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In the Face of Neoliberal Adversity: Engaging Language Education Policy and Practices

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Recent engaged approaches to language policy and practices (Davis 2014) suggest the urgent need for “on the ground” analyses of how global forces, such as neoliberalism, can and do impact local human welfare. An engaged approach further argues for moving away from simply reporting findings towards portraying dialogic processes that are always in a state of evolving and shifting meanings through growing awareness of changing local, national, and global conditions. We more specifically describe here engaged language education policy making that draws teachers, students, parents, and communities into dialogic exploration of ineffective and marginalizing language policies and practices. This approach promotes counterpublic discourses that challenge dominant neoliberal ideologies while supporting practices that meet local language, education, economic, and human welfare needs. Engaged processes effectively suggest local determination of schooling that recognizes language/identity fluidity and multiplicity while upholding the agency of all participants.

INTRODUCTION

While researchers such as Harvey (2005) and Lipman (2011) explore the impact of neoliberal ideologies of unregulated market and privatization on public services such as education, a number of scholars are calling for on-the-ground language policies that resist, negotiate, and appropriate inequitable policies (Davis, 2009b; Johnson, 2013; McGroarty, 2006; Tollefson, 2013; Wyman, McCarty, & Nicholas, 2014). We argue here for an engaged language policy and practices (ELP) approach that draws teachers, students, parents, communities, and concerned others into dialogic exploration of language policy as non-linear processes; covert ideologies and policies as potentially marginalizing; and multilingual policies as often desirable, effective and possible (Davis, 2014; García, 2009; García & Kleifgen, 2010; Phyak & Bui, 2014). We further promote counterpublic discourses and public activism that challenge dominant neoliberal ideologies (Gegeo & Watson-Gegeo, 2001; Tollefson, 2013) while supporting policies and practices that meet local language, education, economic, and human welfare needs. This ELP conceptualization involves attention to interdisciplinarity, fluidity, and multiplicity in which the agency of individuals and communities is considered the epicenter of language policy reform (Davis, 2014; Menken & Garcia, 2010).

In re-envisioning language policy and planning as engaged processes, we draw on and portray theoretical and educational equity perspectives through our dialogic efforts in Nepal and Hawai'i. Thus, we model alternatives to traditional top-down language education policy making by depicting ways in which ELP embodies the intersection of critical inquiry, participant involvement, and ongoing language planning processes. More specifically, ELP aims to describe the *processes* of conducting ideological analyses with parents, educators, and all concerned others towards raising awareness of ideological adversity such as neoliberal commodification through privatization of education, monolingualism, and standardization. Collaborative efforts in planning resistance further aim to reveal and counter marginalizing and ineffective national, state, and regional language ideologies and policies. As a whole, this engaged approach portrays the processes of developing community-based language and education policy that is locally relevant, educationally forward-looking, and serves to provide models for wider social change. In other words, ideological awareness along with localized policies and processes are intended to support collaborative community and educator efforts in building on local knowledge and global awareness for schooling that is relevant and engaging.

ENGAGED ETHNOGRAPHY TOWARDS ENGAGING LANGUAGE POLICIES AND PRACTICES

Our engaged approach places all concerned participants at the epicenter of exploration and liberating transformation (Cammarota & Fine, 2010; hooks, 1994). An engaged ethnography explores ways in which policies are political in nuanced and public ways and promotes the means by which the dispossessed work to possess the right to research, advocate, and acquire sustainable, equitable, and self-defined honorable ways of learning and living (Appadurai, 2006; Gegeo & Watson-Gegeo, 2013). This inquiry approach draws from critical and participatory research methods while engaging ethnographers in negotiating multiple identities and roles to help disrupt hegemonic policies, ideologies, and practices (Giampapa & Lamoureux, 2011; Patiño Santos, 2011). We specifically utilize Fine's (2006) ethnographic *democratic engagement* approach in which the researcher and participants work collaboratively towards collective empowerment. Towards this end, we further draw on emancipatory educators such as hooks (1994), Freire (1970), Smith (1999), and Gegeo and Watson-Gegeo (2013) in viewing language policy as a public sphere in which everyone's voice, ideas, ideologies, and identities are acknowledged. Our engaged ethnography centrally documents alternative ways that indigenous youth, teachers, educators, and community members adapt, resist, and transform harmful ideologies and policies. We specifically take up Appadurai's (2006) call for helping young people achieve full citizenship in a global society through making strategic inquiries and gaining strategic knowledge in areas such as educational disparities, transmigration challenges, and global/local crises. Thus, we address language issues that are closely aligned with neoliberal actions that essentially commodify social disparity.

We take the position that in marketing English and Western forms of education both profit and non-profit organizations are essentially marketing social reproduction (Bourdieu, 1991; Phillipson, 2012). In other words, those who have the least access to social commodities such as geographic (urban), higher social class, multilingual, and technological resources are least likely to succeed in the English/Western educational market place (see Kirkpatrick, 2013; Luke, 2011). At the same time, the promise if not the actuality of

socioeconomic benefit from English language learning can none-the-less pose threats to indigenous languages, home/heritage languages and, more generally, multilingualism/multiculturalism that could provide alternative epistemologies for addressing pressing social needs (Skutnabb-Kangas & Heugh, 2012). Thus, we argue for an engaged language policy and practices approach that includes and goes beyond language in engaging human welfare challenges such as poverty, dislocation, global warming, armed conflict, crime, and health issues (Davis, 2014). Children and their families often confront life-threatening circumstances such as those who flee Central American violence and face deportation at U.S. borders or suffer Hamas and Israeli attacks. Intersecting sociodiversity and biodiversity crises are also addressed by activist-scholars such as Martinez-Alier (2002) who argues for an environmentalism of the poor that reveals the inequitable impact of economic colonialism, imperialism, and globalization. Thus, issues of social and safety concern, regard for environmental impact, and Western neoliberalism and assimilationist intent suggest the need for critical awareness and action that both encompass and transcend language policies and local education concerns. Thus, activism strives towards awakening a sense of injustice not only among the oppressed, but also with those who possess material and cultural power.

