Intentional Dynamics in TESOL: An Ecological Perspective

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ABSTRACT

This paper presents an ecological perspective on meaning-making, conceptualised as developing intentionality and exemplified with reference to three international TESOL settings. The paper draws on philosophical and folk-psychological perspectives on intentionality, including Searle's (1983) distinction between intrinsic (individual) and derived (social) forms of intentionality and Young, DePalma and Garrett's (2002) modelling of intentional dynamics in educational settings. The paper illustrates the analytical affordances of the perspective through sample analyses of intentional dynamics found in three international TESOL settings. This includes: (i) young learners' interpretations of love and marriage in a joint writing task in a Norwegian primary L2 classroom, (ii) a Turkish teacher's first experience of teaching English to young learners, and (iii) the impact of the *English as the global language* phenomenon on the teaching of English to young learners in South Korea. The paper concludes that explorations of intentional dynamics on different levels of language education activities can enhance our ecological understanding of the cognitive, social and political dimensions of TESOL.

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INTRODUCTION

This paper extends the reach of ecological thinking in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) to include explorations of how individual and social intentionality shapes meaning-making activities. *Intentionality* is understood philosophically as the relational quality of one entity or event being about or directed at another entity or event (Searle, 1983), and folk-psychologically as the ordinary meaning of intention (Dennett, 1987). The current paper's focus on intentionality is motivated by recent research on the role of intentionality in various educational contexts (Papadopoulou, 2012; Stelma, 2011; Stelma & Fay, 2014; Young, DePalma, & Garret, 2002), including TESOL (Kostoulas, 2015; Stelma, 2013).

The current paper provides a brief summary of the defining features of ecological thinking, followed by a review of ecological research in TESOL. Then, the intentionality construct is introduced, and an ecological model of the intentional dynamics of meaning-making activities is presented. This model is used to explore meaning-making activities in three international TESOL situations: Norway, Turkey, and South Korea. We suggest that an ecological understanding of intentionality can make a significant contribution to building a contextualised understanding of the cognitive, social, and political dimensions of TESOL. In particular, the ecological model presented here offers terminology and concepts for tracing the outcomes of meaning-making in classrooms (exemplified by the Norwegian data), for understanding the interrelationship between the cognitive and social factors that shape teacher professional development (exemplified by the Turkish data), and making transparent the power and diffusion of top-down policy influences on English language education in schools (exemplified by the Korean data).

ECOLOGICAL THEORY

Ecological theory can be traced back to 19th century Germany, where Ernst Haeckel, in part inspired by Darwin's theory of evolution, suggested the term *ökologie/oecologie* to denote "the whole science of the relations of the organism to the environment" (Stauffer, 1957, p.140). In the early 20th century, ecology was largely a natural science, and to this day the word is associated with things natural, including the relationship humans have with the natural world. However, the core meaning of ecology first suggested by Haeckel also shaped 20th century social science and educational philosophy, with aspects of ecological thinking evident in the contributions of influential scholars such as Dewey, Piaget, Lewin, Vygotsky, and Bruner.

The more recent emergence of ecological theory in the social sciences has been shaped by, among others, Bateson's (1972) ecological fusion of anthropology and cybernetics, Barker's (1968) expansive fieldwork on behavioural settings, Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological systems theory, Gibson's (1979) theory of direct perception and affordances, and Haugen's (1972) ecology of language perspective. In particular, Bronfenbrenner's concept of concentric circles portraying different spheres of influence, with the focal person(s) or activity(ies) in the centre, has a visible presence in social and educational research. Likewise, Gibson's theory of direct perception and the concept of affordances has defined the present day field of ecological psychology, and has recently started to shape educational research (Barab, Cherkes-Julkowski, Swenson, Garrett, Shaw, & Young, 1999; Young et al., 2002), including TESOL (van Lier, 2004; Zheng, Young, Wagner, & Brewer, 2009). Finally, Haugen's contribution has given rise to

a vibrant literature on the dynamics and challenges arising from various forms of inter-language contact (e.g., MacPherson, 2003; Phillipson & Skutnabb-Kangas, 1996).

ECOLOGICAL THEORY IN TESOL

Ecological thinking in TESOL has been shaped by the broader picture illustrated above, but also includes TESOL-specific interpretations of the ecological. This section looks at some of the more distinct ecological thinking strands in TESOL, including: (i) views of language teaching methods and contexts as organisms, (ii) views of language teaching, schools, and curricula as ecological systems, and (iii) TESOL-specific interpretations of the notion of affordances.

An early use of an ecological metaphor in TESOL was Holliday and Cooke's (1982) description of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) as a "somewhat temperamental hybrid plant, native to Britain" (p.125). With this metaphorical image, Holliday and Cooke suggested that if ESP was brought to a different international context, it (the plant) might wither and die, i.e., the different environmental conditions might not be conducive for its survival. Holliday (1991) inverted this by suggesting that international TESOL contexts are like human bodies, and if you introduce a foreign body part (e.g., a western teaching method) into an international TESOL context, you may get "tissue rejection". These ecological metaphors have contributed to the view that local teachers should seek out locally appropriate teaching methodologies (Holliday, 1994, 2005), and/or explore local particularities, practicalities, and possibilities (Kumaravadivelu, 2006).

