

The Ideology of English-as-the-global-language in Taiwan's Private English Language Schools

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Abstract

English is regarded as a key to globalization or internationalization and future success for Taiwan and its people. One of the most extraordinary results of English-as-the-global-language of English teaching and learning in Taiwan is private English language schools are ubiquitous. Research into how private English language schools weld together English-as-the-global-language and English teaching and learning has yet received much attention. This study aims to investigate how Taiwan's private English language schools' television commercials market English-as-the-global-language and what the underlying ideologies of English-as-the-global-language are. Exploring the ideology of English-as-the-global-language, Critical Discourse Analysis was employed herein to analyze 106 private English language school television commercials produced from 2000 to 2020 in Taiwan. The results indicate that English as the key to internationalization and future success is an ideology. Moreover, the ideological concept of English-as-the-global-language is central to English teaching and learning ideologies in Taiwan, such as an early start in English learning, English-only as the ideal English teaching method, and native-speaker norms in English teaching and learning.

Keywords: Critical Discourse Analysis, English-as-the-global-language, ideology, private English language

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Introduction

This study's central argument is that the ideologies of English teaching and learning in Taiwan's private English language schools arise from the view of English as the key to internationalization. The ideology identified in this study is English-as-the-global-language, which has become a fundamental driving force for English language learning in Taiwan, especially following Taiwan's entry into the World Trade Organization (WTO hereafter) in 2001. English-as-the-global-language refers to English being regarded as a tool for Taiwan to achieve economic growth, social modernization, and internationalization. For Taiwanese people, English language mastery is viewed as the key to improving their life and guaranteeing their future success in Taiwan or globally.

Taiwanese people who want to learn English can easily locate a private English language school, which refers to those that provide general English courses for different age groups without being geared for academic tests (e.g., secondary school or university entrance exams). Studying English at a private English language school is a widespread phenomenon and a necessary part of life for many Taiwanese people (Chang, 2012; Hsu, 2008; Tsai, 2020). This phenomenon stems from inadequate English language instruction in public schools that has caused private English language schools have become ubiquitous in Taiwan (Chou, Wang & Ching, 2012; Chung, 2016; Wu, 2014). This phenomenon also implies that English is viewed as a commodity. English as a commodity reflects that English has been marketed as a commodity by sellers (private English language schools) to persuade their customers (English language learners) to purchase this desirable commodity, English. Therefore, English teaching and learning cannot be viewed from educational perspectives but rather from economic ones. Moreover, for the past two decades, the assertions of English language policies in Taiwan have been based on English as the key to a better life and future in the context of globalization or internationalization. Li and Lee (2004) comment English is valued for its economic rewards. English has developed into a form of linguistic capital in Taiwan.

To investigate the ideological concept of English-as-the-global-language, Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA hereafter) was employed in this study to analyze 106 Taiwan's private English language school's television commercials, which were collected from 2000 to 2020. The purpose of this study is to investigate how English-as-a-global-language has been viewed for the past two decades in Taiwan as a panacea and how the use of English has been associated with an ideology that encompasses future success and internationalism. To the best of my knowledge, there exist no published works exploring how private English language school television commercials market English-as-the-global-language and how these commercials construct and project ideologies of English-as-the-global-language.

Based on the purpose of this study, the following research questions need to be answered:

- (1) How is English being marketing as a valued commodity and a key for internationalization and future success in private English language schools' television commercials?
- (2) What are the underlying ideologies of English-as-the-global-language in Taiwan?

There are two research objectives of the present study, first is to alert Taiwanese people who believe that English is a panacea for future success and the key to internationalization to

reconsider this viewpoint critically. Second, it is hoped that Taiwanese people need to be aware of and escape the underlying ideologies of English-as-the-global-language.

Literature Review

This literature review deals with English proficiency being regarded as a form of linguistic capital in English language policies and the proliferation of private English language schools in Taiwan.

