The Routledge Handbook of English Language Teaching

Edited by Graham Hall

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The Routledge Handbook of English Language Teaching is the definitive reference volume for post-graduate and advanced undergraduate students of Applied Linguistics, ELT/TESOL, and Language Teacher Education, and for ELT professionals engaged in in-service teacher development and/or undertaking academic study.

Progressing from 'broader' contextual issues to a 'narrower' focus on classrooms and classroom discourse, the volume's inter-related themes focus on:

- ELT in the world: contexts and goals
- planning and organising ELT: curriculum, resources and settings
- methods and methodology: perspectives and practices
- second language learning and learners
- teaching language: knowledge, skills and pedagogy
- understanding the language classroom.

The *Handbook*'s 39 chapters are written by leading figures in ELT from around the world. Mindful of the diverse pedagogical, institutional and social contexts for ELT, they convincingly present the key issues, areas of debate and dispute, and future developments in ELT from an applied linguistics perspective.

Throughout the volume, readers are encouraged to develop their own thinking and practice in contextually appropriate ways, assisted by discussion questions and suggestions for further reading that accompany every chapter.

Graham Hall is Senior Lecturer in Applied Linguistics/TESOL at Northumbria University, UK. He is the author of *Exploring English Language Teaching: Language in Action* (Routledge, 2011), which was the winner of the 2012 British Association for Applied Linguistics (BAAL) book prize.

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Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group

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Introduction
English language teaching in the contemporary world

Graham Hall

This *Handbook* surveys key topics in English Language Teaching (ELT), providing a clear and comprehensive overview of the field. The book is intended for a varied ELT audience: you, the reader, may be an ELT professional studying at graduate level after some time in the classroom; a language teacher engaged in in-service teacher development, either formally via a teacher training/education programme or informally as part of your own developing interest in the field; a student wishing to enter the ELT profession via an undergraduate or graduate qualification; or a teacher educator, academic or researcher seeking familiarity with elements of ELT that you know less well.

Mindful of the diverse pedagogical, institutional and social contexts for ELT, the *Handbook* aims to provide an understanding of both the principles and practice of ELT through insights gained from relevant academic disciplines such as applied linguistics, education, psychology and sociology. It is underpinned by the belief that professional practice can both inform and draw upon academic understanding. Consequently, the *Handbook* is not intended to be a guide to ELT practice in which 'experts' inform practitioners about 'best practice' (although chapter authors are indeed leaders in the field). Rather, it aims to stimulate professional and academic reflection on the key issues facing ELT practitioners working in a diverse range of contexts around the world. Chapters provide authoritative understandings and insights which enable readers to develop their own thinking and practice in contextually appropriate ways.

English language teaching (ELT)

Naming the field

English language teaching (ELT) is, of course, 'what English language teachers do'. Yet this statement of the obvious obscures the complexity of a field which incorporates teaching and learning English as second, additional or foreign language or as an international lingua franca; for specific, academic or more general purposes; in different countries and contexts; and at different levels (primary, secondary, tertiary or adult). Indeed, 'ELT' is not the only name given to the field as

a whole – we might also encounter 'EFL' (also incorporated into the *International Association of Teachers of English as a Foreign Language*, that is, *IATEFL*); 'ESL' (English as a Second Language); and 'TESOL' (both an umbrella term for Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages and the name of the *TESOL International Association* for teachers).

As Howatt and Widdowson (2004: xv) note, establishing the origins of terminology and expressions is "a needle-in-a-haystack task with few clear-cut answers", yet the use of one term rather than another can reflect a particular perspective on the field and its development. Thus, as English in the twenty-first century is no longer a single entity and has multiple forms (i.e. we can talk of 'Englishes'; see Seargeant, this volume) and is increasingly a lingua franca in conversations between those who do not share a first language, 'English as a *Foreign* language' no longer seems to capture the scope of English and English language teaching in the contemporary world. Similarly, the now widespread recognition of the importance of bilingualism and multilingualism for individual and societal language use (see, for example, Martin-Jones et al., 2012) suggests that English will not be the *second* language of a substantial number of learners around the world.

Meanwhile, whilst 'ELT' was adopted in the UK in 1946 as the name of the British Council's new journal 'English Language Teaching' (now known as *ELT Journal*), the term 'TESOL' first clearly emerged with the foundation in 1966 of the professional association of that name in the US, as an inclusive take on the previously more widespread 'ESL' in that inward-migration context (Howatt with Widdowson, 2004). Thus, we might see a slight and perhaps somewhat stereotypical association between the term TESOL and the US, and ELT and the UK, although it is evident that the terms are interchangeable for most ELT practitioners and researchers (e.g. Pennington and Hoekje, 2014: 163). Yet, as a *Handbook* needs a title, this volume follows Howatt with Widdowson (2004), Smith (2005) and many others in adopting the journal's terminology, 'ELT', as the name for the field as a whole and as the focus of study and reflection in the chapters that follow.

Framing the field

The teaching of English has a long history that interconnects with the teaching of other languages (Kelly, 1969; Howatt with Widdowson, 2004; Pennington and Hoekje, 2014). Yet in the twentieth century, ELT emerged as a recognisable and distinctive entity, prompted in the first instance by increased migration, the internationalisation of education and the growth of multinational capitalism, particularly in the decades following World War II, and more recently by globalisation, the development of the Internet and online communication and the related continued spread of English around the world.