Another strand of ecological thinking views language teaching, schools, and curricula as ecological systems. Whereas the organic ecological metaphor operates on the level of *conceptual metaphor* (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980), ecological systems theory represents a *theory-constitutive metaphor* (see Boyd, 1993) with greater claims of structural equality between the source domain (the theory) and the phenomenon to be explained (TESOL). Pennington and Hoekje's (2010) "language program as ecology" highlights how the living whole of a language programme emerges out of a "multiplicity of interconnected components or resources and their mutual relationships and dependencies" (p. 214). Pennington and Hoekje also suggest that organisations are "physical ecologies in the sense that they comprise organization-internal resources linked to organization-external resources" and "social ecologies in the sense that they comprise people functioning within a social context" (p. 214). Hornberger (2002) has developed the continua of biliteracy model, which ecologically situates "biliteracy development in relation to the contexts, media and content in and through which it develops" (p. 38). Finally, systems perspectives facilitate the investigation of shaping influences within the system, and when paired with the emergentist and non-linear perspective offered by dynamical/complex systems thinking (Larsen-Freeman & Cameron, 2008) ecological systems research is well equipped to challenge reductionist and linear explanations of language teaching and learning.

A third distinct use of ecological thinking in TESOL draws on Gibson's (1979) notion of affordances, or action possibilities, available to teachers and learners. Affordances are ecological and dynamical in the sense that, as action possibilities, they emerge from the interaction between individuals and the environment. Noteworthy in Gibson's theory is that the information which makes affordances available to human perception and action is of the physical kind. Gibson's own research focused on visual perception, and the information he dealt with was visual

information such as light reflecting off surfaces in the environment. Another feature of Gibson's theory is that human activity is driven forward by cycles of perception and action, with action giving rise to the perception of additional affordances for action. In TESOL, van Lier (2000) has argued that "language learning is not a process of representing linguistic objects in the brain on the basis of input received" (p. 253), but instead that we should focus our research on affordances, as perceived by active learners, thereby allowing insight into how learners "use and live in" the new language. Zheng et al.'s (2009) empirical work on young language learners' interaction in virtual communities illustrates how, through continual perception-action cycles, children "pick up language in the virtual world through making the world their own" (p. 490). This focus on how language users live or make the world their own interacts with existing theorising in TESOL, and consequently the understanding of affordances in TESOL has shifted to embrace social types of information. This shift, from the physical to the social, is evident in positions such as that of Aronin and Singleton (2010), who propose that more developed linguistic competence creates more developed affordances to act socially in the world, and Kramsch's (2008) notion of *symbolic competence* describing not simply mastery of one or more languages, but an ability to access and create meanings beyond those present within distinct language codes, including using language "to shape the very context in which the language is learned and used" (p. 400).

The TESOL-specific interpretations of affordances have generated an ecological theory of language teaching and learning as meaningful engagement in the human world. We align ourselves with this development, and contribute further to this position by theorising and exemplifying how various forms of intentionality, as will be discussed in the following section, may contribute to creating affordances for language teachers' and learners' meaningful engagement in the world of TESOL.

INTENTIONALITY AND ECOLOGICAL THEORY

Two core meanings of intentionality that can be found in the literature are: (i) the relational understanding of phenomena being about or directed at (other) aspects of the mind, the body, and/or objects, people and events around us (Brentano, 1874/1995; Searle, 1983), and (ii) the folk-psychological understanding of intentionality akin to the ordinary meaning of intention (Dennett, 1987; Malle et al., 2001). Building on earlier theoretical contributions by Stelma (2011, 2013), this paper develops a theoretical synthesis that combines these two core meanings of intentionality.

Modern scholarship on intentionality goes back to Brentano (1874/1995), who described intentionality as *mental reference*, i.e., mental phenomena (thoughts) being about or directed at a mental objects (contents of consciousness). Thus, Brentano argued that "the only thing which is required by mental reference is the person [who does the] thinking" (p. 272). This introspective approach to psychology may be contrasted with the concurrent development of an empirical psychology by Wilhelm Wundt (see Dale, 2004). Brentano's intentionality is considered a key influence on later phenomenology where intentionality continues to denote mental phenomena which, whilst generated by living in the world, are unconnected in any realist sense to the external environment.

Searle (1983) has developed an understanding of intentionality that includes the relational quality originally suggested by Brentano. However, Searle holds that psychological states are

about or directed at objects and events in the external world. Searle also distinguishes between intrinsic intentionality – the intentionality of psychological states (including beliefs, knowledge, emotions, intentions, and more) – and derived intentionality – a virtual intentionality embedded in social artefacts and practices (including language, practices, laws, and more). The activity-based model of intentional activity developed by Stelma (2011) is focused on how individual and social forms of intentionality may interrelate. Stelma suggests that human activity is: (i) *shaped by* both individual and social forms of intentionality, and (ii) *shaping* new forms of individual and social intentionality. This, then, provides an ecological model of how, through human activity in the world, mental and social phenomena interrelate in ways that create meaning.

