



Raza, K., & Chua, C. (2022). Global-contextual TESOL leadership in diverse and multi-dimensional contexts: A paradigmatic shift. *International Journal for Leadership in Learning*, 22(1), 305-339. <https://doi.org/10.29173/ijll12>

Global-Contextual TESOL Leadership in Diverse and Multi-Dimensional Contexts: A Paradigmatic Shift

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Abstract

The complexity with which today's leadership works, especially in diverse workplaces where multiple cultures, backgrounds, expertise, talents, languages, and values consistently intersect, it is difficult to stick to a single leadership model or theory. The biggest challenge in this regard is the inability to associate a program to a solo culture or group values because contemporary workplaces are amalgamations of diversity, uncertainty, and dynamism. This means that following a particular leadership style, which often presumes that everyone working for the program shares common values, beliefs, and objectives, has become unfeasible. This situation calls for revisiting leadership practices in a globalized world, exploring how such situations are emerging and addressed in different disciplines, and what can be done to contribute to a renewed understanding of leadership that is compatible with global forces and also reflective of the local community. This paper begins with a literature review of Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) leadership and provides an overview of the multilayered challenges leaders deal with in this profession. It discusses how TESOL leaders could create a balance between global developments in the field of education and TESOL, and the language-based needs of local and non-local students and program requirements. Drawing upon four prepositions, this paper argues that there is the need for leaders to adopt a paradigmatic shift when leading complex educational institutions. It proposes that TESOL leaders could take a global-contextual approach that focuses on the local contexts while drawing upon the global practices when addressing the challenges in a TESOL program.

Keywords: global-contextual approach, TESOL leadership, diversity

Introduction

In today's globalized world, the unfathomable diversity produced by continuous interactions between stakeholders (e.g., faculty, administrators, students, and upper management) from diverse backgrounds in a single workplace adds to the challenges faced by educational leaders. These leaders face difficulties in creating and maintaining optimal performance in the

operationalization of their programs, reaching consensus on issues related to curriculum, assessment, pedagogy, and program objectives, and delineating future agendas that reflect everyone's values, beliefs, and needs. These challenges are in addition to everyday work that leaders have to deal with, such as motivating their co-workers, preparing staff for continuous development, and meeting the expectations of the higher administration. Previous models of leadership including authentic leadership (Gardner et al., 2011), collective leadership (Leithwood & Mascal, 2008), distributed leadership (Diamond & Spillane, 2016), ethical leadership (Sagnak, 2017), and servant leadership (Greenleaf, 2002; Harris, 2013) were developed upon certain theoretical foundations like power-sharing, legitimization of status, or empathy. These leadership models have indeed expanded our understanding of how leaders can function following a particular perspective or theory to leadership and how leadership theories can inform practice in particular socio-cultural contexts. However, most of these models presume that the program where one functions as a leader consists of people who share similar expectations and objectives that are consistent, stable, and similar. They have also discounted the complexity within which today's leaders work, especially in current workplaces where multiple cultures, backgrounds, expertise, talents, languages, and values intersect each other, making it difficult for leaders to stick to a single leadership style. The biggest challenge in this regard is the inability to associate a program to a solo culture or single set of group values because today's workplaces are amalgamations of diversity, uncertainty, and dynamism. Thus, following a particular leadership style, which often presumes that everyone working in an organization shares common values, beliefs, and objectives has become unfeasible. This situation calls for revisiting leadership practices in a globalized world, exploring how such situations are emerging and addressed in different disciplines, and devising

new approaches to contribute to a renewed understanding of leadership that is compatible with global forces, but also reflective of the local culture.

Leadership Challenges in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) Field

A field like TESOL has become increasingly diverse in terms of leaders coming from different disciplines, teachers joining the field from various ethnic, cultural and linguistic backgrounds, and staff from English and non-English speaking countries (Raza, 2018a). Furthermore, TESOL students as second language learners often come from countries whereby English has either emerged as a local variety (e.g., India, Nigeria, Pakistan, Philippines, and Singapore) or is being taught as an important language for socio-politico-economic and educational purposes (e.g., China, Israel, Japan, and Qatar) (Raza, Coombe, et al., 2021). Consequently, language program leaders are surrounded by unpredictable interactions, emerging situations, and multiple layers of social, political, and institutional contexts visible in multiple forms. Issues like curriculum development, legitimation of English teachers (especially those whose English is not recognized as a standard variety or those who do not speak English as their first language), multilingualism (multiple languages spoken with varying proficiencies), multiculturalism, plurilingualism (competence and the ability to switch between multiple languages for communication), professional development of faculty and administrators, racism, marginalization of TESOL as a field, and scarcity of research on TESOL leadership are some examples of the challenges TESOL leaders face every day (Raza, Manasreh, et al., 2021). For potential as well as in-service leadership training, such situations bring confusion and lack of guidance, which can be detrimental for their practices and performance as they may not always be able to lead effectively. Earlier research in this regard is either fundamental relativist where the focus is on shaping leadership practices according to an individual or cultural context (Carver,

2017) or too broad in pointing to universal characteristics of effective leaders which are not always reflective of the volatile context where a TESOL leader is practicing. Consequently, the literature on the topic is full of either *one-size-fits-all* strategy (e.g., see Tannacito, 2013) or *universal characteristics* of leaders (Bush, 2018; Christison & Murray, 2009; Coombe et al., 2008; McGee et al., 2014; Stoten, 2015). This leaves language program leaders in diverse contexts with limited resources and guidelines to inform their practices. Furthermore, this universalization of leadership practices in the field of TESOL is being challenged by scholars who argue for the need to reframe the role of TESOL leaders, and that is, leaders who are more able to take a more local-global approach possessing the ability to negotiate between leadership theories and models, and the multiple layers of the context where a leader functions (Raza, 2021). This approach sees leadership as a dynamic practice where leaders draw upon different resources, borrow leadership ideas from different cultures, mix theories and approaches, and reconstruct leadership practices that are situational, informed, and context-specific rather than universal, fixed, and structured (Raza, Manasreh, et al., 2021).