In sum, engaged ethnography and engaged language policy/practices intersect through first viewing critical ethnography as “a meeting of multiple sides in an encounter with and among others, one in which there is negotiation and dialogue toward substantial and viable meanings that make a difference” (Madison, 2012, p. 10). While taking on this critical research perspective, we also argue for grounding collective analyses in awareness of macro level ideologies and imposed policies and practices that are detrimental to human and educational welfare. In promoting awareness, we emphasize the need for researchers/facilitators to take seriously their position as learner and advocate in dialogue with others and key participants in the engaged process. This approach also seeks to place those directly involved, such as students, parents, and community members, at the center of emancipatory processes. For example, informed by critical indigenous praxis, Gegeo and Watson-Gegeo (2013) have a long-term engagement with indigenous Solomon Islands youth and villagers towards building critical consciousness of and resistance to neoliberal ideologies underlying economic development and education. Thus, Solomon Islanders become “Critical Villagers” who own the ability to engage in ideological analyses and dialogic problem-solving. The act of conscious dialogue thus moves all concerned towards collective understanding of the challenges and possibilities of reform towards language policies and practices that reflect greater equity, social justice, and human well-being. ELP documentation also differs from critical research in that, rather than describing outcomes, it aims to *portray* ways in which all concerned individuals and institutions—policymakers, administrators, teachers, parents/community members, students, schools, local organizations—are joined in *processes* of developing awareness of inequitable ideologies as well as the means by which to challenge inhumane, demeaning, and exclusionary policies and practices from within. Thus, we define engaged language policies and practices not in terms of research as data collection and reporting, but as *documentation* of the processes in challenging neoliberal and inequitable top-down policy making.

Our engaged approaches suggest moving away from reporting findings towards portraying dialogic processes that are always in a state of evolving and shifting meanings through collective growing awareness of local, national, and global neoliberal conditions. We illustrate here ways in which this approach both engages and describes dialogic approaches towards equitable policies and practices in Phyak’s Nepal homeland and Davis’

advocacy towards multilingual education in Hawai'i. Providing these two models of engaged ethnography and long-term ELP emphasizes the absolute need for understanding the situated nature of neoliberal-generated policy and on-the-ground advocacy efforts. Thus, we portray the ways in which we engage in activist efforts situated in the historical as well as the evolving social, cultural, and political circumstances at each site. We also suggest the importance of our positionality in engaged efforts. Having been born and raised in a multilingual and multiethnic Limbu community, Phyak has an intimate understanding of the politics and possibilities of language policies and practices in his home country. Davis' 20 years of language education advocacy in Hawai'i provides an understanding of the unique situated diversity challenges as well as possibilities in this U.S. state. Both authors/engaged facilitators have standing within both local and regional communities and institutions.

We begin with portraying how ideological analyses are conducted with parents, educators, and concerned others towards raising awareness of harmful neoliberal commodification and standardization of language education policies (Block, Gray, & Holborow, 2012; Luke, Luke, & Graham, 2007). We further describe how we engage in collective planning of resistance to marginalizing and ineffective national, state, and regional language ideologies and policies. These efforts are intended to aid in developing and documenting language and education policies that are locally relevant, educationally forward-looking, and serve to provide models for wider change. Finally, these processes are intended to promote development of instructional practices that support teachers in building on local knowledge towards schooling that is relevant and engaging for students. Phyak first describes his four-years of engaged efforts to support indigenous languages in Nepal, and then Davis explores two decades of ongoing efforts to address multilingual and multicultural education needs in Hawai'i.

ENGAGED LANGUAGE POLICY AND PRACTICES IN NEPAL

Having been born and raised in a rural village, Phyak has experienced the difficulties that rural indigenous people face in gaining access to information, education, economic opportunities, and other resources. To counter marginalizing conditions, since 2010 Phyak has facilitated the *Language Policy and Youth* project in which he joins indigenous young people in ELP activities such as marching in mass street rallies for linguistic, political, and cultural rights; exploring linguistic, educational, and political inequalities; participating in critical dialogue about how ideologies shape language policies; holding awareness-raising workshops; and supporting development of plans for creating schools as multilingual spaces. In his related *Critical Villagers* project, Phyak engages villagers in critical dialogue aimed at raising consciousness about inequalities and injustices that arise from current language education policies and neoliberal practices. More specifically, Phyak and indigenous youth work closely with village leaders in observing language practices in school and communities; organizing village meetings to discuss issues concerning language, education, and development; and planning action that creates space for indigenous languages and cultures in school and other public spheres.

Engaging in Ideological Analyses

An ideology of inequality is deeply rooted in Nepal's history of a hierarchical caste system of ethnicity, gender, social, and economic positioning. A number of Nepali scholars

(e.g., Gurung, 2006; Hachethu, 2003) are critical of the nation-state's policies and political systems in which indigenous ethnic minorities, women, and those from rural areas are excluded or underrepresented in the political system. Lawoti (2010) and Hangen (2010) specifically criticize the high caste (traditionally Bahun-Chetri) monopoly over the policy-making process (also see Das & Hatlebakk, 2010) that contributes to increasing abandonment of indigenous languages and cultures through assimilation into the Nepali dominant culture, language, and values.