Bourdieu (1986) distinguished four forms of capital: economic, social, symbolic, and cultural. Economic capital refers to material assets such as money or property. Social capital refers to factors that function effectively in social groups, such as connections, networks, and so on. Wacquant (2008) pointed out that symbolic capital (honor, prestige, recognition, etc.) is not perceived much by people but is regarded as a crucial power source. Loos (2000) explained that linguistic capital is one of the forms of cultural capital (competence, knowledge, skills, etc.) that provides its holders with symbolic power. Flynn (2015) stated that “the position of English as a language that dominates discourse on a global scale imbues the English language with an immeasurable weighting of symbolic capital” (p.157). English as a linguistic capital and globalization are inextricably linked in the contemporary world (Harwood & Lai, 2017; Gerhards, 2014; Schroedter & Rössel, 2021; Roth, 2019).

English has been viewed as linguistic capital in many English as Foreign Language countries (EFL hereafter) (Alm, 2003; Cameron, 2012; Gerhards, 2014; Harwood & Lai, 2017; Loos, 2000; Nino-Murcia, 2003; Park, 2011; Roth, 2019). Taiwan is no exception. Lan (2011) and Li and Lee (2004) asserted that English competence constitutes a form of linguistic capital in Taiwan. Based on Bourdieu's theory, if Taiwan's people possess English language competence, it helps them achieve future success with higher social status while raising Taiwan's international competitiveness and accelerating Taiwan's internationalization progress. Consequently, the Taiwanese people and government are willing to invest capital in English learning because they support the concept of English-as-the-global-language providing them with economic, cultural, social, and symbolic capital or power. In other words, the possession of English is an issue of power or stratification, which is an ideology since English teaching and learning are viewed not being from an educational perspective.

The concept of linguistic capital is also demonstrated in Taiwan's English language policies. They emphasize the economic benefits by concentrating on English proficiency as essential to global or international competitiveness. In a nutshell, Taiwanese English language policies are based on promoting English as the key to internationalization (Hsieh, 2010; Lin & Wu, 2015; Tsao, 2008; Zhong, 2013). It is imperative to discuss how English language policies in Taiwan respond to internationalization and why these policies have resulted in the proliferation of private English language schools for English learners of all ages. This process is not necessarily beneficial. The English language policies since Taiwan's accession to the WTO in 2001 are discussed below.

To promote Taiwan's internationalization, the Ministry of Education (MOE hereafter) started English instruction for all elementary school 5th graders in 2001 and 3rd graders in 2005. Moreover, the purpose of English education for elementary, junior high, and senior high schools

is to help students foster a global or international perspective with English as the key (Lu, 2011). Another important policy is a six-year national development plan, Challenge 2008 (Ministry of Education, Taiwan, 2006), launched in 2002. The government hoped to promote internationalization through learning English and increasing the entire population's English ability. Under this plan, English would be made a quasi-official language. The Intelligent Taiwan – Manpower Cultivation Project (Ministry of Education, Taiwan, 2010) was implemented over seven years from 2010 to 2016. Its primary aims were to utilize English proficiency to raise Taiwan's global competitiveness for promoting internationalization. Developing Taiwan into a Bilingual Nation by 2030, the most recent English policy, was issued in 2018 by the National Development Council (National Development Council, Taiwan, 2018). Two primary goals of this policy are to improve Taiwanese people's English ability and enhance Taiwan's overall international competitiveness.

The ultimate goal of these English policies is to achieve internationalization. It is presumed that Taiwanese people will have a better life and a more prosperous future if they possess a good command of English. If Taiwanese people have English proficiency, Taiwan will increase its global or international competitiveness. When English is viewed as linguistic capital, the government is usually willing to promote English education. Unfortunately, despite the vast amount of money spent and great effort made on English education by the Taiwanese government, the results of these policies have not proven beneficial (Hsieh, 2010; Zhong, 2013). The implementation of English language policies has not improved Taiwanese people's English proficiency (Hsieh, 2010; Lin & Chou, 2011; Zhong, 2013). Taiwanese people's English ability remains rated "low" based on English First (EF) Global English Proficiency Index and is falling behind most of their counterparts in EFL countries in Asia (Everington, 2018). One of the most extraordinary results of these policies is that the number of private English language schools has continued to increase rapidly since these policies were launched. According to the Short-Term Tutorial Center Information and Management System (Ministry of Education, Taiwan, 2019), in 2000, there were 792 registered private English language schools, and in 2001 a year after Taiwan acceded to WTO, there were 1,277. In 2019, there were 3,795 schools. The number of private English language schools is increasing rapidly (a 479% rise in the past 20 years), while the number of primary and junior high school students in the public school system has decreased every year. In 2001 there were 2,861,229, and in 2019, there were 1,778,581 primary and junior high school students (Executive Yuan, the Republic of China, 2020). The primary beneficiaries of English language policies or educational reforms in Taiwan are cram schools or private language schools (Lee, 2008; Tsai, 2020; Zhong, 2013). English language teaching and learning in private English language schools in Taiwan is a lucrative business.

