effectively teach communicative English in schools (pp. 56-57) without planning other aspects of languages. Kato (2009) similarly argues that Japan's English education policy cannot be called a policy as such because of the inconsistent status of English as a subject matter in the COS. Until the COS revision in 2003, English had not been a senior high school graduation requirement since the 1970's version

of the COS, though it had been required for graduation between 1961 and 1969 (Kato, 2009).

Between 1970 and 2003, then, theoretically at least, students could graduate from high school

without taking English classes, though such an educational route was impossible in practice.

MEXT set minimum graduation credits for senior high school students that could not be fulfilled

without English credits. In addition, under Japan's college entrance exam system, English was

and continues to be one of the most important subjects, along with Math and Japanese[29] which

also have long instructional hours. At local schools, then, the COS revisions regarding whether

English language learning is an elective or a requirement have not had significant influence.

Nevertheless, such inconsistent treatment of English as a subject matter in the COS is indicative

of a lack of long-term national vision on foreign language acquisition planning in schools.

Relatedly, Gottlieb (2005) illustrates the absence of Japan's language planning toward English

education policy and explicates it as follows:

> Japan has no overarching national language policy which determines which community
>
> languages should be taught (hardly surprising in view of the monolingual belief still
>
> largely prevailing) or which languages should be strategically introduced with a view to
>
> Japan's regional and international linkages. (p. 33)

This lack of national vision with regard to language planning (Gottlieb, 2012; Kato, 2009;

Morizumi, 2012) results in Japan's weak English education policy (Gottlieb, 2005). A too high

reliance on the dominant use of Japanese in public and education as well as on the language's

standing as the *de facto* policy language and the only official language has meant that Japan's

language planning and policies never targets plurilingualism, let alone minority language

---

[29] As a school subject, Japanese, the instruction of the Japanese language, is called "*Kokugo*", the national language. In higher education, the department that teaches the Japanese language and literature used to be called "*Kokubun gakubu*," the Department of National Language and Literature.

education (Gottlieb, 2005). Rather, Japan's LEP has long ignored the maintenance or revitalization of minority languages primarily spoken at home or in unofficial contexts across the country (Fujita-Round & Maher, 2008; Gottlieb, 2005, 2012; Hashimoto, 2000, 2007, 2009; Kaplan & Baldauf, 2003), including Ainu, Okinawan, Korean, Chinese, Portuguese, Spanish, Tagalog, and Vietnamese (Gottlieb, 2012). "[L]anguage planning and policy in Japan have predominantly been top-down, which has contributed to a certain slowness in responding to change" (Gottlieb, 2008, p. 159), and a lack of clear language planning has become detrimental in reforming Japan's English education in public schools.

1.2.7 Empirical Studies on classroom instruction and the Courses of Study (COS)

A large body of literature has attempted to identify the causes for the failure of Japan's English education and has attributed it to several major factors. In particular, research on Japanese English teachers and Japanese English education at the secondary school level has examined issues surrounding teachers' teaching practices in the classroom through the use of research data including surveys, interviews, and/or class observations (Gorsuch, 2000; Hiramasu, 2005; Kikuchi & Browne, 2009; Oda & Takada, 2005; Sato & Kleinsasser, 2004).

Nishino and Watanabe (2008) both attribute the failure of the CLT-oriented policy implementation to nine obstacles and difficulties faced by teachers and local schools: (1) no sufficient in-service training for teachers who graduated from English literature departments rather than education departments geared more specifically toward teaching; (2) teachers' insufficient English proficiency; (3) teachers' lack of confidence; (4) negative backwash of university entrance examinations; (5) no need of English in students' everyday life, (6) teacher's inexperience with student-centered instruction; (7) the passive knowledge-driven content of university entrance examinations; (8) overloaded class size (30-40 students in a class); and (9)

the paucity of available ALTs. They conclude that while there are new pedagogical

developments introduced in classrooms, there remains a huge gap between the vision of English

education policy and the classroom realities in Japan.