Developing upon this research trend and helping TESOL leaders in answering the big question “so what should I do now?”, we suggest that a shift in perceiving leadership as a dynamic practice in language program administration is necessary. Furthermore, we argue that a global-contextual leadership approach that delineates strategies of what can be done to inform leadership practices that are reflective of the local context(s) but also align with international standards and dominant models may be a way forward for contemporary leaders to function effectively in today’s diverse and globalized workplaces. Realizing the significant role of leaders in designing and implementing policies and programs in varied contexts, this paper proposes an approach that invites language program leaders to perceive their context as a fluid, emerging, and ever-changing

phenomenon that requires consistent exploration and reconsideration of the local and the global to devise appropriate leadership practices that are reflective of students' language needs, departmental objectives, institutional agendas, and national/international developments in the field of language education. The global-contextual approach will allow language program leaders to understand how they can modify their leadership practices to better accommodate the contextual needs of their programs and for researchers to develop literature on the topic that can help leaders become more informed, effective, emphatic, and successful in their contexts. The global-contextual approach is developed upon existing leadership theories but pushes further for contextual understanding for language program leadership effectiveness in post-secondary settings where socio-cultural or educational context is not fixed or stagnant but a dynamic and continuously evolving phenomenon. Instead of proposing another leadership theory or a list of characteristics, this paper develops upon existing work on diversity, educational leadership, and TESOL to pay more attention to the context where the topic of leadership is being discussed and negotiated, and how leaders can prepare themselves for these challenges brought forth by global forces that shape local educational policies.

Leadership in TESOL: A Brief History

Due to the increase in migration, immigration requirements, and institutional protocols for admissions, interest in leadership practices in TESOL or English education has gained momentum over the last two decades. Realizing the interconnectedness between leadership and learning, researchers have started investigating the influence of leaders in English education in general (Christison & Murray, 2009; Coombe et al., 2008) as well as contexts (McGee et al., 2014; Raza, 2021; Raza, Manasreh, et al., 2021). For instance, as an earlier work in this area, an edited volume by Coombe et al. (2008) provided insights into the theoretical underpinnings of leadership

development, skills, and strategies required by effective TESOL leaders. The volume was motivated by the lack of research on English Language Teaching (ELT) leaders and included entries from contributors who had served as leaders in the field of ELT and have been associated with professional associations like TESOL, International Association of Teachers of English as a Foreign Language (IATEFL) or local TESOL affiliates.

Following this work and its call for more research in this area, other researchers interested in ELT leadership expanded the field (e.g., Christison & Murray, 2009; Eaton, 2013; McGee et al., 2014; Raza, Manasreh, et al., 2021). For instance, Tannacito (2013) provided a detailed description of different types of leaders that work in a language program and highlighted their contributions as program administrators, managers, curriculum and technology leads, and evaluators. His work helps us understand the distributed leadership model followed by many English language programs where leaders play different roles at different levels within a single program. Some of these roles include working as activities coordinator, assistant director, curriculum leader, director, marketing specialist, records manager, student advisor, teacher trainer/supervisor, testing coordinator, technology coordinator, and tutor trainer/supervisor. However, his work is limited to the description of only one type of English language program, intensive English programs that are mainly self-supported and are intended for preparing international students for a college education at universities based in English speaking countries like Australia, Canada, New Zealand, United Kingdom (UK), or United States of America (USA). This body of work was later expanded by Raza, Manasreh, et al. (2021) by including other types of English language programs such as affiliated programs, often referred to as Foundation Programs in the Gulf, international branch campuses, language programs working under community colleges, bilingual education programs offering language services for/in two

languages, and undergraduate/graduate programs offering certificates, diplomas, and degrees. The main purpose of these programs is to teach English to students whose first language is not English and are on their way to take classes in English at a college or university. In other words, the term language program covers different types of programs that provide language teaching and learning services and may differ from each other in terms of vision and mission as well as structure and functioning.

In addition to researchers, language teacher associations like TESOL International Association and IATEFL have also taken initiatives to provide support to language program leaders. For example, TESOL International Association launched a TESOL Leadership Development Certificate Program in 2005, which aims to familiarize participants with the history of TESOL as an organization, different perspectives on leadership, strategic thinking and planning skills for association leaders, and essential communication and organizational learning skills for leaders. Similarly, both TESOL and IATEFL have interest sections or groups that provide resources for language program administrators who aim to serve as leaders at various levels or in different fields. These sections or groups also serve as platforms for in-service (directors, academic managers, coordinators, supervisors, senior teachers, deputy heads) or potential leaders to share their experiences, ideas, and expertise with each other, thus creating a community of leaders with common goals (Raza, 2018a).

The growing interest in TESOL leadership is also encouraging researchers to examine the influence of leaders on the teaching and learning of communities, therefore, pushing the field towards the practices of TESOL leaders in specific contexts and cultures. McGee et al. (2014), for instance, explored the leadership practices in two New Zealand schools with minority English language learners and how these practices influence student learning. Their study highlighted the

success stories as well as the challenges faced by the leadership that aims to support TESOL teaching and learning in their context. Their findings suggested four leadership practices that resulted in the successfulness of the program in the context of New Zealand: establishing clear objectives, becoming role models for others, providing professional development of teachers, and accommodating language needs of learners through empowerment and structural changes. These findings have become a starting point for TESOL leadership in New Zealand to design, develop, and structure resources for in-service as well as in-coming language program leaders. Similarly, Raza, Manasreh, et al. (2021) provided ethnographic narratives of three language program leaders in Qatar who reflected upon their experiences of administering diverse programs, identifying recurring challenges in program management such as cultural diversity, curriculum development, power sharing, racism, and recruitment, and devising localized strategies to address such issues. Their study argued that an understanding of the macro and micro-level contexts is necessary to successfully administer a diverse language program.