As part of our ELP approach, Phyak has observed and conducted critical analyses with youth and villagers on the increasing dominance of Western economic ideologies underlying educational, environmental, and socioeconomic policies and practices. He points out that after 1990, the country adopted a neoliberal free market ideology that paved the way for foreign investment and privatization of public services. Subsequently, Nepal's plans for infrastructure development as well as socioeconomic and educational reforms are guided by a global neoliberal economic ideology (Shakya, 2009) that challenges local socioeconomic equality and civil rights. According to Pandey (2012), Nepal's dependence on foreign aid is the main reason for its "failed development." A recent United Nations Development Program report shows that Nepal falls within the category of "least developed" countries (UNDP, 2013). At the same time, socio-economic and educational disparity between the rich and the poor is widening. The 2010-2011 National Living Standards Survey (Central Bureau of Statistics, 2011) shows that more than 47 percent of the country's production of goods is consumed by the richest 20 percent while the poorest 20 percent consume only 8 percent.

Since the country relies heavily on funding from international donor agencies such as the World Bank and Asian Development Bank, it has increasingly developed both explicit and implicit education policies that serve the strategic interests of donors. With foreign investment in educational reforms and projects such as the School Sector Reform Program (SSRP) and Higher Education Project, both public/private schools and higher education are in the process of moving away from national administration towards neoliberal management. The World Bank's heavily funded education reform projects embody neoliberalism through promoting so-called "effective schooling" as determined by quantified scores on achievement tests (see Carney, 2003). This increasingly common tactic of setting up economic dependency through neoliberal colonization ignores the sociopolitical, economic, and linguistic challenges of Nepal and the central need for national and local agency. Neoliberal ideologies have subsequently promoted English medium education in schools and universities. Thus, while an increasing gap in quality schooling is being created between the rich and the poor, valuable indigenous language and cultural resources as well as the potential for effective bilingual/multilingual education are being lost.

Against this neoliberal and social-classed backdrop, the critical issue that emerges in Phyak's dialogue with villagers and indigenous youth is the question of access and representation of indigenous ethnic minorities in policy making and planning. Phyak and concerned others realized as early as 2010 the need for substantive critical and strategic engagement of both villagers and youth leading to resistance, negotiation, and transformation of hegemonic and monolingual ideologies. A village school head teacher recently revealed that they were asked to switch from Nepali to English medium instruction by the Resource Center – a hub of schools in a region – to reportedly compete with the current proliferation of English medium private schools. Since villagers are unaware that while the Nepali constitution states receiving education in the *mother tongue* is one's fundamental right, indigenous languages are increasingly marginalized.

This and other critical dialogue with villagers suggest that, despite a multilingual education policy that recognizes all languages in the country, there is a de facto one-language-one-nation ideology that favors Nepali as the national language and English as a much needed global language (Phyak, 2013). Thus, indigenous language education and thereby local multilingualism is framed as a problem rather than a linguistic and epistemological resource (Blackledge & Creese, 2010; Creese & Blackledge, 2010; Weber & Horner, 2012). When asked why public schools are placed in the position of competing with private schools that offer English medium education, a village headmaster simply stated, “private schools are established in the village. They advertise English medium of instruction as their selling point [that works] to attract parents and students.” Clearly, ideologies of multilingualism face formidable challenges in countering historically-established and neoliberally-sold educational policies and practices.

Engaging in Neoliberal Resistance

While recognizing the challenges involved in resisting, negotiating, and transforming dominant neoliberal ideologies, a number of scholars (e.g., Davis, 2009b; McCarty, 2014; Menken, 2013; Shohamy, 2006) have shown that policies can be changed through raising critical awareness at intersecting micro (community), meso (school), and macro (nation-state) levels. Phyak builds on participatory models of youth (Appadurai, 2006; Wyman, McCarty, & Nicholas, 2014) and critical villagers as transformative agents (Gegeo & Watson-Gegeo, 2001, 2013) to portray how indigenous participants engage covert and overt language policies in the face of neoliberal adversity. In assuming a collaborative co-learning approach (Wei, 2014), Phyak works closely with youth and villagers in exploring and ameliorating the sociopolitical, linguistic, economic, and educational challenges of indigenous peoples and rural villagers.

In indigenous village meetings, Phyak engages in critical consciousness-raising that addresses the ways in which current language education policies in schools, both private and public, threaten children's home languages and indigenous identities. Through also raising awareness with villagers concerning the danger of indigenous languages quickly dying out if not spoken by the younger generation, villagers are beginning to explore possibilities for creating space for indigenous languages in communities. Phyak further engages indigenous youth and village elders in critical language awareness towards creating space for indigenous languages in schools. For example, Phyak facilitated a 10-hour *Language Policy and Youth* discussion in July 2014 with indigenous youth studying in one of the constituent campuses of Tribhuvan University in eastern Nepal. Thirty-three students representing various ethnic and caste groups were present at the workshop. The discussion began with a brief overview of the global and local linguistic situation and led up to exploring the national mother-tongue-based multilingual education (MTB-MLE) policy that allows for indigenous medium of instruction in schools (Hough, Thapa-Magar, & Yonjan-Tamang, 2009; Phyak, 2011, 2013; Rai, Rai, Phyak & Rai, 2011). Participants then formed groups to discuss the sociolinguistic situation of their own community; the reasons why children stop using their mother tongue; and the importance of using indigenous languages in education. Each group came up with a visual interpretation of the Nepali situation.



Figure 1: *An Indigenous Youth Ideological Map of Nepal*

One group provided a pastoral representation of Nepal's ideological situation. They explained:

The blindfolded man at one end of the bridge represents the common people, particularly ethnic minorities, who are not informed about the policies. Although there are policies that allow the use of indigenous languages in education, ethnic minorities are already blind-folded. ... they are in the darkness. They don't know where to go. They aren't sure what languages should be used in school. Without being aware of the importance of multilingual and indigenous languages, they cannot take strong activist positions. ... You know ...they might fall into the river.