Other scholars have similarly found that backwash from the excessive pressures of

university entrance examinations have forced Japanese English teachers to teach English in a

teacher-centered fashion with a strong focus on grammar translation. This method, notoriously

known as the *yakudoku*[30] method, aims at achieving reading comprehension through word by

word translation from English to Japanese (Gorsuch, 2000, 2001; Kikuchi & Browne, 2009; Oda

& Takada, 2005) and has contributed to the failure of English acquisition at the secondary school

level (LoCastro, 1996; Oda & Takada, 2005; Nishino, 2008). Gorsuch (2001), meanwhile,

examined through survey analysis how Japanese English teachers interpreted the concept of CLT

inscribed in the COS and how they mediated the policy so that they could put it into practice in

their classroom instruction. The results revealed that teachers tended to continue teaching in the

same ways in which they were taught instead of transforming their teaching practices into

teaching students communicative English with CLT methods.

The dearth of effective in-service training opportunities for experienced EFL teachers is

another prevalent issue (Oda & Takada, 2005). Although designated Boards of Education across

the nation offer in-service training in order to achieve the COS English education goals, the

training has been limited to two weeks in total during the summer break[31]. Similarly, the

mandatory in-service training that accompanies every revision of the COS is short. In the case of

one such training session I attended in August 2010, all public senior high school teachers

---

[30] *Yakudoku* is a combined word of *yaku* or translation and *doku* or reading, which literally means translation reading.
[31] This in-service training is no longer offered.

received only one day-long, in-service training during the summer vacation. This was an informational session rather than a true in-service training with the sole goal of informing teachers of the major changes in the COS (grades 10-12) and the key issues that they were supposed to take into consideration when designing an individual school's curriculum. This meant that although MEXT expected instructional changes to be happening in schools along with these in-service trainings, current practices along with previous studies (Gorsuch, 2000; Lamie, 2000) suggest significant change in classroom instruction has not been observed. Based on her survey results for English language teachers, Lamie (2000) emphasized "if the Ministry of Education's new curriculum is to be a success, English teachers must be given more training and in-service support" (p. 28). Currently, middle school-level English is predominantly taught by native Japanese speakers who learned English in much the same way as they now teach, creating practices that reinforce and perpetuate many of the flaws in the current educational system (Sato & Kleinsasser, 2004).

Glasgow (2014) inquired about private senior high school English teachers' beliefs about English as a MOI as proclaimed in the newest version of the COS (MEXT, 2008) as well as their agentive roles in the implementation process. In 2011 and 2012, before the enactment of the COS, he interviewed, in English, three English teachers who are native speakers of Japanese. The results revealed the teachers' beliefs negatively intervened in their interpretation of the policy statement, which led to teacher resistance and, in the end, negative agency.

Notably, Sato & Kleinsasser's year-long study (2004) is the only ethnography on the teaching culture in a private Japanese senior high school's English department. It has helped to bring about an understanding of the concerns and problems experienced by EFL teachers in terms of both their teaching styles and their interactions with fellow teachers. In Japan, teaching

challenges stem, in part, from a conflict which exists between the various demands placed on the English teachers; at a basic level, the teacher is of course meant to teach the language, but they are also expected to take multiple responsibilities in addition to simply teaching subject matter. The responsibilities include taking care of a 40-student homeroom class, mentoring students through career guidance, and looking after club activities, to name a few. These factors may play a significant role in Japanese English teachers' classroom instruction in response to the COS change.

The relationship between the COS revisions, unchanged teaching practice, and unsuccessful instructional outcomes, then, has fallen into a recurring cycle that perpetuates the status quo. As such, Japan's English education has been described as "chaotic" (Saito, 2007) because of enduring criticisms against pubic school English education from all sorts of fields including public opinion, the media, as well as political and business circles (Oda, 2011; Saito, 2007).

1.3. Conclusion

The aforementioned research on Japan's English education policy sheds light on the imperative factors that affect the overall language policy implementation in Japan. They lay out a landscape of the history of language policies, ideologies of internationalization, interculturalism encoded in the policies at the macrolevel of language policy, and social factors. Nonetheless, there is very little qualitative research conducted on how the English education policy revisions influence local administration, teachers' teaching practices, and students in Japanese public schools. There has, as of yet, been no systematic investigation into the relationship between the national level of English education policy at the macrolevel, the local school district at the meso-level, and the local schools and teachers at the micro-level, and such a study would greatly help

to elucidate the relationship between the implementers and agents of policy.

