

Linguistics, Literature and Culture:  
Millennium Realities and Innovative  
Practices in Asia



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Practices in Asia

Edited by

Shakila Abdul Manan and Hajar Abdul Rahim

**CAMBRIDGE**  
**SCHOLARS**  

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**P U B L I S H I N G**

Linguistics, Literature and Culture:  
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## PREFACE

This is a book of essays, a gathering of minds and disciplines. It offers ideas from diverse backgrounds and nationalities, offering multiple perspectives on the various challenges, changes, and innovation in linguistics, literature and culture during the first decade of the twenty-first century. These scholars had first presented their chapters at the Inaugural International Conference on Linguistics, Literature and Culture (ICLLIC) organised by the School of Humanities, Universiti Sains Malaysia, Penang, in June 2010.

The chapters, sixteen in all, have focused their critical lens on the convergence of the global and the local and its implications to these disciplines. Negotiations and appropriations arising from this convergence are given due consideration. Some papers go further, and focus on new and refreshing ways to study non-canonical literary and film texts as well as other media texts. In this regard, the book provides a contemporary perspective as it has carved spaces for the discussion of other symbolic texts, apart from literary ones. The contemporary flavour of this book is further heightened via papers that showcase innovations in language teaching as a result of advances in technology and digital communication.

This is indeed a welcomed volume, a laudable attempt at capturing current realities and looming transformations in the discipline of English Language Studies. It will indeed serve as a useful reference guide to academics and researchers alike, mainly because of its inherent multi-disciplinarity and state of the art perspectives and perceptions.

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# INTRODUCTION

## REALITIES AND NEW PRACTICES IN LINGUISTICS, LITERATURE AND CULTURE IN ASIA

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### Introduction

The first decade of the new millennium has witnessed tremendous challenges, changes and innovations in various disciplines of knowledge. The main reason for this, one may argue, is globalisation and the inevitable impact it has had on humanity in general, and on knowledge in particular. Broadly speaking, globalisation refers to “an increasing level of interconnectedness between different parts of the world” resulting in “economic change as processes of production and consumption increasingly operate on a global scale” and “technological development,” the latter permitting “rapid communication across the world” and, concomitantly, the dissemination of “cultural practices.”<sup>1</sup> Importantly, globalisation bears an impact on “national, social and personal identities”<sup>2</sup> as they may be reconfigured and reconstructed over time. Although it is commonly believed that globalisation will result in “increasing homogeneity” or Westernisation, this is not necessarily true as it may also “give rise to attempts to maintain a range of local practices and identities,

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<sup>1</sup> Rajend Mesthrie and Joan Swann, “From Variation to Hybridity” In Janet Maybin and Joan Swann, *The Routledge Companion to English Language Studies* (New York, Routledge, 2010), 105.

<sup>2</sup> Mesthrie and Swann, “From Variation to Hybridity,” 105.

sometimes referred to as localization.”<sup>3</sup> Whatever the case may be, globalisation is a major social phenomenon which is also an agent of “glocalisation” (Robertson 1995) that connects the global and local in a productive and creative manner. The rise of these forces, particularly through technological developments and new media, is causing changes in many important areas of human life, creating new realities and raising issues of negotiations and appropriations as well as border-crossing phenomena in many areas of knowledge.

In the area of language, a reality that has become a global concern is the status of the English language as a “global language.” No longer the exclusive property of the British or the Americans, the English language has transcended borders and developed into new hybrids or “glocal” forms after negotiating the local languages and cultures. The unprecedented spread of English has also awakened local sensibilities in terms of language ownership. Canagarajah in his 2000 study, for instance, interprets the switching of English and Tamil in the English language classroom in a school in Jaffna, Sri Lanka as a response to the “global hegemony of Anglo-American ELT practices and local Tamil language policies.”<sup>4</sup> Interestingly, this scenario is also observable in other Asian countries such as Malaysia where studies have shown that switching frequently occurs between English and the local language. Perhaps, this holds true for many ESL classrooms around the globe, especially those which are caught between local nationalistic language policies and hegemonic Anglo-American derived ELT practices. Indeed, the tensions and contradictions arising from this forceful convergence is a changing reality with regard to the teaching and learning of English in many ESL contexts.

Yet another millennial reality which requires close scrutiny is the rise in cross-disciplinary work especially in the field of linguistics and literature. As regards linguistics, specific areas such as Critical Discourse Analysis have defied borders and formed close associations with Media Studies in order to show how the language of the media distorts reality and reinforces certain prevailing assumptions of the world, those that pertain to gender, class, ethnicity and minority groups. By the same token, literature is studied using ideas drawn from a number of critical theories and in tandem with Film and Cultural Studies. New ideas and perspectives generated from such creative collaborations have enabled the exploration of refreshing and alternative themes. Among them are the search for

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<sup>3</sup> Mesthrie and Swann, “From Variation to Hybridity,” 105.