As a result of this range of forces, ELT can be characterised in a number of ways. As a *profession*, ELT is constituted by teachers, teacher trainers and educators, curriculum designers and materials writers, administrators and planners and so forth. Yet the profession is made up of many communities of practice (Lave and Wenger, 1991) within different countries or contexts and educational sectors (e.g. private or state) and levels (e.g. primary, secondary or tertiary), each with its own values, practices and understandings (Pennington and Hoekje, 2014). And these may conceive of their activity in differing ways, such as ELT as 'a business' or 'industry', as 'education' or as 'a service'.

However, ELT is also a *focus of study*, whether as an emerging discipline in its own right, or as a sub-field of, for example, applied linguistics or education. Here we might find research, debate and discussion which aims to inform the development of the field, focusing, for instance, on classroom methodology; curriculum and assessment design; how new technologies might be most effectively used for language teaching and learning; whether and how new knowledge

about language, uncovered through corpus studies, might be introduced to learners; and whether and how the spread of English and subsequent changes in its uses and forms might be recognised in ELT classrooms and materials.

Of central concern, though, is the relationship between 'research/theory' on the one hand and 'practice' on the other, and it seems clear that, in a world of multiple perspectives and in which ELT professionals are subject to a range of competing demands and forces, academic perspectives offer prompts and possibilities for practice rather than neat, 'one-size-fits-all' solutions to the challenges and dilemmas of English language teaching today. Indeed, investigative approaches such as action research (e.g. Burns, 2009) and exploratory practice (e.g. Allwright and Hanks, 2009) offer teachers routes into researching matters of immediate interest, thus creating knowledge themselves.

'Navigating' the field

While offering a more realistic and potentially democratic and transformative view of the relationship between theory and practice, the suggestion that English language teachers need to find their own way through debates, options and possibilities in light of their own local professional experiences is challenging. As Canagarajah puts it, what do such debates and opportunities "suggest for teaching on a Monday morning" (2006: 29)? One response is for ELT professionals to develop personal strategies in line with their underlying assumptions about teaching and learning, as exemplified by Ellis (2006). A related approach is to recognise local contexts, needs and aims as the central lens through which all possibilities should be viewed, developing locally specific approaches which shape existing knowledge and practices in contextually appropriate ways.

Clearly, teachers' abilities to navigate and mediate professional and academic themes in ELT need to develop and, often, to be supported. This is a primary goal of language teacher education (Johnson, 2013) and of this *Handbook,* which aims to outline and explore key issues within ELT, providing space for readers to reflect upon the principles which inform their practice, to connect pedagogical theory and practice to wider social issues, and, where possible, to work together to share ideas (Giroux and McLaren, 1989: xxiii).

There is thus a clear challenge for this volume – to be informative but not directive, and to be authoritative whilst providing opportunities for readers to reflect on and react to the ideas discussed. I summarise below how the *Handbook* seeks to achieve this, outlining its subsections and chapters.

The scope of this volume

Each chapter in the *Handbook* focuses on a specific issue within ELT, and each follows broadly the same format. This comprises an introduction to the area (including the history of the topic as appropriate), a critical review of main current issues, discussion of key areas of debate and dispute, and an outline of possible future developments or contingencies. Chapters conclude with a number of subsections. First, authors provide a series of *Discussion questions* that prompt reader reflection on chapter content and seek to connect the issues discussed to readers' own ELT contexts and experiences. Second, in a field where issues, debates and themes intersect in complementary ways, chapters list *Related topics* in the volume. Each chapter then focuses on *Further readings*, providing a short annotated list of key works which readers might consult for a more detailed discussion of the area. Bibliographical *References* are listed at the end of each chapter, making each contribution to the volume self-contained.

In a volume of this size, surveying a field of such diversity, it is perhaps inevitable that chapters will at times examine topics, interpret debates and present dilemmas in ways that may not satisfy all readers on all occasions. Indeed, given the range of professional lives, narratives and experiences within the *Handbook*'s readership as a whole, it would be a surprise if this was not occasionally the case. Other readers may differ over the way the *Handbook* is organised or with the gaps in coverage which are inevitable in any volume of this breadth. Clearly, despite the intention to cover as much ground as possible, some areas have, for reasons of space, had to be omitted or dealt with only briefly. Nevertheless, the thirty-nine *Handbook* chapters are grouped into six main sections, progressing from 'broader' contextual issues which surround English language teaching in the world to a 'narrower' focus on the language classroom itself. I shall now outline each section in turn.

Part I
ELT in the world: contexts and goals

Pennycook describes English as a "worldly language" (1994: 36), a term which reflects "its spread around the world and its worldly character as a result of being used so widely in the world" – English, and the ways in which the language is used, both reflects and also shapes the world we live in. Equally, ELT is itself a "worldly" enterprise in which social, cultural and political developments and debates surrounding English underpin how, and indeed why, the language is taught in the early decades of the twenty-first century. Thus, this first section of the *Handbook* focuses on contexts for ELT as a contemporary global enterprise and activity.

In the volume's opening chapter, *World Englishes and English as a Lingua Franca: a changing context for ELT*, Philip Seargeant traces the way in which English today is a language which has an unprecedented global spread and is marked by diversity and variety. Drawing on two notable paradigms, 'World Englishes' and 'English as a Lingua Franca' of the chapter title, Seargeant explores the ways in which understanding the diversity and variety of English can inform ELT practices.