There is, therefore, a need for better understanding the implementation process present in Japanese senior high school English education policy through the analysis of the discursive formation of the policy at the macro-, meso-, and microlevels. An analysis of the senior high school COS (MEXT, 2009) would help to reveal how the macrolevel language policy comprises multiple ideologies and how the policy covertly reinforces the nation's political, linguistic, cultural, and ethnic agendas through the national-scale apparatus, namely, the education system. And,an analysis of how mesolevel of social factors influence teachers' teaching practices is also called for. By examining teachers' narratives, attention can be given to why English as taught at the high school level remains problematic. Inquiry into the teachers' teaching lives could also shed light on how the policy as implemented at the microlevel, or in the classroom, affects the process as a whole. One question that needs to be asked is: How do experienced Japanese English teachers continue to live through the policy change by making meaning of their work and adapting themselves to the changes at a personal level? There remains room for further research into the subjectivities of experienced Japanese senior high school English teachers who have myriad professional responsibilities which extend beyond merely teaching the subject matter. Because the language teaching process in Japan is, as Shimahara (1995) and Sato & Kleinsasser (2004) point out, subject to the intense demands on teachers, requiring them to manage both students and their work as well as the teaching of material, it follows that the professional development of teachers will be susceptible to influences, both negative and positive, which are unique to Japan's ELT environment. This resonates with what Tollefson (2002) suggests: "careful attention to the 'local' concerns of everyday life in classrooms: materials, class size, daily and weekly schedules for the study of language and other subjects,

and teachers' time for course planning, problem solving, and professional development" (p. 334) and shows further research is crucial to critical language policy research on educational contexts. Similarly, examining "individual beliefs, everyday contexts, and practices" could reveal what kinds of factors act as "potential obstacles to policy initiatives and reforms" (Ramanathan & Morgan, 2007, p. 449) as teachers are, ultimately, the agents implementing the policy at the microlevel.

Above all, though, the investigation of locality and agency is indispensable as "we are all – teachers, researchers, administrators, or curriculum writers – key stakeholders and partners in the realization of policy practices" (Ramanathan & Morgan, p. 449). Ricento (2006b) urges LPP researchers to keep in mind the effects of the policies we study:

> A theory of language acquisition, use, shift, revitalization, or loss has little value in and of itself as a tool to argue for the need for specific language policies; rather, in order to advocate specific policies or policy directions, scholars need to demonstrate empirically – as well as conceptually – the social benefits, and costs, of such policies. (p. 11)

To gain a rich understanding of the costs and benefits of Japanese policy implementation, then, English education policy research on the Japanese public senior high school context calls for an immediate investigation of the discursive formation and implementation of English education policy in the nexus of the multiple actors and factors at work throughout the multifaceted levels of society.

補記: 本論文は既発表論文の一部が査読を経て新たに掲載されるものである。

References

Baldauf Jr, R. B. (2012). Introduction – Language Planning: Where have we been? Where might we be going? Introdução – Planejamento linguístico: Onde estivemos? Para onde poderíamos ir? *RBLA, Belo Horizonte*, *12*(2), 233–248.

Braine, G. (Ed.) (1999). *Non-native educators in English language teaching.* Mahwah, NJ: Laurence Erlbaum.

British Council. (2014). 文部科学省と英語指導力向上事業で連携 [Cooperation with Monbukagaku-shô (MEXT) for the English leadership improvement project]. Retrieved from http://www.britishcouncil.jp/about/press/20140516-mext-teacher-training

Canagarajah, S. (1999). *Resisting English imperialism in English language teaching.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Cooper, (1989). *Language planning and social change.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

English, B., & Varghese, M. (2010). Enacting language policy through the facilitator model in a monolingual context in the United States. In K. Menken & O. Garcia (Eds.), *Negotiating language policies in schools: Educators as policymakers* (pp. 107-122). New York: Routledge.

Fujita-Round, S., & Maher, J. C. (2008). Language education policy in Japan. In S. May & N. H. Hornberger (Eds.), *Encyclopedia of Language and Education, 2nd Edition, Volume 1: Language policy and political issues in Education* (2nd ed., Vol. 1, pp. 393–404). Springer Science+Business Media LLC.

Gandara, P., & Rumberger, R. W. (2009). Immigration, language, and education: How does language policy structure opportunity? *Teachers College Record, 111*(3), 750-782.