TESOL Leadership Performing in Linguistically Diverse Contexts

One of the drawbacks of globalization on language education is that when promoting linguistic homogeneity and unification of language standards, knowledge, curriculum, and policies (Canagrajah, 2005), certain models of effective leadership for language program management (see Christison & Murray, 2009; Heyworth, 2003) have also been exported from politically, educationally, and economically powerful, and predominantly monolingual, countries to politico-economically as well as educationally unstable, and mainly multilingual, societies (McGee et al., 2014). This has not only promoted the notion of universal characteristics of effective leaders, a concept Stoten (2015) strongly disapproved, but also suppressed local practices, beliefs, and attributes associated with leaders (Antal et al., 2018). A subsequent result of such modeling is the

miniature representation of local literacy practices and contexts when designing and implementing a language policy for a specific setting (Ramanathan & Morgan, 2007) as well as perceiving linguistic diversity as a challenge rather than an asset, and, consequently, promoting specific languages (e.g., English) over local and indigenous languages.

Since the effectiveness of leaders directly influences the performance of their programs in achieving the intended outcomes (McGee et al., 2014), it is necessary that leaders in language programs prepare themselves through continuous professional development for the expected and unexpected challenges and issues that are generally faced in these positions (Raza, 2021). One of the challenges for contemporary leadership is to formulate literacy policies that ensure equal representation for both international languages and vernaculars in curriculum, teaching practices, and assessment. This will require an understanding of the global discussions about language education and a contextual insight of the language related challenges of a community through direct exposure, observation, and experience of everyday issues related to language policy in a multilingual setting followed by the development of necessary leadership skills to address them effectively. Chua and Soo (2018) explained that as policies are negotiated at different levels, the outcomes dependent on contextual circumstances, which often generates both intended and unintended outcomes. As in the case of Singapore's English-knowing bilingual policy, an unintended outcome of the policy is that English has become the language of choice among Singaporeans resulting in the shift to speaking English and not the mother tongue languages for many younger Singaporeans.

Diversity in Program Administration and TESOL as a Field

With the expansion of the field of English language teaching across the globe and recognition of the local language needs as well as resources of English language learners (ELLs)

in the form of bi/pluri/multi-lingual competencies or what Raza, Coombe, et al. (2021) termed as ‘policy development in TESOL and multilingualism’, calls for promoting diversity, equity, and social justice in language education are echoing in the majority of the work being produced on language education in globalized contexts (Canagarajah, 2005; Coombe et al., 2008; García, 2009; Raza, 2018b, 2019, 2020; Raza & Coombe, 2020). With this promotion of diversity, equity, and social justice, the role of language program leaders in ensuring equal opportunities for all learners, regardless of these learners’ language backgrounds, ethnicities, color, and religion became more complex (Raza, Manasreh, et al., 2021). This includes supporting English language teachers in providing equitable and inclusive educational experiences to learners through continuous professional development, incorporating their feedback in policy formation, implementation, and revision, and creating a balance between institutional objectives and learners’ academic and non-academic needs. Literature produced on language program leadership preparation, especially in culturally relevant leadership (e.g., see Raza, Manasreh, et al., 2021), for embracing and promoting diversity in language programs informs us that leaders work as a bridge between different stakeholders such as higher administration (e.g., deans, associate deans, and directors), faculty, and students, and influence the way policies are envisioned, implemented, and revised. Thus, a lot of emphasis is placed on their preparation for balancing multiple forces that intersect their practices in the form of policies, demands, and objectives.

English language teachers, for instance, rely upon their program chairs/heads for policy development and interpretation, as well as translation of policies into desired actions, especially in contexts where these programs are either branch campuses or work as affiliates of client colleges (Raza, Manasreh, et al., 2021). Since these program chairs/heads must align their departmental policies with the institutional vision, mission, and agendas, and function as a resource between