The two subsequent chapters take a more overtly critical position on English and ELT in the world. In Chapter 2, Alastair Pennycook makes explicit links between *Politics, power relationships and ELT*. Here, in an example of the debates surrounding ELT which the *Handbook* seeks to capture, Pennycook outlines what he sees as the shortcomings of the World Englishes, English as a Lingua Franca and Linguistic Imperialism paradigms, before suggesting that English language educators should question the wider implications of classroom language policies, textbook choices, language norms, work choices, knowledge of learners' own languages and, indeed, everything that is done in the classroom. Next, Claire Kramsch and Zhu Hua trace changes in the relationship between *Language and culture in ELT*. Questioning whether English has really become a 'culture-free skill', they observe that English carries discourses, identities, memories and social meanings that constitute global and local cultures. Consequently, they note that English language teaching requires a knowledge of history, awareness of discourse processes and enhanced reflexivity.

Drawing on these debates, Enric Llurda's chapter, focusing on *'Native speakers', English and ELT*, examines changing perspectives of the 'traditional' distinction between 'native' and 'non-native' speakers and the values that were once attached to each type of speaker. The chapter outlines how the classification of language users in these two apparently mutually exclusive groups makes no sense when actual speakers communicating in English in the 'real world' are considered and explores the implications for teachers and for teaching.

Finally in this section, Graham Crookes discusses *Educational perspectives on ELT*, considering the aims of English language teaching as they have manifested over time, as well as within indigenous, progressive and critical or transformative perspectives on education. Crookes draws on concepts drawn from the philosophy of education to explore the values teachers may have and the ways in which they are consistent (or not) with language teaching and educational traditions within which teachers might be working.

Part II
Planning and organising ELT: curriculum, resources and settings

Having examined the broad global trends and debates which frame ELT in Part I, the chapters in Part II examine the planning, preparation and resourcing of ELT in the more immediate context of the school, institution or educational system. As Richards (2001: 112) notes, "in deciding on [language teaching] goals, planners choose from among alternatives based on assumptions about the role of teaching and of a curriculum. Formulating goals is not, therefore, an objective scientific enterprise, but a judgement call". Thus, alongside conceptions of how languages are best learned, decisions concerning the planning and resourcing of ELT reflect wider value-based judgements about the purpose of and priorities for ELT in any given context, as the chapters in this section illustrate.

Opening this section, Kathleen Graves outlines key issues in *Language curriculum design,* which she addresses by describing three historical waves of curriculum content – each with different understandings of both language and how and why people learn a language. Graves highlights the important role of integrating planning processes to align the curriculum with its context. Published materials play a central role in the delivery of most language curricula and are the focus of John Gray's chapter*, ELT materials: claims, controversies and critiques*. Gray highlights the ways in which published materials represent both language for pedagogical purposes (and the simplifications and distortions this can entail) and the world and its inhabitants (and the denial of recognition to stigmatised social groups). Assessment is also a central consideration in language curriculum planning, and in *Dealing with the demands of language testing and assessment*, Glenn Fulcher and Nathaniel Owen outline ways in which teachers might understand and engage with the role of standardised language testing and of assessment in the language classroom.

Clearly, the enactment of any language curriculum depends on teachers' pedagogical knowledge and abilities. Thus, moving beyond components of the language curriculum *per se* to examine *Language teacher education,* Karen E. Johnson discusses the ways in which the development of knowledge for language teaching might take place through 'located teacher education', which links disciplinary knowledge to experiential knowledge.

Although many chapters in this *Handbook* identify new technologies as a key influence on current developments in ELT, Paul Gruba, Don Hinkelman and Mónica Stella Cárdenas-Claros' overview of *New technologies, blended learning, and the 'flipped classroom' in ELT* is the first of two in the volume in which technology is the central theme (for details of the other, by Kern, Ware and Warschauer, see Part VI). Examining two approaches to the language curriculum (i.e. 'blended' and 'flipped'), the chapter discusses how new technologies might spur curriculum innovation but may also disrupt established teacher and student routines, realigning our conceptions of language teaching and learning.

Subsequently, chapters outline key issues across a range of ELT fields and settings. Sue Starfield's overview of *English for specific purposes* (ESP) tracks the development of the field over time, noting the importance of students' needs and contexts and the development of genre-based

instruction. She also points out the challenges raised by the global dominance of English; likewise, Helen Basturkmen and Rosemary Wette's chapter on *English for academic purposes* (EAP). Their discussion also examines the extent to which EAP students should balance the pragmatic accommodation of academic norms with the possibility of critically challenging them. The chapter on *English for speakers of other languages* (ESOL), by James Simpson, focuses in particular on language education and migration. Simpson presents an overview of the teaching and learning of English for adults who are migrants to English-dominant countries, focusing on how social, political and individual factors impinge on ESOL practice.

The final chapter in this section explores the phenomenon of *Bilingual education in a multilingual world*, focusing on language contexts where English is one of the bilingual target languages. Chapter authors Kevin S. Carroll and Mary Carol Combs outline the ways in which language ideologies underlie the design and implementation of differing forms of bilingual education, providing an overview of some of the current tensions in the field.

Part III
Methods and methodology: perspectives and practices

Historically, language teaching methods have been a key focus of ELT, with a search for the 'best method' through much of the twentieth century being an often cited characteristic of the field (e.g. Stern, 1983; Allwright and Hanks, 2009). However, from the 1990s onwards, new perspectives on and questions about Method (as an overarching concept), methods (as specific and pre-specified approaches to teaching) and methodology (what teachers actually do in class) have emerged. For many, the current plurality of methods in ELT is an accepted and welcome feature of the field. Others, however, view the concept of Method with suspicion: does Method create patterns of power and control within ELT? Are we entering a postmethod era? Is Method itself even a 'myth' – a pre-occupation of methodologists and researchers rather than a concern of teachers?