The workshop participants revealed increasing critical awareness of the discriminatory nature of current policies and educational practices. They drew on visual representations to further articulate increasing understanding of the sociopolitical situation. For example, one participant suggested that "the blind-folded man at one end of the bridge represents the ethnic minority people who are not able to resist discriminatory language policies. We [ethnic minorities] take dominant language practices for granted." She further suggested an increasing awareness of collusion in their own oppression by stating: "We ran after Nepali-only policy and now we are running after the English language fashion. We are bound to do so because we cannot go across the bridge (to critical awareness)." In the next stage these youth make their own plans to raise awareness of parents and other youth about the significance of multilingualism to create space for indigenous minority languages in education in their respective communities (see Appendix A).

In considering youth and community elders as key change agents, Phyak further engages villagers in critical dialogue concerning the use of indigenous language and epistemology for equitable and transformative education. In a series of village meetings and face-to-face interactions, he found that village elders are very much worried about the loss of indigenous knowledge, culture, and language. One Limbu villager from eastern Nepal stated that "Youth don't like our culture and language. They don't like to learn and practice In the marriage ceremonies, they are not interested in *kelang* [a cultural dance performed by playing the two-headed drum *Ke* in special occasions such as marriage]. Rather, they organize stage shows." He further says, "they invite modern dancers in Hindi, Nepali ...sometimes English songs. The beauty of *kelang* is destroyed and everybody pays attention to their dances." The villagers

call this phenomenon *sanskritik hastachep* (cultural encroachment). What is more disturbing is the gradual loss of an indigenous culture of cooperation, sharing, and collectivism due to increasing expansion of a Western ideology of individualism promoted by current competition-oriented educational policy reforms.

While the recent mother-tongue-based-multilingual policy (MTB-MLE) has opened-up both ideological and implementational spaces for indigenous languages in Nepalese education, this policy has not yet been implemented due to lack of community engagement and increased domination of a monolingual ideology in exams, curriculum, textbooks, and teacher training. More worrisome is that instead of providing support for multilingualism, the Ministry of Education has succumbed to a market-based competitive ideology that defines educational achievement and school performance in terms of students' test scores on national and district level exams. This ideology has created and circulated a false consciousness among teachers, parents, students and government personnel that learning of and teaching in English is the only way to provide quality education. Yet, Phyak's engaged language policy work with critical youth and villagers holds much promise for developing effective indigenous/minority education based on ideological awareness and community engagement towards realizing local means for addressing education inequality.

We need to acknowledge at this point that, while our article was being copyedited, devastating earthquakes hit Nepal taking the lives of more than 8,500 people and destroying hundreds of mountain villages and major world heritage sites. The question of language education is now clearly marginal compared to the indefinite need for humanitarian relief and reconstruction. Yet, even now, the question of communication through which languages during a crisis may also speak to the need for recognition of multilingualism. We have already seen that the most seriously affected ethnic minority people such as Tamang, Danuwar, and Gurung cannot effectively communicate with aid agencies and rescue teams due to language barriers.

ENGAGED LANGUAGE POLICY AND PRACTICES IN HAWAII

Davis has essentially taken an engaged language policies and practices approach in her language advocacy efforts in Hawai'i from the time she arrived in 1994, although not labeled as such or theoretically defined. Having lived in this island state for 20 years, she has become familiar with and worked to ameliorate the difficulties language minorities face in gaining access to equitable education and economic opportunities. Efforts towards equitable language education policies and practices in Hawai'i focus on representative portrayals of collaborative initiatives, including developing the Council on Language Policy and Planning consisting of activist lawyers, educators, and a cross-section of NGO representatives; lobbying for a State Office of Language Access; securing funding for creating model high school and state university multilingual programs; and, most recently, engaging community members and educators in efforts to develop a statewide multilingual education policy. These portrayals of language education needs and advocacy in Hawai'i also aim to help counter other U.S. sites of education marginalization through situated advocacy.

Conducting Ideological Analyses

Central to addressing inequity in Hawai'i is the need to uncover and portray an ideology of language and ethnic discrimination that arose and is maintained through a history of

colonization and shifting ethnic hierarchies. Prior to the first arrival of Europeans in 1778, the inhabitants of the Hawaiian Islands had developed a highly organized social system, recognized a Polynesian language that became known as Hawaiian, and established a constitutional government. Yet, Hawaiian governance as well as language and cultural practices were increasingly threatened through U.S. missionary settlement and sugar plantation development. While the Hawaiian nation struggled for continued independence, linguistic and cultural autonomy was further threatened when in 1851 plantation owners began recruiting migrant labor from China, Russia, Germany, Portugal, Norway, Japan, Korea, and the Philippines and instituted a contract labor system which was essentially indentured servitude. Linguistic diversity served to counter organizing against unfair labor conditions and, in efforts to further discourage indigenous governance by the Republic of Hawai'i, the state banned the Hawaiian language in all public and private schools in 1896. However, with the help of Pidgin (which evolved into Hawai'i Creole English) as a growing lingua franca among plantation workers and Hawaiians, in 1946 the International Longshore and Warehouse Union brought linguistic and cultural groups together in a strike that lasted 79 days and successfully shut down the sugar industry (Kent, 2004). While labor conditions subsequently improved, at the same time the State legislature began lobbying for U.S. Statehood, primarily to avoid U.S. tariffs on sugar. With objections from Hawaiians loyal to the monarchy and from legislators on the mainland who felt its majority non-white population inappropriate for an American state, *The Act to Provide for the Admission of the State of Hawaii into the Union* (Pub.L. 86-3, March 18, 1959) was nonetheless enacted by the United States Congress and signed into law by President Dwight D. Eisenhower.