<sup>4</sup> Cited in Mesthrie and Swann, “From Variation to Hybridity,” 105.

identity, the perils of ethnic politics and the complexities of nation formation, which also happen to be the central concerns of new writings in English in Asia. These realities and transformations have also impacted other fields of research such as Translation Studies.

The new realities, changes and innovations discussed above are the motivation behind the main concern of this book on emerging issues and approaches in linguistics, literature and culture in Asia. The book is divided into three parts with sixteen chapters in all. The first part, “Global meets Local,” comprises four chapters, the second part, “Realities and Innovations in Linguistics, Literature and Culture in Asia,” consists of seven chapters, while the last part “Innovations in Language Pedagogy” includes five chapters. While all three subthemes are equally important, the fact that there are more chapters under the second subtheme is an indication of the overwhelming concern and interest in the “new realities” in local and regional languages and literatures. The chapters will provide an alternative lens on the changes and challenges that are taking place in issues concerning language, literature and culture in Asia. It is hoped that they will provide the impetus for a further understanding of the meeting of global knowledge and global issues and their consequence on local and regional languages, literatures and cultures. In the following sections, we introduce the key issues and summarize the chapters that are included in each part.

## Global Meets Local

The synonymy of globalisation with homogenisation has met with much opposition from scholars, with Appadurai in particular arguing that “there is growing evidence that the consumption of the mass media throughout the world often provokes resistance, irony, selectivity, and in general, *agency* ... T-shirts, billboards, and graffiti as well as rap music, street dancing and slum housing all show that the images of the media are quickly moved into local repertoires of irony, anger, humour and resistance.”<sup>5</sup> Local cultures, as such, become the “sites of resistance” to globalization as they appropriate and transform Western cultural forms and practices to suit local needs and purposes. This is also reflected in the field of creative writing as writers from formerly colonised countries have appropriated the English language by blending it with local linguistic, verbal and cultural repertoires in order to produce a new variety of English

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<sup>5</sup> Paul Jay, “Beyond Discipline: Globalization and the Future of English,” *PML* 116 (1) (January 2001): 39.

and writing in order to express and “represent the reality of new situations.”<sup>6</sup> This “interplay between the encompassing—i.e. global—and particularizing—i.e. local—processes of change”<sup>7</sup> result in a glocal or hybridised form of writing, one which encourages the mixing and switching of languages, dialects, registers, genres etc. Together, they help to authenticate these writings and enhance their literariness or aesthetic appeal.

The glocal variety or localised variations of the English language, a product not just of globalisation but also of colonisation, is acquired and used by locals in various formal and informal situations and for a number of communicative purposes. As mentioned, the English language has defied borders and developed into new forms or varieties after negotiating the local languages and cultures. This scenario which exemplifies language contact in action clearly demonstrates that linguistic negotiations, appropriations and indeed changes are not one-way. Importantly, these have implications for language use, language choice, language policy and planning, literacy and pedagogy, identity and culture etc. In this regard, where Asia is concerned, the effect and impact of English on local languages, and their linguistics and culture are new realities that require further research and understanding. Likewise, research is also required to study the changes and shifts in minority languages in Asia. These are pertinent issues which will be further investigated in the first four chapters that study the interface of the global and the glocal.

Chapter One essentially shows how the forces of globalisation and modernisation and Arab nationalism shape the teaching of English for Medical Purposes (EMP) in an Arab Syrian University and the tensions and contradictions that arise out of this convergence. The paper suggests a reconfiguration of EMP that will better meet the students’ needs. In Chapter Two, an attempt is made to provide an acoustic analysis of the production of four rounded back vowels of two sets of respondents, a younger group of Malaysian females comprising different ethnic groups (MYF) and an older group of female Malaysian English speakers (MOF). These vowels are examined as studies have shown that their quality has changed in British English. Essentially, the aim is to find out whether there are any differences in terms of the vowel production of these two groups

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<sup>6</sup> Yamuna Kachru and Cecil L. Nelson, *World Englishes in Asian Contexts* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2006), 112.

<sup>7</sup> Allan James, “Theorising English and Globalisation: Semiodiversity and Linguistic Structure in Global English, World Englishes and Lingua Franca,” *Applied Language Studies* 3 (1) (2009), 79–92.



of respondents and how the production compares to other varieties of English. The focus of Chapter Three is on language shift and changes that are taking place with regard to an endangered language, the Papia Kristang or the Malacca Creole Portuguese, in the home domain. This creole language is spoken by the Kristang speech community at the Portuguese Settlement of Malacca. Chapter Four endeavours to examine language choice and the use of localised variations in a series of published anthologies of Malaysian short stories in English. This chapter clearly shows how the English language has been influenced and coloured by local languages.