The folk-psychological understanding of intentionality, akin to the ordinary meaning of intention, infuses an additional sense of agency into an intentional ecology. Dennett (1987), a high-profile proponent of the folk-psychological view, argues that a focus on intentions allows us to explain why things are happening, and to predict what may happen next. Dennett contrasts this *intentional stance* with the *physical stance*, which explains events in terms of physical processes (e.g., Gibson's original definition of affordances), and the *design stance*, which encourages observers to explain how events were assembled (e.g., the computer as a conceptual metaphor for the brain). Only an intentional stance offers observers access to the meaning-making processes driving individual and collective human behaviour.

The folk-psychological view of intentionality has an established presence in ecological explanations of learning and development. Tomasello, Carpenter, Call, Behne, and Moll (2005) have suggested that shared intentionality develops in the first two years of children's lives, and that it is characterised by goals and intentions of one individual including "as content something of the goals and intentions of the other" (p. 680). Papadopoulou (2012) has suggested that "in evolutionary terms all behaviours have a purpose; they are intentional … [and] the ways children engage with their world are … driven by an evolutionary instinct" (p. 578). Young et al. (2002) suggest that human intention is a key generative mechanism of activity. Their modelling of intentional dynamics views human activity as an outcome not only of contextual influences reducing the freedom for action-in-the-moment, but as constrained also by human intentions acting alongside action-perception processes. Common in the above positions is the ecological insight that "meaning is not solely in the environment or solely in the individual but in the flow (the relation) between them" (Barab et al., 1999, p. 359).

Finally, we suggest that the philosophical and folk-psychological meanings of intentionality intersect by way of the psychological state of intention. Whereas other psychological states, such as beliefs, knowledge and emotions, tend to be directed at pre-existing external (or internal) phenomena, the psychological state of intention is directed at something that is not yet realised (see Searle, 1983, Chapter 6). As such, the psychological state of intention has a unique role in realising new activity. Moreover, activity generated by intention is the means by which further intentionality becomes embedded in social artefacts and practices (i.e., Searle's derived intentionality). The present paper usefully illustrates this embedding process; our early intention to write the paper was intentionally directed at a not yet realised activity (the co-writing) and a not yet realised product (the paper), and the embedded (or derived) intentionality of the resulting artefact – the contribution to knowledge in this finished paper – was enabled by our intention to write it.

INTENTIONAL DYNAMICS

In this section, we suggest viewing intentional activity as a journey across a metaphorical landscape. The ground in the landscape is what we, as individuals and collectives, stand on and travel across as we act in the world. The course we take across the landscape is determined by the topology and available routes. Our wish to reach other points in the landscape is what drives us forward. Finally, as human beings, we may pause to reflect on the landscape and our position in it, what are the available routes, and our desired destinations.

Building on the above discussion of intentionality, we suggest the following theoretical development of this metaphorical frame.

- The *ground* of intentional activity includes: (i) the intentionality of individual psychological states such as beliefs, knowledge, emotions, intentions, and more, and (ii) social intentionality projected by others and/or embedded in social artefacts and practices.
- The *course* of intentional activity is specified by affordances that arise from intentional dynamics involving both individual and social forms of intentionality.
- Two particular *drivers* of intentional activity are: (i) the intentionality of the psychological state of intention (i.e., the purposeful quality of the ordinary meaning of intention), and (ii) the corresponding social intentionality of expectations projected by others or embedded in social artefacts and practices.

In this model, we adopt the TESOL specific understanding of affordances (see section 3). Specifically, we believe that a significant source of information specifying affordances are the various forms of individual and social intentionality we have outlined above. Note also that the two suggested drivers of activity are, at the same time, part of the ecological ground of intentional activity and part of the intentional dynamics that give rise to the course of activity. Finally, in order to capture the many forms of meaning-making that TESOL research has uncovered as relevant for a fuller understanding of language education activity, we include a conceptualisation of the intentionality of reflective forms of thinking-in-action (Schön, 1983).

- The *critical agent* of intentional activity is the higher-order intentional activity of *reflexivity*. Reflexivity is individual or collaborative critical thinking directed at understanding and/or developing the ground, courses and drivers of intentional activity. This includes the ground, courses and drivers of reflexivity itself.

Using the above framework, we can delineate three qualitatively different types of activity. Where the activity relies on the ground, without any apparent presence of individual intention or socially projected expectations, the course of the intentional activity is constituted by what Scarantino (2003) refers to as *happening affordances*. What we then have is *spontaneous activity,* or a mere unfolding of events. If, however, the intentional dynamics are shaped by the psychological state of intention, and/or expectations projected by others or artefacts of the environment, the course of the activity is constituted by *goal affordances* (Scarantino, 2003). In this case we have *purposeful activity* directed at achieving particular outcomes. Finally, when the intentional dynamics includes reflexivity, the course of the activity is constituted by what may be called *critical affordances*. We have, then, critical activity pursued with a developing awareness of how the intentional dynamics are constituted, and may be constituting self, others and the

wider human environment. Needless to say, these are matters of degree; all activity is in part shaped by habits of mind and social circumstance, and conversely, both purposeful and critical activity rely on the ground constituted by spontaneity.