The post-statehood Americanization era saw the banning of Hawaiian, suppression of a multilingual press, closure of heritage language schools and ongoing attempts to eradicate Hawai'i Creole English (Pidgin) in public schools through creation of English Standard Schools. The Standard schools subsequently led to private institutions which now serve the majority of upper and middle class students, thus representing the highest percentage of private school enrollment in the U.S. (Poynthress, 2010). Yet in the face of this Standard English language stance, activist Hawaiians staged protests against the ban on their language and pushed for and won official recognition in 1978 of Hawaiian as an official state language that has equal status with English. In 1986, the law banning Hawaiian-medium instruction in public schools was lifted, and Ka Papahana Kaiapuni (Hawaiian Language Immersion Program) was launched in 1987 with the approval of the Board of Education. Hawaiian language fluency and use has subsequently grown from threatened status to over 8,000 second language speakers and 1,000 native speakers (UCLA Language Materials Project). Hawaiians recently advocated for and were granted Board of Education approval for bilingual education in recognition of the indigenous language as a right and English as a literacy resource.

While Hawaiians have gained political and educational ground over the past 40 years, Pacific Islander and Southeast Asian migrants to Hawai'i have not fared so well. The U.S. 2000 Census *Demographic Profile of Foreign-Language Speakers* for Hawai'i indicates that out of 1.4 million residents, over 360,000 are speakers of languages other than English and over 88,000 are from non-English language speaking households (not including the Hawai'i Creole English speaking majority). According to the 2010 U.S. Census, the percentage of Pacific Islanders who have moved to Hawai'i has increased by 26% in the past 10 years and is rising (US Census Bureau, 2010). A steady stream of migrants from both the Philippines and Pacific Islands continue to arrive in search of work, health care and, increasingly,

through dislocation due to global warming. Burkett (2011) details the challenges of increased global warming migration. She states:

As the effects of climate change intensify, time is running out for millions living in Asia Pacific coastal and island communities. Many will be forced to leave their homes within the next half-century because of increased intensity and frequency of storms and floods, sea-level rise, and desertification. The low lying small island states of the Pacific are especially endangered; residents there may lose not only their homes, but their entire nations. (p. 1)

Hawai'i has already experienced increased immigration as a result of the devastating 2013 tsunami in the Philippines while those in locations such as the Marshall Islands are either planning for or have moved to safer locations. As dislocation and relocation intensifies, a crisis of language and social diversity is emerging. While all social services are impacted by increasing migration to the state, adequate and equitable language education is a priority need.

The Hawai'i Department of Education and University of Hawai'i College of Education have so far failed to provide policies and plans that offer comprehensive and effective language minority education. The college has never had either an English Language Learner (ELL) or bilingual/multilingual teacher education program. Instead, the Department of Education has relied on workshops to train teachers, currently in "scientifically based" ELL strategies promoted by the for-profit World-class Instructional Design and Assessment (WIDA) Corporation. In addition, the state essentially experiences and maintains a historical legacy of private schools that favor speakers of "standard-like" English as opposed to Hawai'i Creole English and working class immigrant native speakers of Pacific Islander and Filipino languages. While Hawaiians have legitimated their Hawaiian heritage through the elite private Kamehameha School and the public Ka Papahana Kaiapuni (Hawaiian immersion) schools, children from working class immigrant homes tend to experience severely inadequate schooling (Davis, Cho, Ishida, Soria & Bazzi, 2005). Immigrant children and youth clearly require quality bilingual/multilingual schooling for educational success through college. At the same time, these students potentially offer valuable future resources through providing for much needed interpretation and translation across professional and social services.

Engaging in Neoliberal Resistance

Davis draws on ELP in portraying the challenges that Hawai'i and other U.S. states face in planning resistance to marginalizing policies and practices. The Hawai'i Council on Language Policy and Planning founded in 1994 was created to address the range of language challenges faced by immigrant families and the agencies that serve them. The original Council, composed of lawyers, educators, social service providers, community members, and NGOs, was able to form a state government Language Access Office intended to facilitate interpretation and translation. Although the Council disbanded shortly thereafter due to an economic downturn that decimated funding needed to support NGOs, efforts towards addressing inadequate language minority education were continued through federal grants.

Davis became director of the University of Hawai'i Center for Second Language Studies in 1994 and subsequently applied for and received grants intended to support language

education projects. Although failing to recognize the value of documenting processes of language advocacy at the time, grant staff none-the-less were deeply engaged in transformative efforts through local projects. Funded projects included a 1995-1996 Administration for Native Americans grant with Professor No'eau Warner to help parents of Hawaiian children attending immersion schools learn their heritage language to support intergenerational valuing of the language and culture. Davis and graduates of the Department of Second Language Studies program at the University of Hawai'i began working with language minority students through U.S. DOE grants from 2001 to 2006 for developing multilingual programs at the high school and university levels (see Davis et al., 2005; Davis, 2009b).

We drew on postmodern and multilingual theoretical principles in designing programs at a high school serving nearly 3,000 Filipino, Samoan, and Hawaiian students. Our *Studies of Heritage and Academic Languages and Literacies (SHALL)* program offered interactive courses in home/heritage languages, Pidgin/HCE, academic languages (English, Samoan, and Ilokano), and technology to 240 students. SHALL sought to promote linguistic and discursive proficiency, including improved understanding of school social and educational expectations. Students learned about and reflected on their hybrid heritage, local, and school identities and developed metalinguistic skills through language analyses.