While private English language schools are widely viewed as making an essential contribution in improving Taiwanese people's English proficiency, there is a general lack of research on private English language schools (Chang, 2016; 2017). Moreover, research into English teaching and learning ideologies in the context of internationalization in Taiwan is very scant (Lin & Wu, 2015; Lu, 2011; Zhong, 2013). Besides, the media discourse used by private English language schools in Taiwan that possess ideological functions of English language teaching and learning has not yet been well researched (Chang, 2016; 2017). This study aims to fill the research gap by exploring ideologies of English-as-the-global-language by examining the television commercials used by private English language schools in Taiwan.

Methods

Critical Discourse Analysis

CDA is used to investigate how social inequalities are established in discourses. CDA often focuses on media text, and “critical linguists go one step further in looking more closely at the social forces behind the linguistic persuasion” (Mesthrie, Swann, Deumert & Leap, 2000, p. 327). Vestergaard and Schroder (1985) pointed out that “Advertising can be expected to reflect pretty closely the current trends and value systems of a society” (p.10). To explore how the close interrelationship between private English language schools and Taiwanese society is reflected in such discourses, the most well-known CDA theoretical framework, Fairclough's (1992) three-dimensional discourse model, was employed in this study. The three-dimensional model refers to the analysis of language texts, discourse practice, and social practice. How this model was employed in this study is illustrated in the Data Analysis section.

Data Collection

In this study, 106 television commercials containing the concept of English-as-the-global-language were collected from 2000 to 2020. The commercials were broadcast on leading television stations in Taiwan and were recorded from television stations or downloaded from schools' websites or YouTube. The definition of English-as-the-global-language refers to English as a tool for globalization or internationalization, which is viewed as the preferred path to future success for Taiwan and its people (see Introduction).

Data Analysis

To protect school identities, the symbol “XXX” replaces language school names, websites, and phone numbers. Translation of Mandarin Chinese (written and spoken texts) into English is underlined.

The First Dimension: Text Analysis (Description)

In this study, ‘text’ refers to written and spoken texts and moving images in television commercials. Take TC13 (produced in 2003) as an example.

TC13 starts with a giant inflatable globe with the XXX school name on it. In front of the globe, there are flags of different countries. A young female Caucasian wearing the XXX language school T-shirt and six Taiwanese children in different country costumes are standing in front of the flags in a classroom. The group of Taiwanese children wearing XXX English language school T-shirts sitting at a big table are looking at the female Caucasian and six Taiwanese children with different countries' costumes. The female Caucasian says, “Welcome to XXX (school name)! It is XXX (school name) to the world.” The group of children sitting at the table shout with all their might, “We are XXX (school name) family.” 國際視野 (international perspectives) in Mandarin Chinese appearing at the bottom of this commercial from the beginning to the very end. The commercial ends with the school name and logo.

The Second Dimension: Processing Analysis (Interpretation)

The focal point of this dimension analysis is how private language schools market English-as-the-global language through written and spoken languages and images or moving images. Jewitt and Oyama (2001) pointed out that images are used as records of people, places, things, actions, or events in visual analysis. The following is an example (TC13) of the second dimension analysis.