INTENTIONAL DYNAMICS IN THREE INTERNATIONAL TESOL SETTINGS

This part of the paper uses the ecological model of intentional dynamics outlined above to understand meaning-making in three different TESOL situations: Norway, Turkey, and South Korea. The Norwegian case focuses on how young learners understand love and marriage in a joint writing activity; the Turkish case explores a teacher's gradual development of purposeful and critical intentionality; the South Korean case highlights the shaping influence of a societal intentionality. The data used in these analyses of intentional dynamics were originally generated by three of the co-authors of this paper (see Lee, 2010; Onat-Stelma, 2005; Stelma, 2003).

The Intentional Ground of Classroom Meaning-Making (Norway)

This section explores the intentional ground evident in a written dialogue prepared by two 11-year-old learners in a primary school in a semi-rural area of south-eastern Norway. This focus makes transparent the outcomes of learners' classroom-based meaning-making. The analysis refers to the textbook task used, the learners' final written product, and (more indirectly) audio-recordings of the learners' interaction and observational notes. This data is selected from a larger project undertaken by the first author of the paper, which sought to understand the pedagogical qualities of different patterns of participation in task-based interaction, and which included data on three pairs of learners doing similar classroom activities over a 15-month period (see Stelma, 2003).

The writing task was set by the learners' textbook, and the prompt included the following scenario and suggested beginning for the dialogue (Lothe-Flemmen & Sørheim, 1997).

Maid Marion [sic] and Robin were going to get married, but the sheriff's men came to get him when they were in the church, and he had to flee from his castle, leaving his bride behind. Guy of Gisbourne wanted to marry her, and her father had agreed. But Marion could not forget Robin. She was put into prison in her father's house. She was helped to get away by Friar Tuck who dressed up as the Bishop. He took her with him to the Sherwood Forest.

Suggested beginning:
Robin: Oh, is it really you Marion. I never thought I would see you again.
Marion: Oh dear Robin. It's so good to see you. I have been so unhappy, and my father has been cruel to me. He wants me to marry Guy of Gisbourne. But I only love you.

The scenario evokes the English medieval legend of Robin Hood, with characters and storylines well known to these Norwegian children. The learner pairs were asked to compose a

continuation of this dialogue, and the pairs were subsequently expected to perform their dialogues as a role-play to the rest of the class (about 20 pupils).

The following table shows the written dialogue composed by two girls – Veronica and Karen (pseudonyms). A notable feature of the dialogue is the great number of linguistic inaccuracies, including both spelling and syntax. This was not necessarily a reflection of the girls English language ability; rather, it reflects the explicit meaning focus that had developed in repeated iterations of this type of role-play task (see Stelma, 2013 for detailed discussion). Whilst potentially in conflict with research emphasising the benefits of *Focus on Form* in task-based learning (see Spada, 2011), the explicit meaning focus has particular affordances for exploring the intentional ground of the learners' written dialogue. That is, the analysis of intentional dynamics focuses on the meanings rather than the forms of the learners' language production. The table includes the learners' speaker identifications (R=Robin; M=Marion; F=Forteller [Storyteller]; Fa=Father). The right-hand column suggests elements of the intentional ground on which the learners constructed their dialogue.

TABLE 1
Veronica and Karen's Written Dialogue and Analysis of Intentional Ground

Written Dialogue	Intentional ground

Robin Hood and Marion.

R.:	I love you to [too] Marion. But wer are your father.	
M:	he is aut and lokk for me.	Robin Hood story
	you most haid [hide] me.	
R:	You can be in my house. And we can myerry icather.	Nuclear family script
M:	But may father will kild you.	Robin Hood story
		(Protective father script)
R:	We can leav to the safor [Sherwood] forest together and	Robin Hood story
	leav [live] der [there].	
M:	Ja that a good idée.	
	My father will never find my der [there] becase he is	Robin Hood story
	araid [afraid] to go der [there].	
	I want to have to children. and one dog.	Nuclear family script
F:	And than they leav in happy nass and merry ichater.	Universal story script
	And hor [her] father never find hor [her].	

4 years later

R:	Is intaur [Isn't our] children bjutiful [beautiful]. they	Nuclear family script
	namsar [names are]: Mari and Rob.	
F:	Sombody noted [knocked] on the dor. ho [who] is it.	
Fa:	Way [Why] are you her?	(Protective father script)
M:	Bevas [Because] I love him.	

F: And then Robin skott [shot] him don [down].   (Performance
      Marion was criaing but she nou [knew] that she lowe   intentionality)
      [love] Robin.