### **Realities and Innovations in Linguistics, Literature and Culture in Asia**

With increasing globalisation and easy access to print material, there has been a steady increase of literary works written in English. These works, however, are not just produced in the metropolitan centres but beyond their shores. For instance, notable authors such as Salman Rushdie, Derek Walcott, Arundhati Roy, Nadine Gordimer and others are writing either in their own home countries or in “diasporic communities” in various parts of the world.<sup>8</sup> As a result, some English departments are shifting their attention from British and American literature to multicultural comparative literature or world literature in English. This shift has brought into the limelight authors from a number of ethnic and cultural backgrounds whose works are now being studied in schools and institutions of higher learning. With this, emphasis is no longer placed on canonical works and the discussion of the human condition, universal values and truths, but on issues that revolve around “difference,” with particular regard to race, class and gender.<sup>9</sup> The focus on “difference” is motivated, to a large extent, by developments in critical theories, in particular Marxist, feminist, deconstruction, postmodern theories etc. and social movements (civil, anti-war, women’s, gay and lesbian), the latter (social movements) centring their attention as well on issues of rights, race and gender distinction.<sup>10</sup> The emergence of critical theories resulted in a move from formalist criticism to “extrinsic criticism”<sup>11</sup> where the

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<sup>8</sup> Paul Jay, “Beyond Discipline: Globalization and the Future of English,” *PMLA* 116 (1) (January 2001): 33.

<sup>9</sup> Jay, “Beyond Discipline”, 33.

<sup>10</sup> Jay, “Beyond Discipline”, 33.

<sup>11</sup> J. Hillis Miller, *Effects of Globalization on Literary Study*,

emphasis is placed not just on the text, its use of textual devices and rhetorical strategies, but on the author, the context in which the text is written and the reader. These theories are used as tools to subvert texts and to deconstruct dominant ideologies that reinforce social injustices, race, class and gender inequalities.

With this, literature becomes engaged with social and political issues and is used to bring forth the empowerment of women, minority groups and those who have been colonised.<sup>12</sup> This paved the way for the development of cultural studies, film and women studies, gender studies, postcolonial studies, literatures in English, etc.<sup>13</sup> More importantly, with this, literature is redefined and broadened to include not just print material but all kinds of texts that have a representational potential. The dismantling of borders as a result of globalisation has also advanced cross-disciplinary work as the critical theories that are used to study literary texts are also used to examine non-print medium such as film and media texts. These theories are used to explore refreshing themes with particular regard to identity formation, subjectivity, feelings of dislocation and unhomeliness as a result of migration and the tensions resulting from the interfacing of the local and global. These are indeed changing realities of English Studies which will be the focus of Chapters Five through Eleven as they examine literary, film and media texts.

In Chapter Five, an attempt is made to study blogs written by young Malaysian females in order to find out how solidarity is negotiated using Martin and White's (2005) Appraisal Theory. Essentially, the aim is to ascertain the attitudinal colouring of discourse brought about by the use of evaluative language. The following chapter, Chapter Six, provides a comparative analysis of loyalty as portrayed by Helicanus in Shakespeare's *Pericles* (1607) and selected leaders in Malaysia during the political turbulence of 2008. The concept of loyalty that is utilised is drawn from Josiah Royce's work *The Philosophy of Loyalty* (1908). The study of women's autobiographies, in particular that of Shirley Lim's (1996) *Among the White Moonfaces: Memoirs of an Asian American Woman* (ATWM) and Amy Tan's (2004) *The Opposite of Fate : A Book of Musings* (TOOF) is the focus of discussion in the subsequent chapter.

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<http://litteraturhistorie.au.dk/fileadmin/www.litteraturhistorie.au.dk/forskning/forskningspublikati> (Accessed November 1, 2011).

<sup>12</sup> Professor J. Hillis Miller, "Effects of Globalization on Literary Study", <http://litteraturhistorie.au.dk/fileadmin/www.litteraturhistorie.au.dk/forskning/forskningspublikati> (Accessed November 1, 2011).

<sup>13</sup> Rob Pope, *The English Studies Book: An Introduction to Language, Literature and Culture* (London and New York: Routledge, 2002), 5.