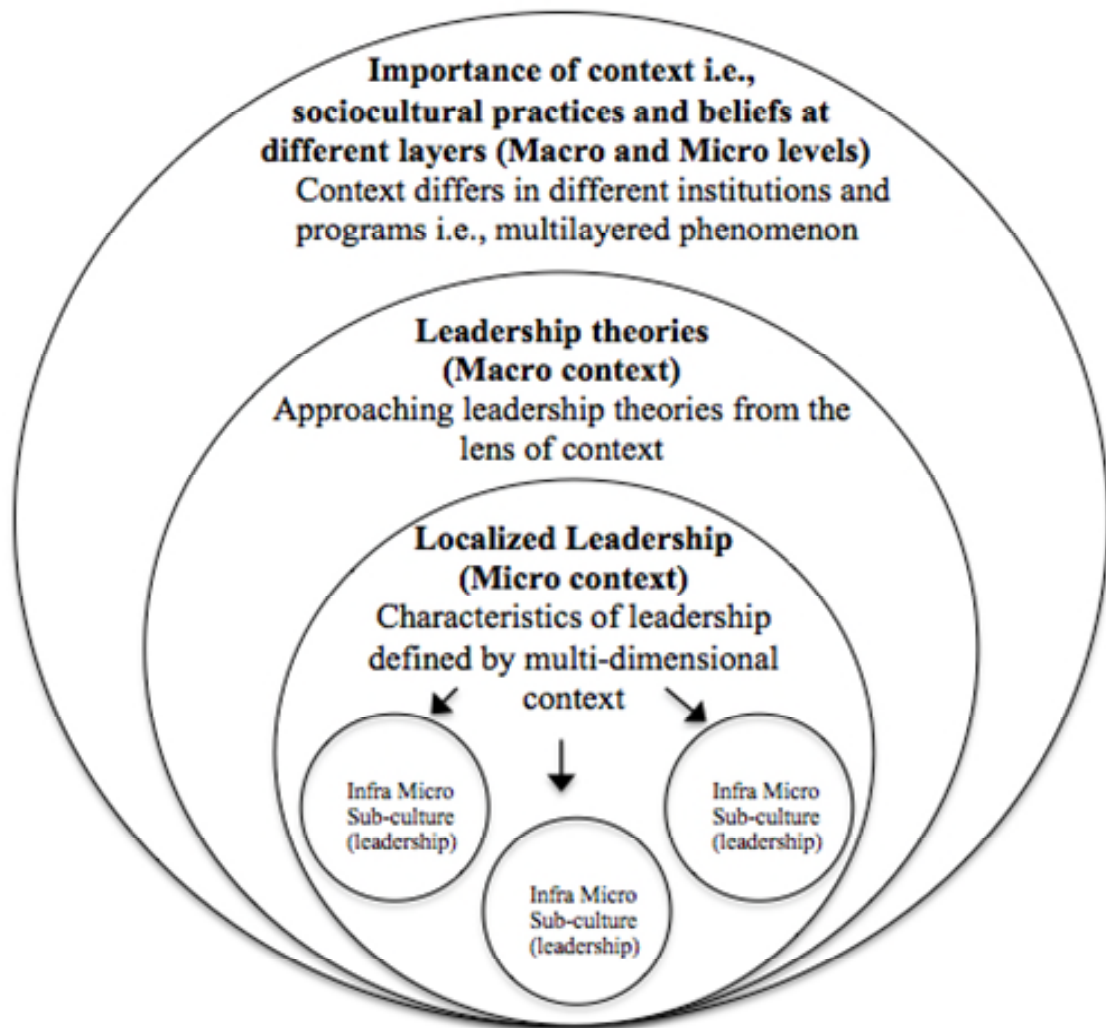
students, teachers, and higher administration, these leaders' perspectives often dominate the ways teachers interpret curriculum, assessments and pedagogy. Consequently, language program leaders, directly or indirectly, influence the teaching and learning process (Raza, 2021). Although at the micro level teachers are the main actors to translate policies into desired actions, program leaders play a significant role in affecting teachers' perceptions and beliefs of the policies, as well as the alignments of teachers with the school leaders' vision, which could affect policy outcomes (Raza, Manasreh, et al., 2021). This is because in the TESOL setting, the micro-level culture itself is already complex and multi-dimensional. These program leaders could further create multiple subcultures, which could result in establishing smaller infra-micro contexts embedded at the micro-level thus making context an ever changing and fluctuating practice. The paper proposes a paradigmatic shift in seeing leadership as a global-contextual practice where context, as a fluid and multilayered phenomenon (Raza, Manasreh, et al., 2021), plays a central role in shaping leadership practices but does not underestimate the significance of international forces that shape local educational policies (see Figure 1).

Figure 1 illustrates the importance of context as well as the scales at which it can manifest itself as a particular and unique practice at the different layers. Essentially, leadership practices are nested within the macro and micro contexts, and infra micro-contexts within the micro-level. Here, the micro-context is multi-dimensional; it is ever-changing and consisting of multiple cultures coexisting together. For instance, an institution could have a diversified culture with each department approaching and implementing the same policy differently depending on the 'infra micro-level' or subculture that surrounds that department (Raza, Manasreh, et al., 2021). Consequently, each department in that institution could approach and carry out the policy or program differently. This requires leaders working for a particular program not only to be informed

of what policies to create for their departments but also be aware of the initiatives and practices in other departments within the same institution or other schools.

Figure 1

Global-Contextual Approach to Leadership



Such awareness of multiple layers of context is important for leaders leading differently in an institution to be aware of their ambience and work towards a common goal.

In view of this, program leaders play a critical role in aligning the intents of policies and programs as they are situated at the infra-micro-level and in different sub-contexts. Therefore, the

global-contextual approach proposed in this paper is situated at program level, and more specifically, on the influence of language program leadership in creating developmental opportunities for diverse faculty and students in their sub-contexts (Hallinger, 2018; Khalifa et al., 2016; McGee et al., 2014) so that they can contribute to the progress of the program as well as benefit from it. Although language issues faced by a community are mostly context-specific and require a deep understanding of the sociocultural and educational situation (Raza & Coombe, 2020), globalization has increased interconnectivity within and among communities. This interconnectivity has made it important for language program leaders working for these communities to be aware of community-level challenges, their cultural roots, and changes happening at the global level that may impact language teaching, learning, and use. For example, these communities usually consist of teachers and students from different countries, with each possessing different cultures and ways of learning, as well as how the recent global COVID-19 pandemic has affected language teaching and learning. Understanding such program level diversity and the global changes will allow leaders to unpack international, national, and institutional policies to develop well-informed localized policies and practices that align with the dominant ways of doing and acting and also reflect global developments, which may produce more effective results. For this purpose, we need to distance ourselves away from one-size-fits-all strategies for leadership training and practices (Bush, 2018; Stoten, 2015), give equal importance to language teachers (Raza & Coombe, 2020) as well as leaders for context-specific leadership preparation (Raza, 2021), and provide opportunities for leaders to rise out of their own communities and language settings with a global perspective instead of borrowing models from other contexts (Raza, Manasreh, et al., 2021).