The current "profusion of methods" (Allwright and Hanks, 2009: 38) in contemporary ELT makes it impossible to deal with every current approach to language teaching within the *Handbook*; this section of the volume therefore balances accounts of debates about methods generally alongside overviews of specific approaches which are particularly influential within the field today. Additionally, many other chapters throughout the *Handbook* identify methodological trends and developments that are relevant to particular contexts and settings (e.g. *English for specific purposes, English for academic purposes* and *Teaching language skills*).

In the opening chapter of this section, therefore, Graham Hall provides an overview of the historical trends and current debates surrounding *Method, methods and methodology*. The chapter outlines a range of perspectives on the development of methods in ELT, narratives which, at times, diverge and offer conflicting accounts of the past and present, each having implications for the way we might make sense of contemporary debates and practice. Hall's chapter touches on a range of methods which are not examined in subsequent separate chapters and discusses the possibility of a postmethod era in ELT.

Following this, Scott Thornbury examines *Communicative language teaching in theory and practice*, exploring and disentangling the links between original conceptions of communicative language teaching (CLT) and learning and current practice around the world. Thornbury discusses whether CLT's influence as 'a brand' in ELT is matched by its impact on current classroom teaching. The next chapter, by Kris Van den Branden on *Task-based language teaching*, likewise reviews a communicative and interactive approach to teaching which has gained momentum in ELT but which can also be challenging to implement. Tom Morton then provides an overview

of *Content and Language Integrated Learning* (CLIL) and assesses its relevance to ELT, focusing on the 'what', 'why', 'who' and 'how' of CLIL. Here, CLIL is identified as an umbrella term identifying a range of approaches to integrating content and language rather than as a label to identify specific programmes or a single pedagogical approach.

All chapters in this section note the challenges to teachers posed by methodological developments and the potential disparity between methods 'in theory' and 'in practice'; it is also clear that ELT practices are linked to wider social and intellectual trends. Adrian Holliday's chapter, focusing on *Appropriate methodology*, therefore closes this section by discussing how teaching methods need to be made meaningful to the existing, lived cultural and linguistic experiences of language learners and their teachers everywhere. Arguing for a critical cosmopolitan approach, Holliday suggests that teachers need to consider the cultural and linguistic value of what their students bring to their learning and to the classroom.

Part IV
Second language learning and learners

There are obvious reasons why an overview of ELT should focus on language learners and learning. "Only the learners can do their own learning", note Allwright and Hanks (2009: 2), and it is learners "that either will or will not effectively complement the efforts of teachers and other, more 'background' language professionals (like textbook writers and curriculum developers) to make language classrooms productive" (ibid.). Understanding what learners themselves bring to language learning can help guide ELT practice. In this regard, Second Language Acquisition (SLA) research provides insights into language learning processes. Although this research has, over time, been dominated by cognitivist perspectives which see learning as a mental process, alternative conceptions have recently emerged offering more socially-oriented explanations that situate learning in its social context. A focus on learners also leads us to consider students as individuals, with differing attributes and attitudes (for example, age, aptitude, motivation and anxiety).

The first two chapters of this section draw on contrasting accounts of how languages are learned. Laura Collins and Emma Marsden discuss *Cognitive perspectives on classroom language learning*, focusing on a range of complex mental processes that learners engage in to develop language knowledge. Meanwhile, Eduardo Negueruela-Azarola and Próspero N. García's account of *Sociocultural theory and the language classroom* reviews theoretical and pedagogical insights for ELT inspired by Vygotsky's research on the relationship between thinking and speaking. From this perspective, social context and cultural tools (such as language) mediate thinking and learning, and it is misleading to separate 'the cognitive' from 'the social'. Of course, ELT practitioners do not have to commit solely to one view of learning or the other and will find plausible insights in both accounts of language learning and their implications for classroom practice.

Subsequently, chapters in this section review a range of learner characteristics and their implications for language learning and teaching. In their overview of *Individual differences* (IDs), Peter D. MacIntyre, Tammy Gregersen and Richard Clément highlight a number of key ID factors such as anxiety, aptitude, language learning styles and strategies and willingness to communicate. The chapter then discusses how such factors may interact, grow together and operate in context. Also an ID, *Motivation* is explored in a separate chapter by Martin Lamb, reflecting its central role in language learning and the range of different approaches that theorists have taken to describe and research this phenomenon.

Although maintaining the focus on learning and learners, the final three chapters in this section pursue a more contextually and institutionally oriented approach to the issues and trends

which they describe. Firstly, Phil Benson discusses how conceptions of *Learner autonomy* are changing in the context of the global spread of ELT, the emergence of research exploring relationships between learner autonomy and language learner identity and the roles that learner autonomy might play in postmethod ELT pedagogies. The subsequent two chapters then focus on the rapid recent growth of English language teaching to younger learners. Janet Enever traces the development of *Primary ELT*, highlighting the socio-political nature of decisions for, and reviewing pedagogic responses to, an early start to teaching and learning English. Subsequently, Annamaria Pinter's *Secondary ELT* chapter reviews core characteristics of teenage learners, and considers the current pedagogic opportunities and challenges of working with secondary level learners.

Part V
Teaching language: knowledge, skills and pedagogy

Part V of the volume examines a range of perspectives on *what* is taught in class, i.e. the language itself, and considers *how* the teaching of language knowledge and skills might be realised in practice. It is not the *Handbook*'s aim to provide a detailed examination of each aspect of linguistic knowledge (e.g. vocabulary, grammar, listening, reading, etc.) and specific instructional practices surrounding them. Rather, the six chapters deal with key themes and questions surrounding the language, and knowledge about language, that learners might need, and explore differing conceptualisations of how this might be developed in the classroom.