These Asian American autobiographies are studied in order to reveal the tensions and conflicts faced by women as they make attempts to achieve their own sense of self and identity. Chapter Eight examines three of Apichatpong's feature films, namely *Blissfully Yours*, *Tropical Malady* and *Syndromes and a Century* to understand how he negotiates the global, the international vernacular of high modernist cinema, and the local, indigenous Thai culture, knowledge, identities and subjectivities in these films. This exploration is integral to our understanding of Apichatpong as an award-winning transnational cosmopolitan artist and filmmaker. Still on the subject of film, Chapter Nine studies a number of transnational Indian films, namely, *Fire* (1996), *Chutney Popcorn* (1999), *Nina's heavenly Delights* (2006), *I Can't Think Straight* (2008) and *The World Unseen* (2008) in order to find out how these films approach the issue of lesbianism to make it acceptable to both Indian and global audiences. Chapter Ten shows how Western theories, in particular that of Bakhtin's and Kristeva's are utilised to examine a non-Western text such as Kanagaki Robun's (1829–94) *The Story of the She-devil Takahashi Oden* (Takahashi Oden yasha monogatari, 1879). Chapter Eleven uses the postcolonial theories of Homi Bhabha and Kwame Appiah to explore the issue of unhomeliness and to provide a voice for the dispossessed in Brian Friel's *Translations*. This is of concern to Asian contexts if one considers the position of the displaced or the dispossessed under the paradigm of globalization.

## **Innovations in Language Pedagogy**

Advances in technology and digital communication have not just accelerated the pace of globalisation but they have also brought forth a number of implications for English education. For starters, instant messaging, text messaging and online blogging have transformed the teaching of writing in schools, as it is no longer viable for students to learn how to compose the conventional "five-paragraph essay" on paper but also how to use modern modes of writing such as websites, blogs, wiki, emails etc. to their advantage.<sup>14</sup> This necessitates their exposure to the features and conventions of these modern modes of writing and the need to use, apart from words, other meaning-making devices such as visuals, sound, symbols etc. to communicate their point of view. This is a changing reality of English language classrooms that will help to enhance students'

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<sup>14</sup> National Council of Teachers of English, "Globalization and English Education," <http://www.ncte.org/cee/2007summit/globalization> (Accessed November 20, 2011)

creativity and imaginative powers as well as skills needed to be effective global citizens who are in a position to utilise the benefits of technology to communicate with people across national borders. Because of globalisation and advances in communication technologies, the teaching of literacy skills in the classroom has also to be revolutionised. This is because information and new knowledge are not just obtained via the textbook or print material but also from other sources such as the World Wide Web, internet, television, radio etc. As such, reading classes should be used as a platform to inculcate important critical skills by exposing students to “global issues,” socio-economic and cultural realities and inequalities.<sup>15</sup> In this regard, an exposure to global warming, poverty in the third world, famine, race and gender discrimination, ethnic prejudices, improper planning and overzealous development, waste management etc. will prepare students to become thoughtful and critical citizens of the world as well as “meta-aware thinkers and communicators.”<sup>16</sup> In this globalised English language classroom, students should also be equipped with sound interpretive skills as they will be negotiating texts which are saturated with all kinds of connotative meanings, symbols and imageries. Some of these issues will be the pivotal concern in the last five chapters on language and pedagogy.

In Chapter Twelve, an effort is made to study Japanese learners of English to find out whether training them to pay attention to illustrations could improve their reading comprehension of texts. The study also explored the linguistic, cultural and attitudinal factors that may affect their ability to use illustrations effectively, or access and integrate background knowledge in general into their reading process. Chapter Thirteen uses Jenkins’ (2002) list of “core” and “non-core” sounds or “features” for the phonology of English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) to conduct an experiment in Japan and the Philippines to investigate the intelligibility of the personal narratives of two speaker groups (Japanese and American) based on the ratings of three listener groups (Filipino, Japanese and American). The experiment was conducted to ascertain the relationship between the intelligibility ratings of the listener group and Jenkins’ list of “non-core” features. The subsequent chapter examines the use and effects of dramatic dialogues on the intercultural competence of eighteen groups of pre-service English teachers. Chapter Fifteen shows how a Multiliteracies approach in an ESL secondary classroom can help students acquire new

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<sup>15</sup> National Council of Teachers of English, “Globalisation.”

<sup>16</sup> National Council of Teachers of English, “Globalisation.”

literacy skills to meet their real world needs. Chapter Sixteen, the final chapter, provides an insight into the cognitive processes of proficient and less proficient learners of the Japanese language in their attempts to understand video materials.

## Conclusion

The uniqueness of this book lies in its attempt to showcase original research in a variety of multicultural settings. Its multi-disciplinary approach will appeal to a wide spectrum of readers from diverse backgrounds. Additionally, the papers in this edited volume reflect “the state of the art” in the relevant individual fields as they examine issues resulting from the interface between the global and the local and their implications on language use, language choice, language policy and planning, identity, culture and pedagogy. In this connection, this book provides a competitive edge as the focus is not on English language per se but on the “varieties of English” or “Englishes” when the former transcends borders and appropriates local languages and cultures. This interface is also observed when Western critical theories are utilised to study new writings, media and film texts from Asia. It is envisaged that this book will serve as a useful reference that is both scholarly and informative for researchers as well as academics in the fields of language, linguistics and culture.