There are two parts in the second analysis: written and spoken texts and moving images. One written and one spoken text were found in TC13. The spoken text by the female Caucasian or the English teacher: "It is XXX (school name) to the world." which straightforwardly tells the audience that English is a valued commodity for it is the key to the world. The written text 國際視野 *international perspectives* appeared in the commercial from the beginning to the end directly and constantly telling its audience that English learning enables them to gain international perspectives.

As far as moving images in TC13 are concerned, not only the enormous inflatable globe (*symbolic – things*) but also the flags of different countries (*symbolic – things*) and children in costumes of different countries (*symbolic – things*) symbolize the world or global village. The language school name on the globe means English is the global language; the group of Taiwanese children (*symbolic – people*) wearing the language school T-shirts in an English classroom (*symbolic – places*) looking at their female Caucasian English teacher (*symbolic – people*) and six Taiwanese children with different country costumes (*symbolic – things*). The commercial's moving images imply that for Taiwanese children to learn English with a Caucasian or native speaker signifies entering the world (*Symbolic – actions/events*).

In sum, written and spoken texts and moving images were used in the commercial to signal to viewers that learning English from a Caucasian English teacher for Taiwanese children is the key to gaining international perspectives.

The Third Dimension: Social Analysis (Explanation)

The third dimension focuses on connecting private English language schools and Taiwanese society. English language schools' presentation of written and verbal language and moving images in TC13 is intentionally employed to convey the ideological concept of English-as-the-global-language. How the ideology of English-as-the-global-language is manifested in commercials and how this ideology is associated with other ideologies in Taiwan are presented in the Discussion section.

Findings

Written and Spoken Texts

A total of 209 written and spoken texts (Tables one and two) were found in the data on marketing English-as-the-global-language. These texts can be put into two categories: *English as a valued commodity* (133 texts) and *purposes of English learning* (76 texts).

Table 1. *English as a valued commodity*

English means	2000 – 2009	2010 – 2019	2020	Texts
The key to the world	16	28	4	48
A bright future	4	25	2	31
Success	3	26	0	29
International competitiveness	0	10	0	10
Self-improvement	2	7	0	9
An asset	0	5	0	5
Competitiveness in general	1	0	0	1

Total texts	26	101	6	133
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Table 2. *Purposes of English learning*

English learning	2000 – 2009	2010 – 2019	2020	Texts
Enabling you to gain international perspectives	7	19	0	26
Fulfilling your dream	7	11	1	19
Making you best in different fields	5	8	0	13
Enabling you to become a part of the elite in Taiwan or the world	3	5	0	8
Enabling you to travel around the world	2	5	0	7
Leading you to a new wonderful life	1	2	0	3
Total texts	25	50	1	76

Table one indicates that English-as-the-global-language is viewed as a high-value product for English learners since English is presented as signifying the key to globalization or internationalization, a bright future, success, self-improvement (such as confidence, and so on), as an asset for hope, knowledge, opportunities, and competitiveness (international or in general). English is regarded as a panacea for overall future success nationally or internationally. English is a highly valued commodity; Table two demonstrates that private English language schools promote English learning as an essential tool for multiple purposes or future success, such as becoming elite in Taiwan or the world, attaining world perspectives, fulfilling learners' dreams, and so on. The written and spoken texts in Tables 1 and 2 illustrate that English is presented as the global language, a high-valued commodity or linguistic capital and that learning English is imperative.

Moving Images

A total of 571 images (Table three) containing the ideological concept of English-as-the-global-language were put into four categories: *People* (241 images), *Action/Events* (124 images), *Places* (104 images), and *Things* (102 images).

Table 3. *English-as-the-global-language in moving images*

Category	2000 – 2009	2010 – 2019	2020	Texts
Symbolic – People	60	176	9	245
Symbolic – Actions/ Events	28	91	5	124
Symbolic – Places	23	77	4	104
Symbolic – Things	18	78	6	102
Total images	129	422	24	575

Children (113 images: elementary school children, 78; preschool children 35) and adults (132 images: Caucasians 82; Taiwanese parent: 16, local English: teachers 13, Taiwanese adult 13, Taiwanese celebrity 8) are used in the commercials. Children and adults play a crucial role in the concept of English-as-the-global-language will be presented after analyzing where they are and what they are doing in the commercials.