The first two chapters in this section deal with ways in which learners might engage explicitly with knowledge about language. Ana Frankenberg-Garcia provides an overview of the possibilities offered by *Corpora in ELT*, discussing both how corpus analysis has provided new insights into language and language use but also how corpora might be used for pedagogical purposes. Frankenberg-Garcia also discusses questions surrounding the use of 'authentic' or 'real' language in the ELT classroom. Subsequently, Agneta M-L. Svalberg's chapter discusses *Language Awareness* (LA), a term which incorporates knowledge about language, a movement with an ideological stance towards language-related issues and an approach to teaching and learning languages.

Whilst recognising that languages are not learned and not often taught in such a 'compartmentalised' way, the next two chapters examine first the teaching of language as a 'system' and then the teaching of 'language skills'. In *Teaching language as a system*, Dilin Liu and Robert Nelson draw on 'systemic functional linguistics' and 'cognitive linguistics' to present a 'comprehensive systems view' which might help ELT practitioners better understand language and language teaching, especially the teaching of grammar and vocabulary. Jonathan Newton's chapter on *Teaching language skills* then provides an overview of the critical issues surrounding the teaching of the 'four skills' of reading, writing, speaking and listening. Newton notes the complex interplay of these skills and discusses how integrating them within a 'fours strands' framework focused on learning opportunities may be a more effective pedagogical approach.

The final two chapters in this section explore aspects of English language teaching that are arguably somewhat overlooked in the mainstream literature of ELT. Amos Paran and Catherine Wallace's chapter on *Teaching literacy* clarifies the distinction between 'literacy' and 'reading and writing', with particular reference to learning literacy in a second language, and presents a view of literacy as a social practice embedded in the social and cultural lives of learners. Whilst noting the existence of many types of literacy (e.g. digital literacy, visual literacy), the chapter focuses on the development of reading and writing, but as a sociocultural practice and process. Finally, Geoff Hall reviews arguments for *Using Literature in ELT*. For Hall, using literature in ELT is a useful way of expanding learners' vocabulary, awareness of register, genre and general linguistic

knowledge. However, a stronger claim within the chapter is that the ways in which language is used in literary texts are centrally relevant to the needs of students in a wide range of situations in everyday life.

Part VI
Focus on the language classroom

The final section of the *Handbook* brings us to the language classroom itself, described by Gaies (1980) as "the crucible" of language teaching and learning. Given the number of factors at play (from global trends in ELT to individual learner characteristics) and the varied contexts in which ELT takes place, what happens in a classroom is localised and situation-specific; experience tells us that no two classrooms are the same.

However, there are a number of key issues and questions that English language teachers and learners navigate in every classroom. These broadly relate to the ways in which teacher(s) and learners relate to each other and use language in class – whether that classroom is a physical or a virtual environment – and the opportunities this might create for learning. Yet while the questions teachers (and learners) face are similar – for example, how should errors be treated, what is the role of the learners' own-language in class – the ways in which these issues are addressed and resolved will vary; as Freeman (2002) notes, context is everything.

Sarah Mercer's chapter on *Complexity and language teaching* opens the section. Clarifying the difference between 'complex' and 'complicated', Mercer outlines how complexity theories, and seeing the classroom as a complex dynamic system, can help us understand ELT learning and teaching contexts and processes. The chapter also suggests that complexity theories can offer practitioners a framework for reflexive practice, systemic thinking or systemic action research.

Subsequently, Steve Walsh and Li Li look at the important relationship between *Classroom talk, interaction and collaboration*. Their chapter not only outlines how learners access and acquire new knowledge and skills through the talk, interaction and collaboration which take place but also suggests that teachers need to develop clear understandings of these processes in order to maximise opportunities for language learning in class. Alison Mackey, Hae In Park and Kaitlyn M. Tagarelli then examine a key aspect of classroom discourse, the ways in which teachers (and learners) might deal with *Errors, corrective feedback and repair*. Their discussion offers English language teachers an overview of the issues surrounding corrective feedback, informed by empirical findings from SLA research, and tackles decades-old questions about whether, when, how and by whom corrective feedback might or should be provided. Philip Kerr's chapter, *Questioning 'English-only' classrooms*, then examines own-language use (i.e. use of the 'mother tongue' or 'first language') in ELT classrooms. Kerr explores the tension between the widely held belief in English-only approaches (in the methodological literature of ELT, at least) and actual classroom practices, and argues the case for the principled use of the learners' own-language in class.

The final three chapters in this section examine issues which, whilst not about classroom discourse and language *per se*, examine contexts for interaction and language learning. Fauzia Shamim and Kuchah Kuchah discuss *Teaching large classes in difficult circumstances* and outline the need for practitioners to move away from a 'problem-solution' approach to pedagogy towards developing context-appropriate methodologies for large-class teaching. Richard Kern, Paige Ware and Mark Warschauer then describe a very different set of issues, examining the relationship between *Computer-mediated communication and language learning*. Their chapter focuses in particular on feedback on learners' writing and speaking and telecollaboration in language and intercultural learning, and addresses the key question of determining the 'effectiveness' of computer-mediated communication for learning. Finally, Julia Menard-Warwick, Miki Mori, Anna Reznik

and Daniel Moglen explore *Values in the ELT classroom*, showing how the teaching of English always involves values, realised both in the decisions teachers make and how classes are organised, and in the values students and teachers express during lessons. Menard-Warwick et al.'s chapter thus reflects, at the level of the classroom, those broad issues of power, culture and educational philosophy raised in the opening section of the *Handbook*.