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## CHAPTER ONE

# EXPLORING TENSIONS IN TEACHING ENGLISH FOR MEDICAL PURPOSES WITHIN A UNIVERSITY CURRICULUM INFORMED BY ARAB NATIONALISM AND THE FORCES OF GLOBALISATION

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### **Abstract**

This chapter reports on initial findings of some aspects of a large-scale PhD research on the teaching and learning of English for Medical Purposes (EMP) in an Arab Syrian university. The forces of industrialization, urbanisation, modernisation, and globalisation were in play with Syria's Arab nationalism and impacted on the foreign language policy and practice. The inherent contradictions in the position of EMP in an Arab-medium university are unpacked and emergent language, students and teacher-related issues are presented to suggest possibilities for a reconceptualisation of EMP to better meet students' needs and rights. The data presented are collected through focus group interviews with students of medicine in a Syrian university and semi-structured interviews with policy makers and ESP teachers who have taught English in the Faculty of Medicine. Simultaneously, policy documents are analysed, English classes are observed and field notes are taken. The chapter concludes with suggestions for future research emerging from the findings of the analysis stage.

## Introduction

Harris *et al*<sup>1</sup> echo Appadurai's definition of the contested term "globalization" as "a dense and fluid network of global flows,"<sup>2</sup> the consequence of which also helps increase capital and human flow. As such, nation-states are no longer considered self-contained sites with stable populations sharing a common culture.<sup>3</sup> Globalization has changed the way we conceptualise language with English as its "accompanist."<sup>4</sup> It has raised issues of how language policy responds to it, especially in the case of the English language. According to Wallace,<sup>5</sup> "the future of English as a global language seems assured" and will continue to have an effect on foreign language policy and on the institutions and classrooms in which English for Academic Purposes (EAP) is carried out.<sup>6</sup> This has paved the way for critical EAP to link academic life to the changing global social-political and cultural context, where EAP teachers and students are "now collectively occupy [ing] global, interconnected spaces."<sup>7</sup>

In previous studies on education development, critical learning or learning to critique has tended to take over other approaches especially in

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<sup>1</sup> Roxy Harris, Constant Leung and Ben Rampton, "Globalization, Diaspora and Language Education in England," in D. Block and D. Cameron (eds). *Globalisation and Language Teaching* (London: Routledge, 2002), 29-46.

<sup>2</sup> Arjun Appadurai, "Disjuncture and Difference in the Global Cultural Economy," in M. Featherstone (ed). *Global Culture: Nationalism, Globalization and Modernity* (London: Sage, 1990), 295-310. See also Anthony Giddens, *The Consequences of Modernity* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1990); David Harvey, *Spaces of Hope* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2000); Claire Kramsch and Steve L. Thorne, "Foreign Language Learning as Global Communicative Practice," in D. Block and D. Cameron (eds). *Globalization*, 83-100.

<sup>3</sup> Arjun Appadurai, "Grassroots Globalization and the Research Imagination," in A. Appadurai (ed). *Globalization* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2005), 2-21.

<sup>4</sup> John Hanson, "The Mother of All Tongues," *Times Higher Education*, (July 1997)

<sup>5</sup> Catherine Wallace, "Local Literacies and Global Literacy," in D. Block and D. Cameron (eds). *Globalisation*, 101.

<sup>6</sup> Alastair Pennycook, "Introduction: Critical Approaches to TESOL," *TESOL Quarterly* 33 (1999): 329-348. See also Sarah Benesch, *Critical English for Academic Purposes: Theory, Politics and Practice* (Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 2001).

<sup>7</sup> Brian Morgan and Vaidehi Ramanathan, "Critical Perspectives and Language Education: Global and Local Perspectives," *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics* 25 (2005): 152.



higher education.<sup>8</sup> In English for academic purposes (EAP), the issues and challenges of the critical dimension have been engaged at theoretical and practical levels.<sup>9</sup> As EAP is an applied linguistics field, the primary reason for the inclusion of this element is derived from the work in critical linguistics and critical discourse analysis fields where understanding texts are set against analysing implicit factors.<sup>10</sup> Throughout its forty-year history, EAP has been influenced by linguistics, applied linguistics, sociolinguistics, communicative language teaching, writing across the curriculum, learning theory, and genre studies. In the last ten years, it has echoed Pennycook's critical approach to TESOL, which draws upon work in critical literacies. Critical applied linguistics (CAL) emerged as a way of thinking that rejects the traditional misconceptions about the complex political and ethical implications of language practices and the "positivistic ideals of neutrality and prioritization of efficiency and applicability."<sup>11</sup> Instead, in Pennycook's definition, CAL is "applied linguistics with an attitude." It is "problematization of the given, constant scepticism, and constant questioning of the normative assumptions of applied linguistics." In other words, it is making applied linguistics "*more politically accountable*."<sup>12</sup> Taking the problematization line implies the abandonment of structuralism where practices end up with generalizations.<sup>13</sup> The focus shifted to the situatedness of a case, questioning its issues, methods, conflicts, and power dynamics in its own way.<sup>14</sup> However, this version of applied linguistics was not highly welcomed by mainstream applied linguistics (AL). It was perceived as "alternative applied linguistics"

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<sup>8</sup> Richard Kiely, "Learning to Critique in EAP," *Journal of English for Academic Purposes* 3 (2004): 211.