Glasgow, G. P. (2014). Teaching English in English, 'in principle': The national foreign language curriculum for Japanese senior high schools. *International Journal of Pedagogies & Learning,* 9(2), 152-161.

Gorsuch, G. (2000). EFL educational policies and educational cultures: Influences on teachers' approval of communicative activities. *TESOL Quarterly, 43*(4), 675-710.

Gorsuch, G. (2001). Japanese EFL teachers' perceptions on communicative, audiolingual, and Yakudoku activities: The plan versus reality. *Education Policy Analysis Archives*, *9*(10).

Gottlieb, N. (2005). *Language and society in Japan.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Gottlieb, N. (2008). Japan: Language and planning in transition. In R. B. Kaplan & R. B. Baldauf (Eds.), *Language planning and policy in Asia* (pp. 102-169). Cleveton/Baffalo, U.S.: Multilingual Matters.

Gottlieb, N. (2012). *Language policy in Japan.* New York: Cambridge University Press.

Harvey, D. (2005). *A brief history of neoliberalism*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Hasegawa, Y. (2013). 日本の中等教育機関における英語以外の外国語教育の実情:「英語教育以外の外国語教育の実情調査」分析結果[The current situation of foreign language education other than English at the secondary school level in Japan].九州産業大学国際文化学部紀要[The Bulletin of Faculty of International Studies of Culture, Kyushu Sangyo University], *55*, 113-139.

Hashimoto, K. (2000). Internationalization is Japanisation. *Journal of Intercultural Studies, 21*(1), 39-51.

Hashimoto, K. (2009) Cultivating "Japanese who can use English": Problems and contradictions in government policy. *Asian Studies Review, 33*(1), 21-43.

Hashimoto, K. (2013). 'English-only', but not a medium-of-instruction policy: The Japanese way of internationalising education for both domestic and overseas students. *Current Issues in Language Planning, 14*(1), 16-33.

Heller, M., & Duchêne, A. (2012). Pride and profit: Changing discourses of language, capital and nation-state. In A. Duchêne & M. Heller (Eds.), *Language in late capitalism: Pride and profit* (pp. 1-21). New York, NY: Routledge.

Hiramasu, S. (2005). Contexts and policy reform: A case study of EFL teaching in a high school in Japan. In D. J. Tedick (Ed.), *Second language teacher education: International perspectives* (pp. 113-134). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Honnna, N., & Takeshita, Y. (2005). English language teaching in Japan: Policy plans and their implementations. *RELC Journal, 36*(3), 363-383.

Hornberger, N. H. (2006). Frameworks and models in language policy and planning. In T. Ricento (Ed.), *An introduction to language policy: Theory and method. Language and social change, 1* (pp. 24-41). Malden, MA: Blackwell.

Hu, G. (2005). English language education in China: Policies, progress, and problems. *Language Policy, 4*(1), 5-24.

Hu, G., & McKay, S. (2012). English language education in East Asia: Some recent developments. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development, 33*(4), 345-362.

Ishida, M., Jimbo, H., Hisamura, K., & Sakai, S. (2011). *Developing professional competences of English language teachers: From pre-service training to lifelong learning* (Vol. 7). Tokyo: Taishūkan Publishing Company.

JET Programme. (n.d.). *Welcome to the JET programme!* Retrieved from http://www.jetprogramme.org/e/introduction/index.html

Johnson, D. C. (2007). "Language policy within and without the School District of Philadelphia". *Dissertations available from ProQuest.* Paper AAI3260925.

Johnson, D. C. (2013). *Language policy.* New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Johnson, D. C., & Freeman, R. (2010). Appropriating language policy on the local level: Working the spaces for bilingual education. In K. Menken & O. Garcia (Eds.), *Negotiating language policies in schools: Educators as policymakers* (pp. 13-31). New York: Routledge.

Johnson, D. C., & Ricento, T. (2013). Conceptual and theoretical perspective in language planning and policy: Situating the ethnography of language policy. *International Journal of the Sociology of Language, 219*, 7-21.

Kachru, B. B. (1992). *The other tongue: English across cultures.* Urbana and Chicago, IL: University of Illinois Press.

