Contexts of English-in-education
Policy and Practice in Postcolonial Hong Kong

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In this article, debates revolving around the global spread of English, linguistic imperialism, World Englishes, and the theories of postcolonial performativity in postcolonial Hong Kong are critically discussed. Is English a cultural imperialistic tool of the West, or is English being increasingly hybridized and used for their own daily purposes by many Asian and Southeast Asian peoples? How is language policy and planning (LPP) related to the creation of social and educational (in)equalities? This article will discuss the above issues and conclude with the proposal that English-in-education policy and practice in many postcolonial Asian contexts need to go beyond linguistic purism and explore the viability of bilingual pedagogies.

Introduction

The Global Spread of English

English has become an everyday presence in many cosmopolitan cities in Southeast Asia today. For instance, in international airports in Seoul, Singapore, Hong Kong, or Kuala Lumpur, bilingual or multilingual signs are everywhere, and among them there are always English signs. The global spread of English has arisen from a host of historical, political, and socioeconomic factors. In many Southeast Asian contexts such as Singapore, Hong Kong, and Malaysia, where English was historically a colonial language imposed by former British colonial government, English has carried with it the baggage of colonial history and exploitation.