<sup>9</sup> Mary R. Lea and Brian Street, "Student Writing in Higher Education: An Academic Literacies Approach," *Studies in Higher Education* 23 (2) (1998), 157–172. See also Suresh Canagarajah, *Resisting Linguistic Imperialism in English Teaching* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999); Benesch, *Critical English*; Ken Hyland and Liz Hamp-Lyons, "EAP: issues and directions," *Journal of English for Academic Purposes* 1 (1) (2002): 1–12.

<sup>10</sup> Norman Fairclough, *Critical Discourse Analysis: The Critical Study of Language* (London: Longman, 1995).

<sup>11</sup> Ahmed Kabel, "Native-Speakerism, Stereotyping and the Collusion of Applied Linguistics," *System* 37 (1) (2009): 12–22.

<sup>12</sup> Alastair Pennycook, *Critical Applied Linguistics* (Philadelphia: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 2001), 90.

<sup>13</sup> Matt Carlson, "A Critical Look at the Construction of Power Between Applied Linguistics and Critical Applied Linguistics," *International Journal of Applied Linguistics* 14 (2) (2004): 177.

<sup>14</sup> Carlson, "A Critical Look," 177

separated from the more powerful mainstream AP which is about “the amelioration of language problems.”<sup>15</sup> CAL is “marginal to the applied-linguistics enterprise.” The justification is based on postmodern critiques which do not fit CAL into “real-world problems in which language is a central issue.”<sup>16</sup>

The emphasis on curriculum and instruction at the expense of research and theory in the ESP/EAP fields triggered later work which echoed critical applied linguistics ideologies.<sup>17</sup> The early work of Phillipson’s “ideology of political purity”<sup>18</sup> and Benesch’s “ideology of pragmatism”<sup>19</sup> ignited the questioning of the “political quietism” of the language teaching context. They identified the need for discussions of “funding, curricular choices, roles ascribed to teachers and students, and the goals of English teachings in institutions and societies.”<sup>20</sup> Following earlier studies,<sup>21</sup> which challenged the academic “discourse of neutrality,” the homogeneity of academic writing etc., Benesch challenged the assumptions and pragmatism of current EAP practice, the promotion of EAP as “service English”<sup>22</sup> and the status of EAP teachers at the bottom of academic hierarchy.<sup>23</sup>

Research in the area of ESP/EAP has mainly evolved around needs-analysis and classroom pedagogy.<sup>24</sup> Similarly, in the Syrian context, a

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<sup>15</sup> Alan Davies, *An Introduction to Applied Linguistics* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1999), 20.

<sup>16</sup> Davies, *An Introduction*, 142.

<sup>17</sup> Benesch, *Critical English*.

<sup>18</sup> Robert Phillipson, *Linguistic Imperialism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992).

<sup>19</sup> Sarah Benesch, “ESL, Ideology, and the Politics of Pragmatism,” *TESOL Quarterly* 27 (1993): 705–717.

<sup>20</sup> Benesch, *Critical English*, 41.

<sup>21</sup> Paul Prior, *Writing Disciplinarity: A Sociohistoric Account of Literate Activity in the Academy* (Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 1998). See also Lea and Street, “Student Writing in Higher Education,” 157–172; Joan Turner, “Academic Literacy and the Discourse of Transparency,” in C. Jones, J. Turner, and B. Street (eds). *Students Writing in the University: Cultural and Epistemological Issues* (Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 1999), 149–160.

<sup>22</sup> John Swales, “Service English Program Design and Opportunity Cost,” in R. K. Johnson (ed). *The Second Language Curriculum* (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 79–90.

<sup>23</sup> Ann M. Johns, “L1 Composition Theories: Implications for Developing Theories of L2 Composition,” in B. Kroll (ed). *Second Language Writing: Research Insights for the Classroom* (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 24–36.