This Introduction has mapped out both the rationale for and the key areas discussed within the *Routledge Handbook of English Language Teaching*. Recognising the diverse nature of ELT, as a profession constituted by a range of communities of practice and professional interests but also as focus of study and professional reflection, the chapters that follow thus provide a comprehensive overview of the field whilst providing opportunities for you, the reader, to develop your own contextualised understandings of principles and practice in English language teaching.

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Part I

ELT in the world

Contexts and goals

1

World Englishes and English as a Lingua Franca

A changing context for ELT

Philip Seargeant

Introduction: Englishes around the world

English in the world today is a language which has an unprecedented global spread, is marked by its diversity and variety, and plays a fundamental role in the lives of millions of people in countries all around the globe. This chapter gives an overview of the current state and status of the language, and considers the implications that its global standing has for ELT theory and practice. It looks at how two notable paradigms – World Englishes studies and English as a Lingua Franca – have been instrumental in theorising the nature of English in the modern world and in refocusing debates about how the language is perceived by those responsible for its regulation in terms of planning, policy and education. The chapter reviews the development and aims of these two paradigms and explores the implications that an understanding of the diversity and variety of the language has for ELT practices.

Let us begin looking at what it means for English to be a 'global' language by considering the question of how many people speak English in the world today. It is a challenging task to calculate with any degree of accuracy the number of English speakers globally, but the processes involved in making these calculations illuminate a number of key issues about the language as it exists today and thus offer a good starting point for our wider discussion. There are two main difficulties in estimating the total number of current English speakers globally. The first of these is a practical issue: no purposefully designed data-gathering procedures exist for recording the use of languages around the world. As such, figures need to be deduced and pieced together from various different sources, and this inevitably results in a wide margin of error for any total one puts together.

The second problem is a more theoretical one and involves issues which have direct relevance to ELT. The difficulty here concerns decisions about precisely whom one includes in the figures. If we wish to calculate the total number of English speakers in the world, we obviously need a stable idea of what counts as an 'English speaker'. And although at first glance the answer to this may seem self-evident, once we begin to take into account the great variety of ways in which people use and engage with English around the world, it soon becomes apparent that

it is actually a rather complex issue. We need to decide, for example, what level of proficiency is necessary to qualify as a speaker of the language. Will everyday conversational ability (which is in itself difficult to define) do, or should the threshold for competence be set at a higher level? Then there is the question of what range of varieties should be included within the broad concept of 'English'. Should we include English-based pidgins, for example, or 'mixed' varieties such as Singlish? With English being spoken in communities stretching all around the globe, diversity of both form and function – how the language looks and sounds, and how it is used – is a fundamental element of its modern-day identity. But this diversity makes it increasingly difficult to define 'English' and 'English speakers' in a simple or straightforward way.

Despite these difficulties, there has been much work done on compiling statistics about the number of people who speak English in the world today, and, as we shall discuss below, the nature of these statistics – and the theoretical issues that are involved in the criteria upon which they are based – have important implications for the teaching of the language. In effect, they provide the broad context in which the teaching and learning of the language takes place, and as such they are a good place to begin when thinking about how English's global status might influence ELT.

David Crystal has estimated that, by the first decade of the twenty-first century, there were somewhere between 400 and 500 million first language speakers of English in the world (Crystal, 2012). This figure is arrived at by combining the numbers of first language users in all the English-dominant countries such as the UK, USA and Australia (while being mindful of the caveat that, in all these countries, large proportions of the population do not have English as their mother tongue, and that several of the countries are officially bi- or multilingual, such as South Africa) and adding to this estimates of people living elsewhere around the world who have English as a native language. (The concept of the 'native speaker' is a complicated and, at times, contentious one. I am using it here in its 'common-sense' frame of reference, while at the same time noting the complexities around its use. A full discussion of these can be found in Llurda, this volume.) The rough figures for the main English-dominant countries are as follows:

United States of America	approximately 250 million
United Kingdom	approx. 60m
Canada	approx. 24m
Australia and New Zealand	approx. 20m
The Caribbean	approx. 5m
Ireland	approx. 3.7m
South Africa	approx. 3.6m

This figure for native speakers is, however, only a part of the overall picture. In addition, there are approximately 60 countries (for example India, Nigeria and Singapore) where English is used as a second or additional language. In these societies, English has an official status alongside local languages and is often used as the primary means of communication in domains such as education, the law and bureaucracy. It has been estimated that only around 20 per cent to 30 per cent of the population in countries such as these are likely to speak the language, as use is predominantly clustered around urban areas and limited to white-collar workers (Mufwene, 2010). However, given the size of the population of some of these countries and the number of regions in which it is used, the total figure for speakers of English as a second or additional language around the world is in the vicinity of 600 million (Schneider, 2011).

A third and final category that can be included in the overall figures is those to whom English is taught/has been learnt as the primary foreign language: people who are or have engaged in formal education of the language for a number of years. This accounts for speakers in over another hundred countries (McArthur, 1998), further extending the reach of the language. By adding these three groups of speakers together, the total that Crystal arrives at is somewhere between one and a half and two billion people. In other words, somewhere between a quarter and a third of the world's current population currently speak English to some level of proficiency.