Figure 2: Student working on research project in Samoan and English

Academic English abilities were further fostered through year-long research projects that involved interviewing community members and teachers in Samoan, Ilokano, Hawai'i Creole English, and standard English on issues of concern such as discrimination and standardized testing. They wrote critical research reports in academic English and produced public service announcements based on these reports that were broadcast on 'Ōlelo Community Television. Compared to the national public school average of high school graduation rate of just over 50% for marginalized student populations (Green, 2002), all SHALL student participants graduated from high school and nearly 90% went onto community colleges and universities. Yet this program was not continued by the high school nor promoted through the DOE.

In an attempt to address inadequate English/multilingual teacher training, Davis and two DOE language specialists were asked by the Department of Education in 2012 to design and implement a statewide *Multilingual, Cross-Cultural, and Academic Development (MCAD)* teacher certification program. Although the piloting of this program indicated highly positive responses by teacher participants and universal success among emergent bilingual students, this initiative was suddenly discontinued by the DOE under Federal pressure to adopt “scientific based” curriculum and standardized methods such as those proposed by the WIDA English Language Development for-profit company. WIDA was subsequently funded to develop standardized and itemized curriculum and tests that they advertised as based on so-called current and integrated scientifically based ELL knowledge. Given that this neoliberal model of English language instruction and assessment has failed to address the needs of immigrant students, the State is faced with the catastrophic long-term effects of marginalizing education.

Countering Neoliberal and Marginalizing Education

The Hawai'i Department of Education (HDOE) has historically engaged education policies and practices that discriminate against non-native speakers of standard English, including speakers of both Hawai'i Creole English and marginalized home/community languages. Hawai'i public schools were charged in 1976, 1979, and 1999 for civil rights violations associated with neglecting the language and academic needs of immigrant students. These violations include the under-identification of language minorities, the lack of services for those who were identified, a disproportionate placement of language minorities in learning disabilities programs, inappropriate staffing of programs designed for language minority students, and improper mainstreaming procedures (Talmy, 2004). Pressing issues for the HDOE are seemingly situated in the lack of knowledge and will to provide an informed language education program (Davis et al., 2005). U.S. neoliberalism and national education policies have further conspired against providing schooling that is responsive to the language, identity, and agentic needs of diverse student populations. Lather (2004) argues that the “disciplining and normalizing effort to standardize educational research in the name of quality and effectiveness” (p. 26) show, as Hall (1996) notes, an “aggressive resistance to difference (and) an assault, direct and indirect, on multiculturalism” (p. 468). An early study from the Harvard Civil Rights Project (Orfield, Losen, Wald, & Swanson, 2004) supported these observations in reporting nation-wide student outcome data that indicate a “national crisis” in graduation rates of minority students. While No Child Left Behind policies have shifted to Common Core Standards that claim to promote inquiry skills across subject areas, this recent initiative continues to create marginalizing education through standardized testing.

An opportunity for engaging in statewide policy and practices change recently emerged through the “Hawaii Forum on Immigration and English Language Learners in Public Schools.” This Forum, held in early 2014, was sponsored by the Hawaii Educational Policy Center, the William S. Richardson School of Law, the College of Education, and School of Social Work at the University of Hawai'i, Manoa. As an invited keynote speaker, author Davis presented on “Diversity in Crisis: Engaging Policies and Practices Towards Educational Equity” which called for revitalization of the *Hawai'i Council on Language Policy and Planning* to advocate for recognizing marginalized children's language/culture education rights and resources. The newly-formed Council began with University of Hawai'i

representatives from the Department of Second Language Studies, College of Education, Department of Urban and Regional Planning, the Law School as well as representatives from the Hawai'i Board of Education, public schools, and community organizations. Participants increasingly represent a range of Pacific Islander and other language communities in Hawai'i. The Council states its mission as follows:

The Language Council founded in 1994 and revitalized in 2014 is an independent equity and social justice organization. The Council draws on community, educator, and expert input in advocating for language education rights and development of language resources. The Council takes an engaged equity position in ensuring that communities, parents, and youth have access to information and a voice in decision-making concerning their multilingual and multicultural resources and needs. While independent of State and Federal agencies, the Council supports educator access to information regarding multilingual resources and best program and teaching practices. Policy-making and action plans are thus based on Language Council expertise as well as information gathering representing collaboration among communities, educators, and agencies.

The Council has prepared for state-level administrator education and community-based advocacy by disseminating multilingual *Language Rights and Resources* information; organizing BOE and DOE meetings with national and local language education experts to inform decision-making; and creating a *Critical Communities Project* that promotes locally based ideological awareness and advocacy towards effective emergent bilingual policies and practices.

The Language Council determined that the Board of Education, Department of Education, and College of Education would benefit from receiving sound theoretical and practical input on the needs and resources of language minority children. We subsequently invited the well-known expert on multilingual education Ofelia García to visit Hawai'i for a week in January, 2015 to provide information and strategies for moving towards equitable and effective teaching. We began with a Board of Education meeting that included a 30-minute presentation by García and one hour of questions/answers from the BOE as well as testimony from language minority advocates. Professor García subsequently gave public presentations on "Multilingualism in Education: Reimaginings" and "Issues and Potential of Translanguaging." Council members and College of Education faculty then met with the Department of Education Superintendent and Associate Superintendent to discuss the possibilities of moving towards effective education for language minorities.

We further had an informal meeting with the Department of Indo-Pacific Languages and Literatures, including discussion of a community-based Samoan language maintenance program that promises to be a model of language education reform. We also met with a district ELL coordinator of schools serving Pacific Islander children who is supportive of but challenged in attempts to bring about reform. Other meetings included advocates for Hawaiian and Pacific Islander language minorities in West Oahu. Despite wide-spread poverty, this community has lobbied and received funding for a modern and environmentally-conscious school, Boys and Girls Club, and Wellness Center.