<sup>24</sup> Rodney D. Huddleston, *The Sentence in Written English: A Syntactic Study Based on an Analysis of Written Texts* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press,

limited number of research studies<sup>25</sup> was carried out in the field of ESP and was mainly situated in mainstream ESP with primary focus on needs-analysis, course design, materials and curriculum development and other pedagogical concerns. As Biesta defines education as “a moral practice, rather than a technical one,” attempts to go beyond the “technicist” approach to ESP would open up possibilities of showing other issues of the complex ESP.<sup>26</sup>

Regarding the Syrian case, research in ESP/EMP has more than functional pedagogical concerns as far as Arabisation and Arab-nationalism are concerned. In the era of globalisation and the spread of English as a global and international language, the country has retained its

1971). C.D Johnson, Presentation to the Beirut conference on Adult English for National Development. *Proceedings of Conference on Adult English for National Development*, (Beirut: Centre for English Language Research and Teaching, the American University of Beirut, 1971), 63–73. See also Peter Strevens, *New Orientations in the Teaching of English* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977); Tom Hutchinson and Alan Waters, *English for Specific Purposes: A Learning-Centred Approach* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987); J.M. Swales, *Episodes in ESP* (Hemel Hempstead: Prentice Hall International, (1988); Malcolm J Benson, “The Academic Listening Task: A Case Study,” *TESOL Quarterly* 23 (1989): 421–445; R.R Jordan, “English for Academic Purposes (EAP),” *Language Teaching* 22 (33) (1989): 150–164; Ann M. Johns and Tony Dudley-Evans, “English for Specific Purposes: International in Scope, Specific in Purpose,” *TESOL Quarterly* 25 (1991): 297–314; Vijay K Bhatia, *Analysing Genre: Language Use in Professional Settings* (Essex: Longman, 1993).

<sup>24</sup> Benesch, “ESL, Ideology, and the Politics of Pragmatism,” 705–717; Tony Dudley-Evans and Maggie J. St John, *Developments in English for Specific Purposes* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998); Hyland and Hamp-Lyons, “EAP: Issues and Directions,” 1–12.

<sup>25</sup> Ahmad .K Mleiki, “An Integrative Approach to Syllabus Design for Teaching English as a Foreign Language” (PhD diss., University College Cork. Ireland, 1997). See also Naima Ghanem, “Syllabus Design and Learners’ Needs in the Faculty of Arts at Tishreen University, with Special Reference to ESP” (MA diss., Tishreen University. Syria, 2001); Awras Othman, “Identifying the Students’ English language Needs at the Language Teaching Institute in Tishreen University” (MA diss., Tishreen University. Syria, 2003); Dima Farhat, “Investigation into the Status of Teaching Business English Listening at Tishreen University in Syria” (MA diss., University of Warwick. United Kingdom, 2007); Nidal.S Wureidah, “A Framework for Designing English Materials for Legal Purposes Based on the Student’s Needs at the Faculty of Law, Damascus University” (PhD diss., Aleppo University. Syria, 2008).

<sup>26</sup> Gert J.J Biesta, “Why ‘What Works’ Won’t Work. Evidence-Based Practice and the Democratic Deficit of Educational Research,” *Educational Theory* 57 (1) (2007): 7.

national language (Arabic) as the medium of instruction in education at all levels. In theory, Syria has prided itself on teaching medicine in Arabic, standing out as the only country in the Arab world which has maintained Arabic as the only language of instruction in all state medicine institutions since 1919. This policy contributed to eliminating threats to local languages or “linguistic imperialism” and other critical issues raised by scholars such as Phillipson<sup>27</sup> and Skutnabb-Kangas<sup>28</sup> who research language rights and right to education in the mother tongue. The impact of globalisation, as reflected in the recent foreign language policy (see section 2), patriotism and Arab nationalism also play a role in Syria that could be manifested in the Arabisation of medicine and science.

### **Pan-Arab Nationalism**

The present ruling ideology in the country entails that “all Syrians manifest an intense patriotism ... championing pan-Arab nationalism and proposing unification of all Arab countries into one Arab nation stretching from the Atlantic Ocean to the Arabian Sea, transcending what are regarded as arbitrary and artificial borders drawn by Ottoman or European colonial rulers.”<sup>29</sup> The Arab world is mainly Muslim but Syrians were aware that using Islam as the “defining criterion of Arabism” could arouse discrimination and offence to the other Syrian religious minorities. Adopting a “secular” rather than “religious” attitude, Syrians stressed the notion of the “cultural heritage of all Arabs,” “the Arabic language” which obviously constituted the root of Arab nationalism alongside the united antipathy toward Zionism among Arabs regardless of their ethnic or religious background.<sup>30</sup>

In the post-independence era (1946), the following changes in the educational system and foreign language policy occurred, impacted by the political changes in the country,

- (a) The Arabisation of school and university education in 1946. Arabic became the medium of instruction for all subjects.

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<sup>27</sup> Robert Phillipson, *Linguistic Imperialism*.