Symbolic – Places

A total of 104 images were put into three categories; indoors (80 images: English classroom 73; stages 5; an international airport; 1, museum; 1), outdoors (21 images: forest, baseball diamond, field, beach, running track, and so on) and the universe (4 images). The analysis of *actions or events* will demonstrate what children and adults are doing in the above-mentioned places in the commercials and how they are used to promote the concept of English-as-the-global-English.

Symbolic – Actions/Events

The following describes actions or events carried out by children and adults in the commercials. A total of 124 images of actions/events were found in the data. These images can be put into *English language teaching and learning* (85 images), *speaking and looking at audiences* (15 images), *communicating with Caucasians* (10 images), and *others* (14 images) categories. In the *English teaching and learning* category, 85 images of Taiwanese English learners, mainly children (68 images) either in the classrooms or outdoors, are learning English with white Caucasians (75 images), without teachers (nine images), or with local English teachers (one image). Clearly, in English learning in private English language schools, white Caucasian or native English-speaking teachers (NESTs hereafter) are promoted as better or ideal teachers.

Fifteen images (second category) depict people (English language learners: children or adults), parents, and Taiwanese celebrities (actresses, singers, and athletes) looking and telling their audiences that English is a global language and that learning English is the key to the world and future success. The third category (10 images), Taiwanese people communicating with white Caucasians or native English speakers, illustrates that English is the international language for communicating with English native speakers. The last category, *others* (13 out of 14 images), illustrates Taiwanese people receiving national or international awards, flying around the world, winning a running race, going abroad, working in a different workplace, knocking down a wall, and then seeing the light, directly revealing to their audiences that English is the global language and key to future success. One image demonstrates a little Taiwanese boy with an astronaut costume who can see the universe after putting on an astronaut helmet provided by a Caucasian English teacher. This action suggests that the NEST provides children with English as a tool to gain international perspectives or to gain access to the international community.

Symbolic – Things

A total of 102 images indicate that English is a global language and key to future success. A virtual object indicates that English-as-the-global-language by using globes (35 images). Apart from globes, images of airplanes, world-famous landmarks, world maps, different countries' flags, different countries' costumes, a vast ocean, a universe, and a sky with kites can be analyzed in the same way as a globe. Moreover, children with different outfits of white-collar occupations (15 images, such as lawyer, doctor, businessperson, etc.), with spotlights and trophies, depict learning English as synonymous with future success.

Summary

The central theme of television commercials is that English is the key to the world and future success. The commercials, implicitly or explicitly, tell their audiences that English enables

Taiwanese learners to dare to dream, to fulfill their dreams for a successful future. Moreover, the schools' commercials reinforce perceptions of the integral relationships among native speakers, early English instruction, and the English-only immersion teaching method as the fundamental concepts of English teaching and learning in the context of English-as-the-global-English.

Discussion

The Ideology of English for Internationalization and Future Success

The results illustrate that English is promoted as a tool needed for most purposes and is associated with internationalization, globalization, Anglicization, and future success that coincide with Taiwanese English language policies (Hsieh, 2010; Lin & Wu, 2015; Tsao, 2008; Zhong, 2013). For Taiwan, while English is presented and perceived as the key to gaining international competitiveness or competitiveness in general, some scholars (Chang, 2000, 2003, 2011, 2015; Chou, 2009; Liao, 2000; Hsieh, 2010) stress that English is not a panacea and English as the key to globalization or internationalization and future success is an ideology. Hsieh (2010) compared perspectives from nine language policymakers, managers, or human resource personnel from 18 "Top 50" enterprises. The significant finding of policymaker interviews was that English is not necessarily a key to enhancing Taiwan's global competitiveness. Pan and Roever's (2016) research finding demonstrates that 14 out of 17 employers with 10 to 30,000 employees argue that English proficiency is not their primary criterion for recruitment. Chang's (2015) study indicates that English competence is rarely viewed as the key to globalization by a group of English major students in a leading university in Taiwan. Yuan (2016) from the Foundation for International Cooperation in Higher Education of Taiwan (FICHET) emphasizes that the Taiwanese government began promoting higher education internationalization in 2000. However, Taiwanese universities with English as a medium of instruction (EMI) programs, facilitating English language learning, or using English does not equate with internationalization. Moreover, Chang's (2011) research findings illustrate that promoting English language learning has resulted in educational, economic, and linguistic inequality in Taiwanese society.