There are a number of interesting implications to note from these figures, even when we take into account the lack of precision in the overall total. The first point to make is that, although English is not the language with the most native speakers in the world – Chinese overshadows it in this respect with over 1.2 billion native speakers, while Spanish is also a close rival with around 414 million first language speakers (Ethnologue, 2014) – when one adds those who speak it as a second or additional language within their communities and those who use it as a foreign or international language, English emerges as very much the pre-eminent global language of the modern era. And, as the summary of figures above reveals, a significantly larger proportion of English users – a ratio of around four to one, in fact – are now non-native rather than native speakers. In other words, the majority of people around the world who speak English – and who use it as a fundamental resource in their daily lives – have learnt it as an additional or foreign language. ELT, therefore, has played a very significant part in the spread and current role of the language around the world.

A further important point of note, however, is that over two-thirds of the world's population do *not* speak English. Thus, although it can be described as the pre-eminent global language in today's world, when compared to other languages, it is not by any means a universal resource, and a majority of the global population do not speak it. Yet, given the range of functions and the nature of the domains in which it is used (e.g. its status as the language of global business, its role in the global knowledge economy, etc.), it nevertheless often still plays some role in the lives of those who do not have any practical knowledge of it and is a significant part of the environment in which they live. For example, such is the nature of contemporary global commerce that a farmer in rural Bangladesh may well need to find ways to decode the instructions on the pesticides he (and it usually is 'he') uses on his crops as these are printed in English, even if the language has little other existence in his life (Erling et al., 2012). In contexts such as this, therefore, access to English language education is often desirable or in some cases necessary, although such provision is often not provided or sufficiently resourced (for a critical perspective on the access or barriers to material benefits created by the spread of English, see Pennycook, this volume).

Theoretical paradigms: a multiplex of Englishes

World Englishes

The current status of English around the world, as well as the different ways it is used and exists in different societies, is a product of the language's global spread. The extent of this spread has meant that, since the 1980s, there has been a trend within scholarship to talk of it in the plural form. English in the world today is not a single entity; it is multiplex, with different forms, different identities and different histories. In the words of Braj Kachru, one of the pioneering scholars in this field, "The result of [its] spread is that, formally and functionally, English now has multicultural identities. The term 'English' does not capture this sociolinguistic reality; the term 'Englishes' does" (Kachru, 1992: 357).

The Three Circles of English

To highlight the multiplexity of the language, and the sociolinguistic profiles of these many 'world Englishes', Kachru (1992: 356–357) devised what has become a very influential descriptive model. Known as the *Three Circles of English*, this focuses upon a number of key issues responsible for the ways in which English is now used in particular countries. It views the language in terms of three concentric circles, each of which is composed of countries whose use of English is a product of the history of its spread, the patterns of acquisition in that country, and the ways it is used. In other words, he highlights the following three issues which he sees as fundamental for the identity the language has in different parts of the world:

- the historical process that has resulted in English occupying its current position in a particular country;
- how members of that country usually come to acquire the language (e.g. as a first language learnt from birth, as an additional language learnt via formal education later in life);
- the purposes or functions to which the language is put in that country.

Using these issues, he divides the world up into three broad groups which he terms the Inner, Outer and Expanding Circles.

The Inner Circle comprises those countries where English is the mother tongue for the great majority of the population and where it is used as the default language for most domains of society. Along with the UK, this includes countries such as the USA, Canada, Australia, New Zealand – i.e. those which were colonised by the British and where English displaced indigenous languages. Kachru (1992: 356–357) refers to these as "norm-providing" in that the type of English that is spoken by their populations has generally acted as the model for the English taught and learnt elsewhere in the world. That is to say, when people learn English in, for example, Japan, there has been a tradition of using standard American or standard British English as the model. American and British Englishes have been seen as the standards to which to aspire and viewed as 'authentic' forms of the language.

The second grouping is known as the Outer Circle, and this again comprises countries where English's current status is the product of a colonial history. The difference here, though, is that in these countries English did not displace indigenous languages but came to be used alongside them, often fulfilling specific functions in various institutional domains. English is therefore predominantly an additional language in this circle, used in contexts such as bureaucracy and education. In 1992, Kachru referred to these countries as "norm-developing" in that the varieties of English spoken here have their "own local histories, literary traditions, pragmatic contexts, and communicative norms" (1992: 359), and have thus become indigenised to a significant degree. They do not, however, have the same status as the Inner Circle varieties (they are occasionally known as 'new Englishes') and have thus not normally been used as teaching models in EFL contexts. Countries in this circle include places such as India, Kenya and Singapore.

The final grouping is what Kachru calls the Expanding Circle. This, in effect, comprises the rest of the world, i.e. countries in which English has been predominantly taught as a foreign language. The spread of English here is not tied specifically to a history of colonisation but is the result of other factors, predominant amongst which are processes of globalisation. Historically, these countries have been "norm-dependent"; these are the countries which have followed an Inner Circle standard English as their model. They can be categorised as English as a *Foreign* Language (EFL) countries in that the education system has, at least traditionally, assumed that English is taught for purposes such as foreign travel and engagement with foreign literature – although in recent years

this has been added to by the notion of English for international communication in domains such as business. Countries in this circle include China, Japan and most of the countries of Europe.

Strengths and critiques of the Three Circles model

One of the major strengths of the Three Circles model – and one of its important legacies – has been the way it has focused scholarly attention on the diversity of English and particularly on the history and current cultural identity of non-native varieties. In promoting interest in these, the model – and scholarship which takes a World Englishes perspective – has done a great deal to legitimise these varieties as valid linguistic systems in their own right. By referring to these varieties as separate Englishes rather than simply non-native dialects, this approach makes a case for seeing what were often previously viewed as deficient versions of Inner Circle varieties (e.g. Quirk, 1990) as legitimate varieties in their own right, and research conducted in this field has provided empirical evidence of the ways in which these varieties are linguistically stable and have firm roots within the culture of the societies which use them.