Planning Effective Multilingual Policies and Practices

Current postmodern philosophy and theories promote deeper understanding of language

and identity diversity, potentially leading to more effective and equitable policy and pedagogical practices that are locally situated and strategically employed (Cummins, 2006). In a 2010 in-service teacher program in Hawai'i, Davis encouraged multilingual learning through advising teachers who did not speak students' languages to none-the-less allow children to draw on home languages in group work, sharing time, and story writing. We discovered that, despite teachers' lack of multilingual ability, teaching practices supportive of home languages were highly successful in promoting English language learning, validating and improving home language/literacy abilities, and fostering a sense of competency and agency. García and Flores (2014) now argue that while globalization has produced increased diversity as well as higher educational standards, contradictory forces of uniformity and diversity are creating educational tension, especially for educators of emergent bilingual students. Although the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) at present do not allow for bilingual or multilingual education, these scholars provide a highly convincing case for this inquiry and situated literacy form of schooling. They effectively promote translanguaging or the "soft assembling of multiple language practices in ways that fit a particular sociolinguistic situation" (García & Flores, 2014, p. 155). They further argue that this approach represents dynamic bilingualism and multifaceted identities that can be a tremendous resource within the context of CCSS and global employment demands. Yet García and Flores (2014) also admit to the challenge of articulating an ongoing and individualized assessment of emergent bilingual students, given the vast diversity of their intersecting and ever-changing language, literacy, social/identities, and academic abilities. While emergent bilingual education and translanguaging is highly desirable in Hawai'i, students would be vulnerable to any form of standardization given complex statewide diversity. Teacher resistance to multilingual education is also possible and, in the case of Hawai'i, inevitable.

In addressing teacher resistance to multilingual education, we draw on the transnational work of teacher educators such as Portante and Max (2008) who describe research on children's multilingualism and schooling which reveal that:

...a range of tensions arise when the complex linguistic backgrounds of the children clash with normative, curriculum-oriented and teacher-centred instructional practices relying on textbooks and pre-structured activities. Nevertheless, these underlying tensions encourage teachers to transform their classroom practices to create innovative plurilingual classroom spaces that address the needs of changing population. Research data reveal that the children's linguistic and culturally diverse backgrounds work as resources for learning as they expand opportunities for participation and for learning of all children. (p. 124)

Hélot's (2007) "Ouverture aux Langues" approach also serves to enhance openness to "the other" and develop linguistic and cultural tolerance in schools towards language attitudes and practices that acknowledge global diversity. Vasco Correia's (2012) study focuses on language awareness implementation and outcomes in four primary school classrooms. Students were asked to tell stories about their language use, focusing on describing language networks, developing language landscapes and creating language biographies. The goal is to help each individual student flourish in school via an emerging sense of community through heterogeneity. This ELP fieldwork, applicable to Hawai'i and elsewhere, provides rich and diverse data on an intervention that aims to sensitize students and teachers to multilingualism that exceeds and transforms official school language policies.

To address both the challenges and possibilities of engaging in multilingual education, the Language Council, University of Hawai'i College of Education and the University of Hawai'i Student Equity Excellence and Diversity program invited Professor Kate Menken in May 2015 to assist in promoting a Board of Education *Multilingualism for Equitable Education* policy. Professor Menken was further scheduled to begin the implementation planning process by working with Department of Education (DOE) personnel. Davis and Menken arrived at the planning meeting assured that the policy would move forward through official mandated channels. Yet we unexpectedly discovered that the Hawai'i Board of Education members had indefinitely tabled this initiative, reportedly arising from a DOE document to the BOE detailing why a multilingual policy for equitable education would not be feasible. Essentially, rather than have a discussion concerning the possibilities and challenges of the policy, the DOE listed objections such as “the policy goes beyond the requirements of federal law by requiring the development and maintenance of a student’s home language” and “Hawaii has 79 language categories and 560 students indicating that they speak a language other than the 79 listed”. While there are no restrictions to going beyond federal law, the policy also did not suggest *required* state-wide bilingual/multilingual education. Kate Menken had explained to BOE members that New York and other states have flexible policies that allow for optional ELL or bilingual education based on parent and school choice as well as a required minimum number of students per classroom who speak the same home language—20 in the case of New York.

In sum, this advocacy journey that we—colleagues, teachers, students, communities, and multilingual activists—have been on over the years continues to reveal obstacles to equitable education. Yet it also provides the impetus to push harder towards galvanizing state, national and international support. In refusing to collude in the oppression of our most marginalized and ill-served students, we feel obligated to resist unfair practices while promoting effective policies.

CONCLUSIONS

The rise of neoliberalism has prompted counter social and educational equity movements that are geographically specific and globally relevant. We suggest here new directions in the language policy and planning/practices field towards engaged theories and methods that inform and transform (Tollefson, 2013). Thus, we are working towards articulating dialogical research approaches that acknowledge the harmful impact of global ideologies such as neoliberalism while building awareness of the potential for alternative local equitable policies and practices. Our own work seeks to model movement from a state of language and educational oppression towards collective indigenous/minority and personal agency. Consciousness-raising through ideological analysis and alternative equitable practices has sought to help youth, villagers, and educators re-evaluate and transform their beliefs about the efficacy of locally situated and educationally equitable language policies. Yet, given the earthquake catastrophe in Nepal, Phyak now turns his advocacy efforts towards present human welfare needs and the role of multilingualism within this challenging context.