Chang (2003) at the Economics Department of National Central University stresses that internationalization can be achieved through trade and that Taiwan is an international trading nation. Taiwan ranked 12th among the most competitive economies in the World Economic Forum (WEF) 2019 global competitiveness report (Strong, 2020). It rose to 8th place by the Institute for Management Development (IMD) in the world economy competitiveness rankings in 2021 (Huang, 2021). Yuan (2016) and Liao (2000) elaborate that the type of internationalization Taiwan needs is based on cultural awareness and understanding and humanistic characteristics, not economic interest or western-centric internationalization. The Taiwan model of combating the COVID - 19 pandemic has gained worldwide recognition and helped the international community in various ways in 2020 (Ellington, Melnik, & Shattuck 2020; Spencer, 2020; Taiwan Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2020). Taiwan's assistance of other countries has enhanced its international image and participation; these are apart from English, so clearly, there are different ways to increase competitiveness in the international arena.

The arguments mentioned above, indicate that English proficiency does not equate to global competitiveness or future success. However, in reality, English learning has become a hot pursuit in Taiwan since Taiwan acceded to WTO in 2001, for Taiwan and its Taiwanese people

to further connect with the international community and compete globally (see Literature Review). English-as-a-global-language is a deep-rooted ideology associated with other ideologies of English teaching and learning in Taiwan, discussed in the following section.

The Ideologies of English Teaching and Learning

The results indicate that western-centric globalization or internationalization is promoted by private English language schools. The images of places or countries in the commercials refer to English-speaking countries; the images of 'foreigners' almost always refer to Caucasians. English language learning is promoted as offering the ability to use English to communicate with native speakers in real-life communication. However, Modiano (2001) states FL speakers primarily need the English language for cross-cultural communication (which most often, for such people, takes place with other non-native speakers)" (p.170). Taiwan is no exception. The most significant number of foreigners in Taiwan come from South East Asia (Indonesia, Thailand, the Philippines, Vietnam, etc.). According to Taiwan National Immigration Agency (2019), there were about 798,000 foreign residents in Taiwan in 2019; about 744,000 (93.23%) were from South East Asia and only about 15,400 (1.93%) from the USA (around 9,900 – 1.24%) and other English-speaking countries (5,500 – 0.69%). In other words, to communicate with native English speakers, Taiwanese English language learners need to study at private English language schools with NESTs or study abroad to immerse themselves in real-life communication in an English-speaking country.

English is learned as a foreign language for international communication in EFL countries by relying on the English-speaking country norms (Alm, 2003; Nino-Murcia, 2003; Yano, 2009). Another ideology of Western-centric English language teaching and learning is that NESTs with Western appearance or Caucasians are regarded as ideal English teachers teaching speaking proficiency. The white native speakers of English are viewed as exemplary English teachers in teaching English speaking proficiency in Taiwan, which is in line with Chang's study (2017). If an ideal English teacher is a NEST, another ideology is that to acquire English speaking proficiency, English should be taught monolingually by native English speakers (Phillipson, 1992). However, many scholars (Auerbach, 1993; Lee, 2010; Lotherington, 1996; Lucas & Katz, 1994; Phillipson, 1992; Wei, 2013) assert that the premise that the English-only immersion method should be employed in classes in the U.S. or EFL countries is an ideology.