Implications for Leaders in TESOL Field

Stoten (2015) argued that the characteristics of effective leaders are rather context-specific. Although this is true to a great extent as local values and beliefs shape public expectations (Raza & Coombe, 2020), contemporary leaders do not always work with local populations in isolation from the rest of the world. Their work involves interactions with national and international stakeholders in designing curriculum, selecting textbooks, deciding program objectives, and aligning content selection and teaching with global developments in education (Raza, Coombe, et al., 2021). To prepare leaders to adopt a global-contextual perspective, studies are needed that explore platforms and resources that provide opportunities for leaders to rise out of their own communities and language settings (Raza, 2021), instead of copying models from other societies, but also be informed of developments in education and leadership studies at international level. This will contribute to the advancement of knowledge on the effectiveness of context-specific leadership in English and multilingual education and in other disciplines. Consequently, this will help increase resources and information for future leaders who wish to serve specific linguistic communities, develop assessment frameworks to measure the effectiveness of leaders in different contexts, and recognize local and cultural perspectives of leadership for the administration of knowledge, languages, and identities – a limitation recognized by the Policy Horizons Canada (Antal et al., 2018) that may cause cultural and historical erosion in near future and can have serious sociocultural implications.

The global-contextual approach proposed in this paper is based on four key propositions that provide a framework for language program leaders to devise, implement, and reform policies with an understanding of the international developments and micro as well as macro contexts within which they function. They are:

- Leadership requires an understanding of their multi-dimensional context in one way or the other.
- Multi-dimensional context is a fluid, multilayered phenomenon and differs from program to program, course to course or committee to committee.
- The global-contextual approach increases opportunities for diversity, equity, and inclusivity by recognizing local leadership skills and practices.
- The global-contextual approach develops upon leadership theories in globalized contexts and offers unification between existing literature and the local contextual needs of a language program.

Importance of the Mainstream Context

Policy implementation is not context-free; it requires a flexible strategy to allow for the adaptation of policy to local challenges and contextual factors (Raza, Coombe, et al., 2021). Braa et al. (2007) explained that context influences implementation, and it is influenced by actions as they occur in the context of their setting, which is shaped by the organization's social, economic, and political context(s). Therefore, whether teacher leaders or program leaders, leaders require an understanding of their context. Here, context is used as a synonym of culture, which shapes human actions and may include education, religion, language, race, gender, food, habits, and behaviors, i.e., socio-cultural practices. Based upon these factors, followers associate different characteristics and qualities with their leaders, and these expectations may differ from context to context. For instance, a study by Raza and Coombe (2020a) explored the expectations of students and teachers about the characteristics of an effective TESOL teacher in the Gulf. Their findings showed that, unlike other contexts, “a teacher who employs interactive methods of teaching and develops rapport with their students is considered the most effective regardless of their gender, nationality,

accent and age” (p. 154). They added that “as teachers employ instructional strategies and put efforts into building connections with their students, they should keep students’ context and cultural values in mind to ensure efficiency and effectiveness” (p. 155). Thus, for teachers to perform better as leaders, contextual understanding and aligning teaching strategies to local values and practices is mandatory (Raza, 2018b, 2020).

Essentially, developing an understanding of the context is also important for leaders (Bush, 2018; Hallinger, 2018; Raza, 2021). For example, Jong Ho (2000) argued that for school leaders to perform well in most Eastern countries, especially South Korea, they must learn from the teachings of Confucius, the Chinese philosopher, who preached humility, commitment, loyalty, and virtuousness. Jong Ho emphasized:

Trying to graft a western leadership concept may not work for leaders in the Korean culture, or perhaps, in any Eastern culture [because] when packaged programs about leadership are transported to Eastern cultural contexts, those packages may be misunderstood or missed.
(p. 94)

Hence, Western leadership theories may not be widely applicable in East Asia and other cultures, such as Africa, due to “significant differences in values concerning authority, group loyalties and interpersonal harmony” (Blunt & Jones, 1997, p. 18). An empirical study by Dorfman et al. (1997), for instance, compared six leadership behaviors (directive, contingent reward, contingent punishment, supportive, participative, and charismatic) in five countries (Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, Mexico, and the United States) and concluded that “the United States is as different from Mexico [despite both located in America] as it is from the Asian cultures. ... It is the *only* culture where participative leadership had a positive effect on subordinate performance” (p. 266). Similarly, Hofstede (1993) problematized American approach to management that focuses on

marketization, individualism, and managerialism, and differs from many other countries such as Japan where decision-making is “controlled by their [Japanese] peer group rather than by their manager” (p. 84) or China where “there were no formal laws, only formal networks of powerful people guided by general principles of Confucian virtue” (p. 86). Thus, TESOL leaders who adopts an American managerial style in an Asian or Eastern country may encounter backlash against their focus on marketization of language programs, promotion of individual preferences rather than collective control, and assertion of top-down decision-making (Raza, Manasreh, et al., 2021).

Although global-contextual orientation for TESOL leadership requires an understanding of international developments in the field of education in general and in TESOL in specific, it argues for screening leadership practices through the contextual lens for possible adjustments and to increase their effectiveness. Offering a situational analysis, this approach allows language program leaders to assess the needs of their program, its students, and stakeholders to inform their decisions (Bush, 2018) without compromising international guidelines or standards. Essentially, a good understanding of the context makes leaders aware of the language issues among community members that will allow them to devise strategies to address these issues to promote equity and inclusion for all language speakers (Raza, Coombe, et al., 2021). Furthermore, the global-contextual approach allows a leader to unpack and understand what is needed and by doing that, the leader can better lead teachers and learners.