Kaplan, R. B., & Baldauf, R. B. Jr. (2003). *Language and language-in-education planning in the Pacific basin.* Dordrecht, Netherland: Kluwer Academic Publishers.

Kato, K. (2009). Globalization and Japanese language policy. *Sophia Law Review*, *52*(3), 137-170

Kawai, Y. (2007). Japanese Nationalism and the global spread of English: An analysis of Japanese governmental and public discourses on English. *Language and Intercultural Communication*, *7*(1), 37–55.

Kikuchi, K., & Browne, C. (2009). English education policy for high schools in Japan: Ideals vs reality. *Regional Language Center Journal, 40*(2), 172-191.

Kobayashi, Y. (2007) TEFL policy as part of stratified Japan and beyond. *TESOL quarterly 41*(3), 566-571.

Kobayashi, Y. (2013). Global English capital and domestic economy: The case of Japan from the 1970s to early 2012. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development, 34*(1), 1-13.

Kubota, R. (1998). Ideologies of English in Japan. *World Englishes, 17*(3), 295-306.

Lamie, J. M. (2000). Teachers of English in Japan: Professional developments and training at a crossroads. *JALT Journal, 22*(1), 27-45.

Liddicoat, A. J. (2007). Internationalising Japan: Nihonjinron and the intercultural in Japanese language-in-education policy, *Journal of Multicultural Discourses, 2(1),* 32-46.

Lo Bianco, J. (2010). Language policy and planning. In N. H. Hornberger, & S. L. McKay (Eds.), *Sociolinguistics and language education* (pp. 143-176). Tonawanda, NY: Multilingual Matters.

Lo Bianco, J. (2013). Innovation in language policy and planning: Ties to English language education. In K. Heylland & L. L. C. Wong (Eds.), *Innovation and change in English language education* (pp. 139-154). New York: Routledge.

LoCastro, V. (1996). English language education in Japan. In H. Coleman (Ed.), *Society and the language classroom.* (pp. 40-58). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Llurda, E. (Ed.) (2005). *Non-native language teachers: Perceptions, challenges and contributions to the profession.* New York: Springer.

Matsumoto, (2009). 外国語教育と言語権[Foreign language education and language rights]. *Society of Language Communication Aichi Shukutoku University, 10*, 49-58.

May, S. (2005). Language rights: Moving the debate forward. *Journal of Sociolinguistic, 9*(3), 319-347.

McCarty, T. L., Romero-Little, M. E., Warhol, L., & Zepeda, O. (2010). Critical ethnography and indigenous language survival: Some new directions in language policy research and praxis. In T. L. McCarty (Ed.), *Ethnography and language policy* (pp. 31-51). New York: Routledge.

McGroarty, M. (2012). Multiple actors and arenas in evolving language policies. In J. W. Tollefson (Ed.), *Language policies in education: Critical issues* (pp. 35-60). New York: Routledge.

Medgyes, P. (2001). When the teacher is a non-native speaker. In M. Celce-Murcia (Ed.), *Teaching English as a Second or Foreign Language* (pp. 415-428). Boston, MA: Heinle & Heinle.

Ministry of Economy, Trade, and Industry. (METI). (2011). *An interim report of the council on promotion of human resource for globalization development.* Retrieved from http://www.kantei.go.jp/jp/singi/global/1206011interim_report.pdf

Monbukagaku-shô. (MEXT). (2002). 「英語が使える日本人」のための戦略構想 [A Strategic plan to cultivate "Japanese with English abilities"]. Retrieved from http://unpan1.un.org/intradoc/groups/public/documents/APCITY/UNPAN008142.htm

Monbukagaku-shô. (MEXT). (2003).「英語が使える日本人」の育成のための行動計画 [An Action plan to cultivate "Japanese with English abilities"]. Retrieved from http://unpan1.un.org/intradoc/groups/public/documents/APCITY/UNPAN008142.html

Monbukagaku-shô. (MEXT). (2008/2009) 高等学校学習指導要領 [The Courses of Study: Upper secondary school: English]. Retrieved from http://www.mext.go.jp/a_menu/shotou/newcs/youryou/1282000.htm

Monbukagaku-shô. (MEXT). (2011a). 国際共通語としての英語力向上のための５つの提言と具体的施策 [Five Proposals and Specific Measures for Developing Proficiency in English for International Communication (Provisional translation)]. Retrieved from http://www.mext.go.jp/component/english/__icsFiles/afieldfile/2012/04/11/13197071_1.pdf