Recognizing the agentive potential of ELP as an effective epistemological and methodological approach represents a substantive shift from seeing data as solely concrete and reportable to understanding data as also process and portrayable (Davis, 2014). In other words, although outcomes continue to be important to report, for the ELP researcher/learner, the process and the revealing of it takes center stage. Drawing from Freire’s dialogic

process of conscientization, while making ideologies such as neoliberalism that underlie language policies and practices transparent and known, ELP also aims to raise consciousness among all the various actors involved in LPP decision making towards engagement in countering unjust practices. The cases of Nepal and Hawai'i represent on-the-ground work in differing states of addressing conscientization, resistance, and/or transformation. We further draw on critical ethnography as embedded in ELP to gain an understanding of participants' personal experience of history place, and culture in relation to globalization, neoliberalism, and nationalism. We focus on how indigenous/minority youth in Nepal and Hawai'i gain agency through dialectic processes intended to help construct, refine and transform agency into action in resisting exclusionary language policies. Yet our ELP approach also recognizes that language policy takes a back seat in the face of catastrophic events such as experienced in Nepal and resistance when seeking to ameliorate what amounts to institutional oppression in Hawai'i. Although unexpectedly calling for re-envisioning, our ongoing experience serves to complexify and, thus, go beyond our previous notions of ELP.

Our dialogic intertextual methods serve to foster an *in process* description of the epistemological, theoretical, and methodological premises underlying our ELP approach. The article further intends to communicate a shift from gaining knowledge about inequitable situations and/or exemplar equitable practices towards ELP that portrays the processes of mutual engagement—and resistance—among researcher/learners and all relevant actors towards realizing equity and human welfare. We feel that, as language and social equity advocates, further ELP theoretical conceptualization and social practices portrayal are important in realizing our collective commitment to and progress towards social justice.

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Appendix A: Nepal Indigenous Languages in Education Youth Plan

Carry out a feasibility study. Observe the language situation in schools and the community. Talk to community members about the possibility of multilingual education.

Conduct an awareness-raising program that discusses the importance of multilingualism and indigenous languages in education.

Collaborate with community members, social organizations, schools and other institutions to promote multilingualism and the use of indigenous languages in school.

Generate funding from various resources such as the Village Development Committee, District Education Office, and other organizations.

Collect indigenous knowledge (e.g. weaving skills and herbal medicine), culture and social practices, and develop curriculum and materials by using these resources.

Regularly monitor whether or not schools use indigenous languages and provide support as needed.

Group members: Ranjit Sangpahang, Shiva Kumar Dewan, Gajendra Chemjong, Priti Kerung and Poona Raini.

Appendix B: Ka Papahana Kaiapuni BOE Policy 2105: Model for Hawai'i State Multilingual Policy intended to serve all students

Ka Papahana Kaiapuni (Kaiapuni Educational Program) provides students with Hawaiian bicultural and bilingual education. Additionally, the program contributes to the continuation of our Hawaiian language and culture. The Kaiapuni Educational Program offers students an education in the medium of the Hawaiian language. The comprehensive program combines the use of Hawaiian teaching methodologies, language, history, culture and values to prepare students for college, career and to be community contributors within a multicultural society. The Department of Education (Department) shall develop the necessary rules, regulations, guidelines and procedures as well as an updated strategic plan for the program. Every student within the State of Hawai'i's public school system should have reasonable access to the Kaiapuni Educational Program.

The goals of the Kaiapuni Educational Program shall be:

1. To provide parents and student a Hawaiian bicultural and bilingual education based upon a rigorous Hawaiian content and context curriculum. The Kaiapuni Educational Program is offered to students K--12.
2. The curriculum and standards are to be developed by the Department to prepare students for college, career and contributors to community with the assistance of the appropriate stakeholders including the 'Aha Kauleo, Office of Hawaiian Affairs, University of Hawai'i system of colleges, and any other stakeholders selected by the Department. The development of the Kaiapuni curriculum, content, instruction and assessment should be informed and researched--based utilizing qualitative and quantitative data.
3. The Department shall establish in the Office of the Superintendent an Office of Hawaiian Education of which the head shall be part of the Superintendent's leadership team which will have oversight of the program's implementation and accountability to ensure effective curricula, performance standards for professional qualifications, organizational structure (e.g. Complex Area, Office), and community engagement. Additionally, this office will provide an annual program performance report to the Board of Education (BOE) and community via the Superintendent.
4. The program's success is largely dependent on the capacity, capability and expertise of the program's professional staff. The Department will establish professional qualifications and develop training programs internally and/or in cooperation with stakeholder groups/universities. The goal is for program professionals to be qualified in both English as a medium of instruction and Hawaiian as a medium of instruction and appropriately compensated for these additional qualifications.
5. The program's effectiveness requires the development and proper administration of appropriate formative and summative assessment tools. These program evaluation tools should be in alignment with the State's Kaiapuni curriculum and measure student growth and proficiency with the goal to prepare students for success in college, career and community.
6. The delivery of the program to students within the Department may include one of three organizational structures depending on the number of program students: (a) All students are enrolled in the program; principal and teachers are dual qualified. (b)

- Majority of students are enrolled in the program; principal and teachers are dual qualified; those students not in the program would be taught in English under supervision of the school's principal; and, (c) Students are offered a Kaiapuni Educational Program in an English medium school. Only the teachers teaching the Kaiapuni classes are required to be dual qualified. This policy shall not apply to teachers currently employed by the Department and/or Charter Schools prior to [insert BOE date of policy approval], and may be waived on an individual basis by the Superintendent of Education as circumstances warrant.
7. Each Kaiapuni School shall comply with all applicable BOE policies, rules and regulations. This policy is applicable to Kaiapuni charter schools. A charter school may request a waiver of this policy from the BOE. Approved 01/19/2006; Amending 2.13. 2014.