                                                                   Universal story script
The end

_____

The presence of the Robin Hood story in the intentional ground of the dialogue, and the affordances this offers, is clear. This includes the father's wish that Marion (more commonly referred to as Marian) should have nothing to do with Robin, and the Sherwood forest as a place of escape. The Robin Hood story also seems to interact with a 'protective father script', which is universally available and present also in the Norwegian context. However, investigation of the transcribed interaction between the learners did not reveal any explicit references to such a protective father intentionality. It is more likely that this script *found its way into* the dialogue by way of the Robin Hood storyline. The *nuclear family script*, however, is not overtly present in the Robin Hood story and, hence, seems a more distinct part of the learner generated intentional ground. This includes the social intentionalities of sharing a house when married, wishing for two children and a dog, believing that your own children are beautiful, and naming children after parents/family members. Also evident in the dialogue are the affordances offered by a *universal story script*. This is indexed by the addition ("I love you too Marion") to the *orientation* originally provided by the textbook, the father wanting to keep them apart as the *complication*, and hiding in the Sherwood forest as the *resolution*. Although this may have been motivated by the Robin Hood storyline, the "living happily ever after" reference makes the universal story script a more distinct element of the intentional ground. Moreover, the learners add an event happening four years later, including an additional orientation ("Isn't our children beautiful. they names are: Mari and Rob"), complication (the father finding them), and resolution (Robin shooting the father and Marion accepting this as "she knew that she love Robin").

A possible final element of the intentional ground is a *performance intentionality*; this refers to a collective intentionality that emerged in this class as a similar role-play task was repeated over the course of a year (this was the third time the learners did such a task). The performance intentionality "included formulating entertaining dialogue, practising the dialogues, paying attention to how to stage the performances, and gradually also the emergence of 'realia' used in the performances" (Stelma, 2013, p.12). Hence, this collective intentionality, specific to this class at this point in time, provided a particular course for the learners' activity and may have acted as a driver for the addition of the final dramatic resolution.

We suggest that the above analysis of the intentional ground evident in the dialogue that the learners' formulated provides a window on their meaning-making during the task performance. That is, we believe that our focus on the outcomes of learner interaction can provide some insight into the intentional dynamics that generated the outcomes. However, a fuller understanding of the course and drivers of the intentional activity would require a moment-to-moment (microgenetic) analysis of the learners' talk-in-interaction during writing; such an analysis is provided by Stelma (2013). The aim of a microgenetic analysis would be to explore how and to what extent the various elements of the intentional ground, as reviewed above, actually shaped the moment-to-moment affordances that determined the course of the writing activity. A microgenetic analysis might also reveal something about the relationship between the emerging intentional ground and the English language the learners used, thereby connecting the

analysis of intentionality with the *affordances of language* perspective developed in other parts of the TESOL literature (see earlier section). In addition, a combined focus on the intentionality of a product, such as the above dialogue, and the microgenetic origin of the product, may generate insights into broader educational affordances of learners' meaning-making activity. Based on observation of the spontaneous role-play activity of nursery children, Papadopoulou (2012) suggests that "simple and stereotypical categorisation of the world enables the developing person to manage simple and broad categories of information before more complex distinctions and meaning structures emerge" (p. 590). The intentional ground of the above dialogue also appears simple and broad, and hence may index a stage of these young learners' cultural development. However, composing a text in L2, as well as various forms of peer-influence (such as the performance intentionality), may have affected the elements that these learners incorporated in the intentional ground of their written dialogue.

Intentional Dynamics of Teacher Professional Development (Turkey)

Our analysis in this section is focused on the intentional dynamics generated by cognitive and social influences in a particular instance of teacher professional development. This analysis provides further exemplification of the concept of intentional ground, as well as a more explicit focus on the developing courses and drivers of a teachers' language classroom teaching. Finally, the analysis makes reference to the role of reflexivity and critical agency in the teacher's developing practice.

The discussion of intentional dynamics in this section represents a re-analysis of data from a larger study by Onat-Stelma (2005; see also Stelma & Onat-Stelma, 2010), which aimed to understand the impact of the Turkish government's 1997 plan to introduce English language as a compulsory subject in primary schools. The data is from the private primary sector, which moved quickly to include English language as a subject. Given a shortage of teachers with experience of, or formal qualifications in, teaching English to primary age learners, these private schools recruited teachers with a track-record from secondary, high-school and adult TESOL (a recruitment pattern that was repeated shortly thereafter in the public sector; see Kırköz, 2007). The analysis focuses on Imge (again a pseudonym), an experienced teacher of Business English, who started teaching English language to Year 1 children (6-7-year-olds) in an Istanbul private primary school. We draw on interview and observational data generated at regular intervals over the course of a school year (September to May). The interviews were conducted in Turkish; the data used in the following analysis has been translated into English.

The intentional ground for Imge's early approach to teaching Year 1 English was evident in comparisons she made with her previous experience with older learners.