Proposition 1. *Leaders require an understanding of their mainstream context in one way or the other.*

Different Layers of Context

Challenges exist in every program (Eaton, 2013; Tannacito, 2013); however, the nature of these challenges and the required solutions may differ from program to program or context to context (Hallinger, 2018; Raza, Manasreh, et al., 2021). For instance, McGee et al. (2014) explored the influence of leadership practices in creating a supportive learning environment for minority English language learners in two New Zealand schools. Their study concluded that even though interconnected, successful leadership practices were observed in both schools, these practices were more evident in the second school, where the leaders were successful at supporting TESOL teaching and learning, thus pointing to differing leadership practices within the same context. Similarly, Raza, Manasreh, et al. (2021) explored the challenges language program leadership faces in their workplaces and invited leaders from three programs to involve in self-reflections to highlight the strategies they used to address issues related to program management. Their study found that despite working within an Arab, Muslim, English as a foreign language context, all three programs differed in terms of the challenges that manifested in the administration of the programs as well as the steps taken by the leaders to solve them. This shows that leaders functioning in different organizations within a dominant culture (e.g., New Zealand or Qatar) and serving student population that shares the dominant mainstream culture of the country (e.g., Arabs, minority language groups) may still encounter different contextual challenges and may require different strategies to address these challenges as the one-size-fits-all technique does not work all the time (Bush, 2018).

The fact that context is fluid and multilayered (macro-level vs. micro-level) requires leaders to be aware of the national context that shapes macro-level policies as well as the social, program context that translates and interprets policies at the micro-level (Raza, Manasreh, et al., 2021). Chua and Soo (2018), for instance, stressed that the ability of school leaders in Singapore to align policies at both macro and micro-levels, and then communicate the objectives to their schools or institutions, is critical in determining the success of language policy at the micro-level. This means that one-size-fits-all approaches that argue for conformity to status quo, promote standardized leadership practices in language program administration, and project context as a static, fixed practice needs to be confronted by acknowledging diversity, promoting inclusivity, and differentiating leadership practices (Bush, 2018; Hallinger, 2018). In order for leaders to be able to address contextual challenges emerging at different levels even within a dominant culture, the global-contextual orientation calls for advancing the field of TESOL in terms of developing effective TESOL leadership through courses and programs designed with the objective that prospective leaders should have knowledge of the challenges related to English language program administration (Christison & Murray, 2009; Eaton, 2013; Tannacito, 2013) and how the nature of these challenges they will face (e.g., curriculum, faculty concerns, students' language needs) may differ from one program to another or within a single program.

Researchers interested in exploring organizational context (Bush, 2018; Hallinger, 2018; Khalifa et al., 2016; Raza, 2020, 2021) often employ cultural competence approach to examine the effectiveness of leadership in specific contexts. In addition to understanding what cultural values are held and practiced by the members of an educational organization, this understanding allows building multicultural communities based upon multicultural awareness, welcoming diversity and different views, and discouraging divisions. Nevertheless, what remains unresolved is the

conception of context as a phenomenon and how it influences leadership practices. There are attempts to bring down the notion of context to a single definition or investigate particular contexts in educational leadership. However, limiting it to a single definition or brief interpretation often leaves out variables that directly or indirectly influence leadership practices (Bush, 2018). Hallinger (2018) broadened our understanding of context in leadership studies and invited us to go beyond traditional definitions of context that restrict the phenomenon to institutional or communal settings to consider economic, political, school improvement, and sociocultural factors in shaping leadership practices. After introducing readers to other contexts that are central in evaluating the effectiveness of context-specific leadership, Hallinger (2018) encouraged continuous exploration of new ways of understanding contexts and how they impact leadership practices. The global-contextual perspective proposed in this paper furthers Hallinger's position and argues for approaching a context as a multifaceted reality where social, political, economic, institutional, departmental, individual, collective, and educational factors shape situations that require consistent exploration, negotiation, and consideration. Although dominant culture influences context, contemporary globalized workplaces that are amalgamations of different values, beliefs, expectations, experiences, and backgrounds require continuous flexibility, cooperation, and reflection in adopting appropriate leadership practices that meet majority expectations, align with program objectives, serve institutional agendas, and conform to national and international developments. This implies that leaders in such contexts are constantly adjusting and adapting their leadership practices; they do not adhere to one type (or more) leadership styles. Instead, their approaches resemble an amoeboid that shape-shifts to accommodate to their unpredictable context.

English language programs also differ at the structural level and this difference may depend upon their placement within an institute (e.g., Foundation Program, international branch campuses)

or higher education (e.g., intensive English programs or undergraduate/graduate programs). Since the differences between these programs are not the focus of this conceptual paper, a brief description of different language programs and their operationalization is provided earlier in this paper and interested readers are directed to Raza, Manasreh, et al. (2021) and Tannacito (2013) for further reading. Although these programs may share some components of their mission, vision or structure with others, they are unique in terms of their organization and placement and may require a different leadership style to achieve their goals and agendas. For example, a Foundation Program working within a larger university has to align its policies with the mainstream institutional policies and practices as well as with the expectations of the faculty and students. This exerts pressure from both sides: internally from diverse faculty, growing number of student population, different types of courses and assessments, and unseen circumstances like the current COVID-19 situation; externally from program directors, college deans, university administrators, who may not come from a similar discipline(s) and have their own interpretations of educational administration, local context and the larger culture in which the program is situated (Raza, Manasreh, et al., 2021).