<sup>28</sup> Tove Skutnabb-Kangas, *Linguistic Genocide in Education—Or Worldwide Diversity and Human Rights?* (Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum, 2000).

<sup>29</sup> Thomas Collelo (ed), *Syria: A Country Study* (Washington: GPO for the Library of Congress, 1987), 59.

<sup>30</sup> Collelo, *Syria*, 59.

- (b) The introduction of English language for the first time in the same year. This was when a decision was taken that English should replace French as the first foreign language and links with the occupying nation should be minimized.<sup>31</sup>

In the French-controlled country, English had no status until the end of the French mandate in 1946. English became the first foreign language in Syria. French continued to be taught in schools and universities as an optional foreign language subject while English attracted the majority of the Syrians as their first foreign language due to the growing interest in it as the world language of business, technology, science and communication. The rationale behind the shift to Arabic instead of French as medium of instruction conformed with the call for “national unity and the sense of belonging historically to the Arab World” and the need to enable students “to understand more fully and easily subject-matter which was currently taught in French.”<sup>32</sup>

This policy has continued since independence until the present, consistently prioritizing Arabisation and Arabic in all state fields. Emphasis on Arab nationalism is reflected in the Syrian constitution which is based on principles such as:

The march toward the establishment of a socialist order besides being a necessity stemming from the Arab society's needs, is also a fundamental necessity for mobilizing the potentialities of the Arab masses in their battle with Zionism and imperialism.<sup>33</sup>

## Arabisation

Education in Syria is socialist as stated in Article 23 of the Constitution,

- (1) The nationalist socialist education is the basis for building the unified socialist Arab society. It seeks to strengthen moral values, to achieve the higher ideals of the Arab nation, to develop the society, and to

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<sup>31</sup> Mleiki, “An integrative approach,” 29.

<sup>32</sup> Ammar I. Sandouk, “Teaching English as a Foreign Language in the Third World university: A Study of the Problems of Linguistic Standards in Literature-based Courses with Particular Reference to Damascus University” (PhD diss., University of East Anglia. United Kingdom, 1992), 2.

<sup>33</sup> International Constitutional Law (ICL) “Syria-Constitution”, <http://www.servat.unibe.ch/icl/sy00000.html> (Accessed August 25, 2010), 1.

serve the causes of humanity. The state undertakes to encourage and to protect this education.<sup>34</sup>

Arabisation is deemed “a political decision” in the sense that it embraces “taking one united stance towards a scientific and educational decision that serves the movement of science and technology” without disregarding the value of the foreign language learning.<sup>35</sup> Arabisation was launched in Syria in 1919 in Damascus University which, at that time, had only two faculties; Law and Medicine. Ever since, Arabic in higher education has been rooted as a “science and national pride.”<sup>36</sup> The Faculty of Medicine in Damascus has been a pioneer in coining terms and dictionaries, writing books in Arabic which means that the Arabic language is sufficient enough to compete with other languages once its speakers keep loyal to its use.<sup>37</sup>

The Arabisation movement in Syria believed in the Arabisation of education at primary and tertiary level. The Arab Academy in Syria, officially established in 1919, is the oldest academy of its sort in the Arab world. It is concerned with enhancement of the Arabic language in education and services and it has played a vital role in the Arabisation movement to restore Arabic to a state before the influence of the Ottoman language, and French during the French Mandate.<sup>38</sup> Arabisation and the importance of Arabic are intertwined topics; extensively researched and published in Arabic medical journals (e.g. *The Arabisation of Medicine Journal*, where a special section is dedicated to the Arabic language topic, its role and importance. Alongside research studies on Arabisation, other studies in Arab countries and the world were carried out on the negative impact of the use of foreign language in education especially in teaching science and technology. It generates a feeling of inferiority in students that can last a lifetime and the feeling that science and technology are monopolized by the West which creates the feeling of constant depression and national deficiency<sup>39</sup> Macedo, Dentrinos & Gounari approach

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<sup>34</sup> International Constitution Law, 1

<sup>35</sup> Said M. Al-Haffar, “Arabisation of Higher Education. Experience and Difficulties in the Light of the Syrian case of Arabisation,” Overview Presented at the *Conference of Arabisation of Medicine and Medical Sciences Teaching in the Arab World. Bahrain, February 16-18*. (Qatar: Qatar University, 1993), 19–20.

<sup>36</sup> Al-Haffar, “Arabisation”, 15.

<sup>37</sup> Al-Haffar, “Arabisation”, 19–20.

<sup>38</sup> Arab Academy, Syrian Arab Republic. 2010. *Establishment- continued*, <http://www.arabacademy.gov.sy/establish3.aspx>. (Accessed July 25, 2011). (In Arabic)

<sup>39</sup> Al-Haffar, “Arabisation” 27.