The results of this study also demonstrate that another crucial issue is that English should be learned at a young age. It is a fact that Taiwanese children are being urged to learn English at younger ages, as mastering English is the key to modernization and internationalization. Phillipson (1992) asserts that a the-younger-the-better notion strengthens dependence on aid and expertise derived from English-speaking countries. In a recent policy, Taiwan will recruit 80 to 300 NESTs a year to teach in elementary and secondary schools in 2021 to develop Taiwan into a bilingual nation by 2030 (Huang, 2020). The increase in the number of NESTs reinforces the ideologies that ideal English teachers are NESTs, and English is the only medium of instruction. Moreover, some scholars advocate that English education at an early age could result in Taiwanese children possessing a lower proficiency in their mother tongue without necessarily improving their English ability. In other words, early English education in Taiwan might negatively impact their Mandarin Chinese or other ethnic language acquisition. In short,

ideologies of English teaching and learning such as the earlier the better, English-only instruction, and English-speaking country norms are woven together, reinforcing each other and constituting the context in which English is taught and learned.

Conclusion

Private English language schools in Taiwan are critical to promote the association between English and globalization or internationalization and to keep the discourse of English-as-the-global-language in circulation. In this study, I have investigated the underlying ideologies of English-as-the-global-language in private language schools' television commercials. I have demonstrated that English is a form of linguistic capital, positing that English is the key to future success and internationalization in Taiwan, which is an ideology. The ideological concept of English-as-the-global-language is central to English teaching and learning ideologies, such as native-speaker norms, the ideal English teaching method, and an early start in English learning.

Implications

The result of this study has cultural, social, educational, and political implications for Taiwan. The first implication is that the premise of current Taiwanese English policies is that English is for international communication or exchanges. Therefore, English language teaching and learning should no longer emphasize English-speaking countries or western cultures but on various cultures in globalization. Taiwanese people need to view English as offering communication to share ideas and cultures with other nationalities in cross-cultural encounters. Ideally, Taiwanese English language policies should be based on multiculturalism or plurality, which focuses on ethnic, linguistic, and cultural diversity.

Second, the Taiwanese government and private language schools emphasize economic benefits by improving English proficiency to realize a brighter future for Taiwanese people. Many Taiwanese English learners believe that in the end, their efforts to learn English will result in a more promising future (such as studying abroad, a good job, a high income, etc.). In reality, various other agendas (such as physical health or mental well-being, personal lives, family, etc.) may be far more critical than learning English.

Third, English has been promoted by the Taiwanese government for the past two decades. The elevation of English status impacts mother tongue learning, and English threatens *bentü* or local languages (Liao, 2018; Tien, 2019; Pan, 2021). Pan (2021) reports that Taiwan is a multicultural nation; to manage a multicultural country, it is necessary to recognize and preserve ethnic, cultural, social, and linguistic diversity as valuable resources to keep abreast of world trends and compete internationally.

Fourth, there is a considerable gap in urban and rural elementary school English instruction, and the gap is widening (Chen, 2011; Lee, 2013; Lee, 2020; Lin & Chen, 2013; Sun, 2012). Lee (2020) argues that the English language proficiency of students from underprivileged families lags far behind that of students from better-off families, as many parents in rural areas cannot afford to send their children to private English language schools. The implication is that the Taiwanese government needs to provide equal opportunities for all Taiwanese children to achieve internationalization by learning English. However, English learning does not offer the

concept of education for all, and it deprives underprivileged children of their right to an equal education.

Fifth, Taiwan is facing unprecedented challenges due to a considerable spike of Covid-19 in 2021. Moreover, The Economist declares the most dangerous place in the world is Taiwan, owing to the increasingly tense relationship between Taiwan and China (Lin, 2021). In short, English learning cannot solve the imminent social and political problems in Taiwan.

Finally, ideologies of language teaching and learning of English-as-the-global-language in this study deserve more attention from laypeople and English educators, researchers, and policymakers. Taiwanese people need to consider cultural, linguistic, and social factors in local and global domains. If Taiwanese people view the English language as a tool for achieving internationalization for Taiwan while disregarding Taiwan's current economic, environmental, social, linguistic, political, and other problems, Taiwan will not successfully compete internationally to the degree it desires.

About the author

Dr. Jackie Chang is an associate professor at National Pingtung University in Taiwan. She teaches English teaching methodology and curriculum design and evaluation for elementary school English teachers. The focus of her research interest is the teaching and learning of English as a Foreign Language (EFL), in particular, the social, cultural, and political contexts of EFL. <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-9089-3268>

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