Leaders in such situations may draw upon different leadership theories such as distributed leadership, where they share their powers and duties with others (Diamond & Spillane, 2016) or servant leadership where others' needs come before a leader's priorities (Greenleaf, 2002); however, it is often observed that in practice, such leadership is more concerned about the outcomes of their performance rather than its alignment with a particular leadership style (Raza, Manasreh, et al., 2021; Tschannen-Moran & Gareis, 2015) since their practices influence the functioning of their program and its ability to achieve intended outcomes. This highlights that leadership theories (e.g., distributed, ethical, servant) may inform practice, but they have to be

adjusted to the context where the leadership is placed; thus, signifying the importance of the global-contextual approach that invites leaders to use context as a filter to shape international perspectives on leadership practices with an understanding of the values attached by people to different leadership styles locally.

Proposition 2. *Context is a fluid, multilayered phenomenon and differs from program to program, course to course or committee to committee.*

Global-Contextual Approach and Local Leadership for Language Education

The global-contextual approach invites language program leaders to think more about the language needs of their students and adjust the program vision, mission, and operationalization to create opportunities that pave the way for diversity, equity, and inclusivity in language education. Raza (2020) discussed the diversity of English language classrooms in Canada and argued that to better facilitate the language needs of students, teachers and leaders should distance themselves from “... one-size-fits-all approach [in English education] that is often followed in the development of textbooks, supplementary materials, and educational technologies that aim to cover broader markets” (p. 42). Similarly, Harper and de Jong (2004) discouraged two assumptions about teaching English language learners that shape language instruction in many contexts: all English language learners have similar needs, and a simple pedagogical adaptation is sufficient. They recommended that, “teachers in mainstream classrooms must therefore be prepared to teach students who come from different linguistic, cultural, and educational backgrounds” (p. 152).

Developing upon these debates, the global-contextual approach invites language teachers and particularly leaders to:

- Understand social, economic, political, and educational needs of students that are shaped by their context (Pollock et al., 2015; Raza, 2018b, 2019, 2020; Raza, Coombe, et al., 2021).
- Design teacher professional development programs that introduce them to various ways of accommodating students' language needs (Raza, 2020).
- Prepare teachers and programs to maintain and develop local diversity in language education (Harper & de Jong, 2004; Raza, 2019, 2020).
- Build upon current theories of leadership but push further for cultural adaptation.
- Create opportunities for leadership to emerge from the local culture instead of copying models from other contexts (Hallinger, 2018; Khalifa et al., 2016; Raza, 2021).
- Seek to identify and institutionalize practices that affirm local and authentic cultural practices of students and teachers, thus, promoting anti-oppressive and liberatory leadership (Khalifa et al., 2016).
- Perform cultural work – learn more about the student population they serve and situate aspects of their program according to the sociocultural values of the students, which can differ from program to program (Raza, 2018b, 2020).
- Promote local languages by supporting and welcoming prior knowledge, hence bi/pluri/multilingualism (Canagarajah, 2005; Garcia, 2009; McGee et al., 2014; Ramanathan & Morgan, 2007; Raza, Manasreh, et al., 2021).

Proposition 3. *The global-contextual approach increases opportunities for diversity, equity, and inclusivity through recognition of local leadership skills and practices.*

Global-Contextual Approach and Leadership Theories

The global-contextual approach recognizes the significance of leadership theories and their contribution in shaping leadership practices; however, in addition to developing upon these theories, it pushes further for their cultural adaptation for better performance as an authentic and local leader. The main assumption is that since language program leaders influence program environments and draw upon some kind of leadership style, a deeper understanding of the macro/micro/intra-micro context in which they work can prepare them for better performance (Raza, Manasreh, et al., 2021). The global-contextual approach calls for leaders to perceive leadership theories through cultural/contextual lens and then devise strategies/practices that may better address existing as well as emerging challenges in language education. For instance, one of the criticisms of leadership theories is that they can be interpreted in different ways in different times and situations and do not always work in their entirety (Anderson et al., 2017). Although leadership theories often serve as magnifying glasses for researchers to examine leadership practices in their contexts and settings, what goes unnoticed is their limitations in terms of scope, implementation, and factors (e.g., context, experience, practice) that contribute to leadership. Anderson et al. (2017) draw attention to these pitfalls by showing how five common leadership theories (transformational, information processing, leader-member exchange, authentic and ethical leadership) do not align with the characteristics of the younger generation, termed as *GenMe* or *Millennials* who are comparatively individualistic, self-centered, and attention seekers. Although their work problematizes

differing characteristics of the younger generation, i.e., individualism, and how they do not match with traditional attributes of selfless, group-oriented and model leaders, one can disagree with their depiction based upon the argument that it is over-generalized and not contextualized (Lawler & Ashman, 2012); however, their work is significant in terms of understanding what leadership is, how to examine it, and what to keep in mind when evaluating a leader, especially when using theories as benchmarks. Theories have their own values as they provide frameworks for observation and understanding of the phenomenon (Brooks & Miles, 2006; Bush, 2011), but theory-based analysis of leaders should not exclude other factors that contribute to leadership and administration (Bowie, 2000; Lawler & Ashman, 2012).

Leaders can draw upon different leadership theories but what remains critical is to what extent this helps make leadership practices useful and effective for their programs and in their context. Servant leadership (Greenleaf, 2002), for example, provides an ethical framework that describes the expected behavior of leaders as servants rather than masters. Differentiating themselves from traditional leaders who trust in powerful leadership and the use of power and control to drive performance, servant leaders believe in sharing power that ensures engagement, equal opportunities, collaboration, and thus productivity. However, ethics, norms, and humility that are central to servant leaders' behaviors can be interpreted differently in different programs and contexts. For example, program leadership that is bound by the institutional policies (e.g., the leadership of a Foundation Program that works as an affiliate of a college) may have limited options in terms of prioritizing their students' and staff's needs compared to program and institutional requirements (Raza, Manasreh, et al., 2021). In such a situation, a leader can use global-contextual approach to

filter the aspects of servant leadership that serve them the best and then develop their leadership style based upon it.