Monbukagaku-shô. (MEXT). (2011b). 国際共通語としての英語力向上のための５つの提言と具体的施策に係る状況調査 [A survey on Five Proposals and Specific Measures for Developing Proficiency in English for International Communication (Provisional translation)]. Retrieved from http://www.mext.go.jp/component/english/__icsFiles/afieldfile/2012/07/09/1319707_1.pdf

Monbukagaku-shô. (MEXT). (2013). グローバル化に対応した英語教育改革実施計画 [English Education Reform Plan corresponding to Globalization]. Retrieved from http://www.mext.go.jp/a_menu/kokusai/gaikokugo/__icsFiles/afieldfile/2014/01/31/1343704_01.pdf

Monbukagaku-shô. (MEXT). (2014). 英語教育推進リーダー中央研修実施要項 retrieved from http://www.mext.go.jp/b_menu/shingi/chousa/shotou/102/102_1/shiryo/__icsFiles/afieldfile/2014/06/26/1348788_01.pdf

Monbukagaku-shô. (MEXT). (2015).日本人の海外留学状況について[The current situation of Japanese students studying abroad]. Retrieved from http://www.mext.go.jp/a_menu/koutou/ryugaku/__icsFiles/afieldfile/2015/03/09/1345878_01.pdf

Morizumi, F. (2012). 日本人にとって英語とは何か: 英語教育と言語政策 [What English language means to Japanese: English language education and language policies]. *Review of Asian and Pacific Studies, 37*, 139-151.

Morrison, K., & Lui, I. (2000). Ideology, linguistic capital and the medium of instruction in Hong Kong. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development, 21*, 471-486.

Nishino, T., & Watanabe, N. (2008). Communication oriented policies and classroom realities. *TESOL Quarterly, 42*(1), 133-138.

Nunan, D. (2003). The impact of English as a global language on educational policies and practices in the Asia-pacific region. *TESOL Quarterly, 37*(4), 589-613.

Oda, M. (2011). 英語教育をめぐる世論と専門家の役割 [The public opinions and roles of experts regarding English education]. 「論叢」玉川大学文学部紀要 ["Ronsō" The Bulletein, Faculty of Literature, Tamagawa University], *52*, 165-173.

Oda, M. & Takada, T. (2005). English language teaching in Japan. In G. Braine (Ed.), *Teaching English to the world: History, curriculum, and practice.* (pp. 93-101). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Okuno, H. (2007). A critical discussion on the action plan to cultivate "Japanese with English Abilities". *The Journal of Asia TEFL, 4*(4), 133-158.

Park, J. K. (2009). 'English fever' in South Korea: Its history and symptoms. *English Today, 25*(1), 50-57.

Park, S. J., & Abelmann, N. (2004). Class and cosmopolitan striving: Mothers' management of English education in South Korea. *Anthropological Quarterly, 77*(4), 645-672.

Pennycook, A. (1994). *The cultural politics of English as an international language.* New York: Routledge.

Pennycook, A. (2006). Postmodernism in language policy. In T. Ricento (Ed.), *An introduction to language policy: Theory and method. Language and social change, 1* (pp. 60-76). Malden, MA: Blackwell.

Phan, H. L. (2013). Issues surrounding English, the internationalization of higher education, and national cultural identity in Asia: A focus on Japan. *Critical Studies in Education, 54*(2), 160-175.

Phillipson, R. (1992). Linguistic imperialism. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Piller, I., & Cho, J. (2013). Neoliberalism as language policy. *Language in Society*, *42*(1), 23-44.

Ramanathan, V., & Morgan, B. (2007). TESOL and policy enactments: Perspectives from practice. Introduction to the special issue on language policy. *TESOL Quarterly*, 41(3), 447-463.

Rappa, A., & Wee. L. (2006). *Language policy and modernity in Southeast Asia (Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, and Thailand)*. New York: Springer.

Ricento, T. (2000). Historical and theoretical perspectives in language policy and planning. *Journal of Sociolinguistics, 4*, 196-213.