I use more pictures, more flashcards, more cutting and pasting activities, it is a bit more game-oriented. It is very enjoyable for me, because a part of me never grows up. (September)

Sometimes I prepare extra games, like in the book, whether it is in the curriculum or not. (October)

This and other data suggests that the affordances that determined the course of Imge's early teaching activity were shaped by her own spontaneous awareness of how children learn

(through practical activities and play), by the colourful materials available in the school, as well as a textbook which included game-like activities. Viewed on a more extended timescale, the intentionality embedded in the materials and textbook may have been shaped by the common expectation, variously expressed in the teaching English to young learners literature and community, that classroom environments should include fun-filled and creativity activities (e.g., Moon, 2000).

An unexpected feature of Imge's early experience was that the children soon became noisy and started misbehaving.

> ... the children become very noisy, they make fun of each other, and sometimes there are arguments which go on into the break time. I say that when we play a game our aim is to learn. We will have fun while we are playing and while we are having fun we will show respect for the other group's rights, like we will listen to them just the same as they listen to us when we come up to the board. (November)

It is possible that Imge's early approach to teaching young learners was driven by an insufficiently developed purpose; she acted on expectations embedded in the available materials and textbook, as well as her own pre-reflective intentionality about how children learn. However, the developing ground of Imge's teaching activity, subtly shaped also by conversations with other teachers, also included seeds of change. Change seemed prompted by Imge's interest in creating criteria for good behaviour, and from this emerged a new driver - the intention to create an orderly classroom environment - and thereby new affordances for Imge's teaching activity.

> Well, we decided on certain criteria. I increased the criteria gradually. The ones who abide by them were chosen as stars. The first one [criterion] is to stand up when the teacher comes in, in order to greet the teacher. The second one is that our materials are complete. Scissors, glue and paint is at the top of the list. (January)

All the while, Imge persisted with frequent game-like language activities. Hence, the drivers of Imge's intentional activity now included: (i) an intention to create a fun-filled classroom environment using game-like activities, and (ii) an intention to create an orderly classroom environment. However, classroom observation and follow-up interviews indicated that the affordances of this particular combination of intentional drivers resulted in further tensions.

> I am not happy in terms of class management. I am not sure of the atmosphere. The lesson gets interrupted so much. We are aware of the situation but we can't solve it, we aren't practical. In other words, I haven't been able to achieve the result I have expected so far. (April)

Further change seemed inevitable, and this came from Imge's gradual realisation that she needed to understand the experience and perceptions of the children, and that she needed to reflect on possible tension between expectations communicated by the teacher's book and contrary signals received from the pupils. As early as October, Imge commented on the advice in the teacher's book to pause an audio tape at difficult words.

I don't need to pause ... and get them to listen and show from their books because these are students who can understand. They got bored there for example, there was a bit of a wandering off there, that was not necessary. (October)

The realisation, when more fully developed, was that the learners themselves were significant agents in the classroom ecology, with their own intentional dynamics impacting on the classroom experience. This eventually led Imge to challenge her earlier espoused intention to create a fun-filled classroom environment ("important not to overdo the game concept"—April), and she increasingly tried to engage the children in more constructive classroom roles.

And also, so that he [the student in question] doesn't feel bad, I say, you are my assistant, last week he helped me as an assistant. Actually I did that so that I wouldn't let him leave my side, being an assistant, I would say, "assistant, what should we do today", you should see how he runs in the classroom ... that's how he became motivated. He says, "it's really important to be an assistant, it's an important job". (January)

By becoming more critically aware of the impact of her teaching activity, including understanding the experience of her young pupils, Imge now reflexively observed the intentional dynamics unfolding in her classroom. This criticality is evident in the following instance of reflecting back on the start of the year.

In the beginning of the year I used to follow the teacher's book much more strictly, it was the uneasiness of being new, I didn't want to trust my own instinct actually and also it was a period of getting to know the students. (April)

Over time, the intention to engage children in constructive roles seemed to replace the earlier intention to create an orderly environment. Coupled with a more judicious use of game-like activities, and her ongoing reflexive consideration of the classroom intentional dynamics, Imge's teaching evolved into a more coherently purposeful activity. At the end of the year she commented:

Now they are better, they are settled more, everyone is clearer. I know how to treat them now, better results. In the begining of course I was trying, should I do it like this, should I do it like that. (May)

However, as the following extract shows, this change did not mean that the intentional ground upon which Imge stood at the start of the year was entirely abandoned. There was still a sense of spontaneity alongside the more coherently purposeful and critical.

Art, music, physical education, actually it's a combination of all of these, they are sprinkled in our lesson like sweet spices! (May)

This section has further developed the notion of intentional ground, in this case how intentional ground acts to anchor a teachers' classroom teaching activity. Moreover, the section has exemplified the significant role played by gradually changing intentional drivers in creating

new affordances for action and in shifting a teachers' approach to teaching. Finally, the analysis has briefly touched upon how the teacher's developing reflexivity and critical agency allowed for a fuller appreciation of the evolving intentional dynamics of the classroom situations she was facing.