Raza, Manasreh, et al. (2021) shared ethnographic narratives of three program leaders and how they negotiated between external and internal forces as well as departmental priorities, initiated and shaped by faculty and student needs, to delineate program objectives that reflect different stakeholders' perspectives. For instance, when confronted with monolingual ideologies and main campus interference that impacted curricular, assessment, and recruitment decisions which did not always align with the local context where the student population was mainly bilingual (English and Arabic-speaking), the study found that one of the leaders needed to exercise intercultural accommodation to benefit fully from the international faculty of the program. This leader also utilized a culturally situated leadership style to ensure that there was an alignment between external demands (e.g., main campus agendas) and internal tensions (e.g., the multilingual student population in a mainly monolingual program). This leadership style involved consultation with colleagues in the institution on curriculum revisions, invitation of imminent scholars in the field to increase awareness of faculty about multilingualism in the field of TESOL, and promotion of program achievements at local and international platforms to showcase their accommodation of students' diverse academic needs. As Greenleaf (2002) cautioned, servant leadership does argue for prioritizing others' needs above self, but this should not restrict leadership actions to the mere ordering of priorities; a combination of action-driven behavior and humility should be employed for better performance. Using this argument in favor of adding global-contextual approach to the understanding of leadership theories, the perspective allows leaders to be humble, developing upon servant leadership, but also

invites them to align their actions with the contextual complexities that require adjustment (see Raza, Manasreh, et al., 2021).

Let us look at another example. Distributed leadership (Diamond & Spillane, 2016) is often proposed as a model for the successful administration of a program. This theory argues for sharing power with others to increase engagement and enhance performance. Using Tannacito's (2013) description of different leaders working within an intensive English program and the complexities involved in the works of leadership (Pollock et al., 2015), sharing power and then maintaining a balance by using a standard checklist does not seem an easy task. Internal and external factors often influence policy change, which can be seen as a sign of inconsistency, lack of clear instructions, and limited representation of different stakeholders in policy reforms (Raza, Coombe, et al., 2021). An understanding of the context through global-contextual approach where distributed leadership is being proposed may help understand what aspects of the theory can be employed and in what ways it can inform the organization of the program where different stakeholders share different levels of power, so that leaders can benefit fully from the model. For instance, Jong Ho (2000) highlighted the differences between Western and Eastern leadership styles when discussing Korean principals' leadership practices and argued that "Korean principals think of their teachers as their children, always to be obedient and non-deviating ... Teachers like a principal with abundant expertise and ability who is esteemed by others" (p. 3). Likewise, Singaporean school leaders are both "system players" and "system enforcers". The education system in Singapore adopts a centralized-decentralized approach and so principals have the autonomy and power to manage their schools and at the same time ensure that the ministry goals are translated effectively in schools (Chua & Soo, 2018).

In other words, leaders in these countries are perceived to be more powerful, decision-makers, and knowledgeable people, who guide their followers. In such a situation, the Western concept of distributed leadership, where power is divided among different stakeholders to promote decision-making at micro and macro-levels, may not function well as “the effect of leadership style on subordinates depends on the nature of the power exercised by the leader in the working situation. The greater the expert power and the referent power of the leader, the more satisfied the subordinates are” (Jung Ho, 2000, p. 3).

As Harris (2013) warned us that simply labeling a leadership style as distributed leadership is not enough, “much depends on how leadership is distributed and the intentions behind it” (p. 12). Similarly, Diamond and Spillane (2016) emphasized the issues of practice within the distributed leadership model and invite us to pay more attention to the *how* part of power distribution, and that is “a practice distributed over leaders, followers, and their situation... [considering] sociocultural context as a constitutive element of leadership practices, an integral part defining element of that activity” (Spillane et al., 2004, p. 11). In other words, leadership styles are very much situated in cultural expectations and nested within multiple levels.

Proposition 4. *The global-contextual approach develops upon leadership theories and offers unification between existing literature and the contextual needs of a language program.*

Conclusion

This paper presents an argument that leadership practices are global, as well as contextual in nature, since they are *nested* in the different layers of specific sociocultural practices. Global-contextual approach invites us to include the contextual complexities and requirements (Pollock et al., 2015) when considering a leadership theory to inform practice in a particular program. As each program inherits its organizational structure from its vision, mission, placement or stakeholders, the approach allows program leaders to add an extra filter in employing a particular or a combination of different leadership theories or their parts in deciding what style aligns with their context to make the best out of it. As discussed previously, language issues faced by a community are context-specific and require a deep understanding of the situation, they also need to be observed in the light of global changes happening in language education and use. Leaders working for these communities must be aware of these challenges and their roots to devise effective and fruitful policies that are reflective of the global and the local. Since leaders impacts program operationalization, their understanding of the needs of teachers as well as learners is central in ensuring diversity, equity, inclusivity, and social justice. Calling for the utilization of the global-contextual lens to approach leadership theories, this combination will allow language program leaders to understand the local language needs of their learners with a global understanding before deciding which leadership model or part of it will work better in their context. In summary, the paper presents the four propositions that inform the construction of the global-contextual approach are derived from existing literature on educational leadership, language education, globalization, bi/pluri/multilingualism, equity, and highlights the need for an increase in research on

language program administration in globalized TESOL programs and can be used by leaders in diverse contexts to inform their practices.

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