Ricento, T. (2006a). Theoretical perspectives in language policy: An overview. In T. Ricento (Ed.), *An introduction to language policy: Theory and method. Language and social change, 1* (pp. 3-9). Malden, MA: Blackwell.

Ricento, T. (2006b). Language policy: Theory and practice – an introduction. In T. Ricento (Ed.), *An introduction to language policy: Theory and method. Language and social change, 1* (pp. 10-23). Malden, MA: Blackwell.

Ricento, T. K., & Hornberger, N. H. (1996). Unpeeling the onion: Language Planning and Policy and the ELT Professional. *TESOL Quarterly, 30*(3), 401-427

Ruiz, R. (1984). Orientations in language planning. *NABE journal, 8*(2), 15-34.

Saito, R. (2007). 日本人と英語:もうひとつの英語百年史 [Japanese people and English language: Another hindered-year English history]. Tokyo: Kenkyūsha.

Samimy, K. K., & Kobayashi, C. (2004). Toward the development of intercultural communicative competence: theoretical and pedagogical implications for Japanese English teachers. *JALT Journal, 26*(2), 245-261.

Sato, K., & Kleinsasser, R. C. (2004). Beliefs, practices, and interactions of teachers in a Japanese high school English department. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 20,* 797-816.

Schiffman, H. (2006). Language policy and linguistic culture. In T. Ricento (Ed.), *An introduction to language policy: Theory and method. Language and social change, 1* (pp. 111-125). Malden, MA: Blackwell.

Schneer, D. (2007). (Inter)nationalism and English textbooks endorsed by the Ministry of Education in Japan. *TESOL Quarterly, 41*(3), 600–607.

Seargeant, P. (2008). Ideologies of English in Japan: the perspective of policy and pedagogy. *Language Policy*, *7*(2), 121–142.

Shimahara, N. K. (1995). Restructuring Japanese high schools: Reforms for diversity. *Educational Policy, 9*(2), 185-200.

Skutnabb-Kangas, T. (1999). Linguistic human rights: Are you naive or what? *TESOL Journal 8*(3), 6-12.

Spada, N. (2007). Communicative language teaching: Current status and future prospects. In J. Cummins & C. Davison (Eds.), *International handbook of English language teaching, 15* (pp. 271-288). Springer Science+Buisness Media, LLC.

Spolsky, B. (2004). *Language policy: Key topics in sociolinguistics.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Terasawa, T. (2012). The discourse of "Japanese incompetence in English" based on "Imagined Communities": A sociometric examination of Asia Europe Survey. *Journal of English as an International Language, 7*(1), 67–92.

Tollefson, J. W. (1989). Alien winds: The reeducation of America's Indochinese refugees. New York: Greenwood.

Tollefson, J. W. (1991). *Planning language, planning inequality: Language policy in the community.* New York: Longman.

Tollefson, J. W. (2002). Conclusion: Looking outward. In J. W. Tollefson (Ed.), *Language policies in education: Critical issues* (pp. 327-337). New York: Routledge.

Tollefson, J. W. (2006). Critical theory in language policy. In T. Ricento (Ed.), *An introduction to language policy: Theory and method. Language and social change, 1* (pp. 42-59). Malden, MA: Blackwell.

Tsui, A. B. M. (2006). Language policy and the social construction of identify: The case of Hong Kong. In A. B. M. Tsui & J. W. Tollefson (Eds.), *Language policy, culture and identity in Asian contexts* (pp. 121-141). New York: Routledge.

Tsui, A. B. M., & Tollefson, J. W. (2004). The centrality of medium of instruction policy in sociopolitical processes. In J. W. Tollefson & A. B. M. Tsui (Eds.), *Medium of instruction policies: Which agenda? Whose agenda?* (pp. 1-20). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Tsui, A. B. M., & Tollefson, J. W. (Eds.). (2006). *Language policy, culture and identity in Asian contexts.* New York: Routledge.

Tsuido, K. (2007) 日本の英語教育改革に関する一考察−JET Program を中心に [A study of English language education reform in Japan: Focusing on the JET Program]. *広島外国語教育研究* [*Hiroshima Gaikokugo Kyoiku Kenkyu*], *10*, 1-16

Valdés, G. (2005). Bilingualism, heritage language learners, and SLA research: Opportunities lost or seized? *The Modern Language Journal, 89*(iii), 410-426.