Intentional Dynamics Driven by Policy (South Korea)

Our final case highlights that when the intentional ground, courses and drivers of English language teaching are shaped by policy and society more generally it is difficult for stakeholders, such as parents, principals, teachers and learners, to individually change the intentional dynamics. The data that we reinterpret in this final case was originally generated in a larger study (see Lee, 2010) that explored stakeholders' perceptions of the state of young learner TESOL in South Korea in the mid-2000s. The data included interviews, conducted over a three-year period, with young learners, their parents, as well as teachers and principals in both private and public primary English language teaching settings. In the present analysis we focus on the often unprompted reflections on the impact of the 'English as the global language' phenomenon. We use English translations, clearly marked, for those participant statements that were originally spoken in Korean.

Lee (2011) describes how, in the 1990s, the South Korean government initiated the policy of 'globalisation' (글로벌화—*Globalhwa* in Korean). Central in this policy was the introduction of the English language as a compulsory subject in state primary schools. Lee also synthesised the following policy-based intentions for introducing English language into the primary curriculum.

- To improve the economic competitiveness of South Korea;
- To provide more equal opportunity for children from disadvantaged backgrounds (in part by reducing household expenditure on private English language education);
- To encourage children's interest in English language and culture.

The 'English as the global language' phenomenon is intentionally present in these policy intentions, including a clear association between economic competitiveness and English language, and a seemingly intrinsic value accorded to English language and culture (however ambiguously defined). This intentionality was perceived strongly also by ordinary South Koreans.

Countries using English language as their mother tongue have great power over countries that do not use English language. Therefore, the English language is an essential instrument to survive in this world. (Parent; translation)

In an era of globalisation, English language is important to express oneself and to persuade others. To understand various cultures of other countries a language which is used commonly internationally is very much needed ... (State school principal; translation)

The data collected by Lee (2010) suggests that the *English as the global language* phenomenon, serving as intentional ground for principals, teachers, parents and children, shaped

affordances in South Korean TESOL in a number of concrete ways. Lee found a strong focus on speaking skills, including statements such as "Korean parents' passion for English language education is high because they want their children to speak English fluently and be successful in the future" (state school teacher; translation) and "being in the era of a globalised world the public education sector seems to be trying their best to focus on speaking" (parent; translation). There was also a *culture* of children having English names, aptly summarised by a private institute English teacher: "There is no one who does not have an English name since they all went to English language kindergarten" (translation). There was also a strong sense of *native-speakerism* (Holliday, 2005), with a state school teacher linking this to the focus on speaking when suggesting that "to use native English speaking teachers rather than Korean teachers is much better in the eyes of the parents and … we also noticed that children's speaking ability has risen when using native English speaking teachers" (translation). Finally, there were strongly worded statements indicating a sense of competition among parents, such as e.g., "My child has to be special; my child has to be extraordinary; my child has to be in the first rank" (parent; translation).

Noteworthy in these intentional dynamics was the absence of individually derived purposes to drive activity. Analysis of the available data, then, suggests that the driver of the teaching of English to young learners was the societal expectation about English language competence. In particular, ELT activity seemed driven by the government's intention to increase the nation's economic competitiveness. The other two policy intentions, as synthesized by Lee (2011; see above), seemed less prominent as drivers. In fact, the role of private English language institutes seemed to be strengthened in the 1990s and 2000s, thereby increasing the costs for parents. A private institute teacher offered the following explanation.

> Private forms of English language education have emerged as parents just cannot leave their children not learning anything after school. They may feel pressured and worried if their children are not studying while others are having extra education.

Whilst previously affecting mainly middle/high school, University and the job market, it appears then that the government policy of globalisation extended the influence of the *English as the global language* intentionality to the primary school level, creating societal expectations regarding English language competence even for younger children (see also Jeon, 2009). This observation is by no means new; the de-motivating effect of the competition culture in South Korean TESOL has been empirically documented in both primary and secondary settings (Kim, 2006; Kim & Seo, 2012).

The absence of individually derived drivers seemed to result in teachers', parents' and pupils' feelings of disempowerment. Korean-born English language teachers may have felt this particularly strongly.

> I come up against a limitation when using only English because I cannot use English as perfectly as I do with Korean. Korean comes out of my mouth often … However, I try to use English a lot because it is good for the children. (State school teacher; translation)

The sense of displacement was felt by child participants as well, as the following comment by a parent, focusing on her child's perception of her Korean-born English teacher, shows.

> As Ye-bin told me before, teachers … their pronunciation is so weird and when the teachers talk [in English], children make fun of them so teachers just use CD-ROMs and do nothing [do not speak English]. (Translation)

This did not necessarily mean that children preferred English *native-speaker* teachers. One young research participant offered the following observation: "I like Korean teachers … because native speaker teachers … when we say something they do not understand us and they disregard us" (translation). Finally, displacement was felt also in terms of identity, as illustrated by a state school teacher's reflections on the use of English names.

