

English Language Teaching and Teacher Education in East Asia

The spread of English is so much an integral part of globalization that English has become an essential global literacy skill. In Asia, this poses immense challenges to governments and English language teaching and teacher education professions as they attempt to meet this demand for graduates with a high level of English proficiency. This volume examines English language education policies across ten Asian jurisdictions, the corresponding teacher education policies, and how these policies affect teachers and teacher educators. Each chapter covers a different jurisdiction and is written by scholar(s) engaged in the implementation of government policies on English language and teacher education, providing the reader with insiders' perspectives. It gives a fascinating glimpse into the remarkable similarities in the challenges posed to these countries and the critical issues that have emerged from the local responses despite their markedly different socioeconomic, political, cultural and historical backgrounds.

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English Language Teaching and Teacher Education in East Asia

Global Challenges and Local Responses

Edited by

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PREFACE

It is widely acknowledged that the spread of English is one of the key processes in globalization, so much so that English has become an essential global literacy skill. This process has been most strongly felt in East Asia, not least because its rapid rise as a major power in the world economy and world politics in recent decades necessitates mastery of this *de facto* lingua franca in global trade, politics, communication and education.

Much has been written about the sociocultural aspects of this phenomenon, including its impact on culture, language and identity. Much has also been written about its impact on English as a foreign or second language (or EFL/ESL) pedagogies, especially regarding the effectiveness of pedagogies imported from the West and how they should be adapted to local contexts. Relatively less has been written about the challenges posed to jurisdictions in the region and how their governments have responded to them. As we shall see in this volume, in the official discourses of these jurisdictions, competence in English has been constructed as intimately tied up with national missions of playing a leadership role in the world economy and in world politics, of revitalizing the national economy or, more modestly, of getting a nation out of poverty and oppression, and of transforming the individual's life. As some scholars have observed, this is a very heavy burden for teachers to bear as they are often held responsible by their governments for the realization of such lofty missions. I would further argue that the burden is no less heavy for teacher educators who are often held responsible for the quality of the teachers they produce. Therefore, this volume sets out to examine the English language education policies, the corresponding teacher education

policies that governments in these jurisdictions have formulated, and how these policies have impacted on teachers and teacher educators.

I invited contributions from scholars from ten jurisdictions in the region, *all of whom have been engaging, in one form or another, in the implementation of government policies on English language education and teacher education in their own jurisdictions*. I asked the authors of each chapter to outline and discuss the language landscapes in their respective jurisdictions and how the landscapes have been shaped by their respective cultural traditions, historical legacies and sociopolitical forces; the global challenges that their governments have faced and their responses to these challenges; the policies formulated and the implementation; and how *teachers* and *teacher educators* have responded to them. I also asked the authors of each chapter to outline what they see as the *critical issues* that have emerged from these responses. I hope that the first-hand experiences and insights provided in each chapter will help readers to gain a better understanding of the magnitude and complexity of the tasks presented to the English language teaching and teacher education profession.

Readers will note that the spelling conventions adopted in the chapters vary between UK and US English. I have retained the convention adopted in each chapter as it is a reflection of the variety of English that is accepted in the respective jurisdictions.

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