> When a native speaker teacher teaches the class and um … gives students English names, what I feel is that … what will that student feel about his/her Korean name? They might think of their names as less valuable. I refuse to use English names. (State school teacher; translation)

The data and interpretation offered above points to a societal intentionality, given shape by government policy, which may fundamentally shape the life-course opportunities of young South Koreans. South Korea is an export-driven economy dominated by a small number of large commercial *Chaebol* (large industrial corporations such as Samsung, LG, POSCO, and Hyundai). An aspirational culture means that the status, security and *draw* of working for these Chaebol have a disproportionate effect on young people's lives. Sixty-five percent of South Korean 25-34-year-olds, the highest rate of any Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development member country, have attained some type of tertiary-level education (OECD, 2012). The English language plays a central role in these intentional dynamics; English language is a key part of the South Korean university entrance examination, and standardized testing of English is widely used for employment and promotion purposes.

This final case, then, illustrates how local intentional dynamics of English language teaching and learning may be fundamentally shaped by expectations originating in society and policy contexts. Lee's (2010) data *does* suggest reflexive engagement, including e.g., parents and children's reflections on local versus foreign 'native-speaking' teachers, and the local teacher that questioned the use of 'English' names. Counter-narratives to native-speakerism in South Korea are available also in the literature, such as Shin and Kellogg's (2007) empowering account of the contributions of Korean-born teachers. However, overall the data suggests that the *English as the global language* phenomenon contributes to a uniquely rigid ground for TESOL teaching and learning activity in South Korea, privileging certain affordances for action over others, and thereby leaving little room for individual purposeful or critical activity.

CONCLUSION

We believe that by ecologizing the concept of intentionality, and using this to understand meaning and meaning-making activity, we can make a significant contribution to contextualised

understanding of cognitive, social and political dimensions of TESOL. The analysis of the intentional ground shaped by the two Norwegian young learners illustrates new ways of understanding the origins and development of learners' meaning-making during classroom activity. The task-based learning literature has emphasised the unpredictability of learner interpretation during task-based activity (Breen, 1987; Kumaravadivelu, 1991). The present ecological perspective offers vocabulary and concepts for tracing the dynamic processes and outcomes of learner interpretation (see also Stelma, 2013). The exploration of the first year of a Turkish teacher's experience of teaching young learners suggests how we may understand the interrelationship between cognitive and social shaping influences in teacher professional development. That is, at the start of the year the teacher's intentional ground was shaped by pre-reflective beliefs about how children learn, and relatively spontaneously drawing on resources and expectations present in her environment. As she gained in experience, and engaged more critically with her teaching, as well as her pupils reactions to her teaching, her approach seemed characterised by a more coherent and purposeful intentionality. This exploration of the intentional dynamics of teacher experience is not only consistent with recent calls for more holistic and situated research on professional development (Opfer & Pedder, 2011; Tudor, 2003). We believe, in addition, that a focus on intentional dynamics can make visible "the ups, downs, laughs, mistakes, disappointments, insights, emotions, dilemmas, tensions and achievements" that provide reason for investigating teacher professional development (Hoban, 2002, p. 174). Finally, the South Korean case is perhaps the best illustration of intentionality as an ecological construct, showing how powerful the top-down influence of the *English as a global language* phenomenon can be. It also illustrates the possible diffusion of top-down influence through policy, whereby more specific social intentionalities such as native-speakerism may emerge. It is eye-opening to see how South Korean children, at a young age and mediated by teachers, parents and policy-makers, begin to engage with the socio-political phenomenon of *English as a global language.*

We should comment, finally, on the analytical approach taken in making sense of the intentional dynamics in the above reported cases. Most importantly, we do not have access to our participants' intrinsic intentionality (see discussion of Searle's position in section 4); their mental lives remain hidden to us. Rather, we rely on the derived intentionality of what our participants say, write or do for clues about their intrinsic intentionality. Social forms of intentionality, one might argue, are equally available to be perceived by our participants and us as researchers. However, it is not possible to either repeat or reconstruct the exact intentional dynamics of real world situations. Moreover, intentional dynamics involve interpretive processes, and it is likely then that both our participants, in talking to us, and we as researchers trying to make sense of our participants' accounts, strive for that continuum in our respective experience that Connelly and Clandinin (1986) refer to as *narrative unity*. We do believe that ecological intentional systems are *real*, representing networks of meaning that shape affordances for action and our experience in the world, but accept that our data and our interpretations are ultimately an outcome of a cascade of complex intentional dynamics, including also the analytical activity reported on in this paper.

In sum, we believe that our focus on intentionality strengthens the sense, already strong in ecologically framed TESOL research, that language teaching and learning is about meaning (Kramsch, 2008), and that an analysis of meaning-making must span the individual and the social in a manner that avoids reduction into component parts (Tudor, 2003). We further believe that our ecological exploration of intentionality offers new vocabulary and conceptual tools for

understanding experience in context, and that an appreciation of the intentional dynamics that shape us and our world can further enhance the explanatory potential of ecological thinking in TESOL.

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