Since the introduction and development of the Three Circles model, however, it has been subject to a number of critiques, focusing on certain limitations in its scope, detail or theoretical assumptions (e.g. Bruthiaux, 2003; Pennycook, 2007). In its attempt to generalise across the broad sweep of English speakers globally (a population which numbers, as we have noted above, up to two billion people), the model necessarily looks on a broad level at certain aspects of the phenomena it is explaining. Limitations to which people have drawn attention include the fact that it deals with language only at the level of the nation state, thus ignoring the immense amount of variety, e.g. the regional and social dialects, the domain-specific registers, which occur within countries. It has also been criticised for conceptualising varieties as separate and distinct entities (e.g. Indian English, Singapore English) rather than attempting to deal with the way that people often tend to mix English with other languages in an *ad hoc* manner, creating hybrid patterns of language use which draw on the various linguistic resources they have to hand (Pennycook, 2007). In other words, the critiques claim that the model is built on distinct national varieties that do not reflect the real-world fluidity of language use as experienced by speakers around the globe and thus gives a skewed picture of the sociolinguistic realities of much of the world's population.

Another problem concerns the way that several countries do not fit neatly within the categories used by the model. Kachru himself noted this weakness for the case of South Africa, which now has eleven official languages and where English exists as a mother tongue for large sections of the population but not for others. As noted above, several of the Inner Circle countries are officially bilingual, and thus even these complicate clear-cut distinctions between the three groupings.

A further problematic area (again intimated by Kachru in his early writings, e.g. Kachru, 1985) is countries such as those in Scandinavia, in which English is, on paper, a foreign language but where it now exists as such an integral part of everyday life that to all intents and purposes it operates more as an additional language. Despite these areas of critique, however, the model has been greatly influential, both in broadening the scope of research and debate about the nature of global English and in providing a conceptual vocabulary to talk about these phenomena.

Schneider's dynamic model

Other models for explaining the roots of the diversity of Englishes around the world have also been proposed, aiming to further refine our theoretical understanding of the current nature of

the language. One such is that devised by Edgar Schneider (2011) who, like Kachru, focuses on the historical development of worldwide varieties and the way that patterns of contact between different speech communities that took place as a result of colonialism have shaped the current form and function of the language in post-colonial countries. Schneider identifies five broad stages that varieties in what are now post-colonial countries can pass through which influence the way the language is used and perceived. Not all territories go through all five stages – depending on the particular historical circumstances, different parts of the process will be more prominent than others for some territories – but as a model, this attempts to provide a more detailed explanation of the development of worldwide varieties than the Three Circles model.

The first stage – what Schneider calls "foundation" – sees English being brought to a territory where it was not previously spoken as part of the broader process of colonial expansion. In this first phase of contact, the two communities – the indigenous people and the newly arrived settlers – view themselves as distinct groups, and though some language contact takes place, communication is usually conducted via interpreters or high-status members of the communities.

In stage 2, "exonormative stabilisation", English starts to be spoken on a more regular basis in the territory, although it is confined mostly to domains such as education, administration and the legal system. The variety that is spoken is exonormative in that it is modelled on norms external to the territory itself – i.e. from the 'home' country (i.e. Britain) – and thus it has no distinct linguistic or cultural identity of its own. This is followed by Stage 3, "nativisation". At this point in the process, the cultural and political allegiances of the pre-colonisation period are beginning to wane, and the territory is instead developing a new cultural identity which includes a localised variety of English. The fourth stage of the process, "endonormative stabilisation", then sees this local variety become viewed as a legitimate entity in its own right, to the extent that it starts to be promoted as a significant element of the territory's culture. The population of the territory thus no longer looks to a British model of English but instead relies upon local norms, which often begin to be codified in national dictionary projects. This stage often occurs after political independence for the colony, and linguistic issues, along with other cultural issues (e.g. the promotion of a national literature), are part of the process of forging a distinct political identity.

Once the local variety is firmly established, the fifth stage of the process takes place, termed "differentiation" by Schneider. This refers to processes of internal linguistic variation that happen within a territory as different sectors of the community begin to establish their own specific usage patterns. For example, differentiation will occur between the way different geographical regions use the language, or between age groups, and the extent of this is such that these can be considered as separate dialects. The five-stage model thus maps a process which accounts for how diverse world varieties develop and the role that historical and cultural issues play in shaping this development. As we shall discuss later, when we look at implications for ELT, this historico-cultural background and the influence it has on the relationship between English and local identities is a key issue for teaching as it provides the background context for questions about language form and function.

English as a Lingua Franca

Research and debate in World Englishes has, then, done a great deal to highlight the full extent of the diversity of English around the world and the deep cultural roots it has in various world contexts, especially in so far as it is bound up with the cultural identity of different communities. There is another significant way in which English is presently used as a language across the globe, however, and this is as an international language: a *lingua franca* allowing communication between those who do not share a mother tongue. The phenomenon of English as a Lingua

Franca (ELF) is another important site for research for English language studies and one which also has implications for the teaching and learning of the language. The term 'lingua franca' originally referred to a trade language that was used in the Levant from the eleventh through to the nineteenth centuries. The name, the Latin for 'Frankish tongue', comes from the way that Muslims in the area would commonly refer to the Crusaders as Franks irrespective of their actual background. From the nineteenth century onwards, the term began to be used for any medium of communication between people who do not share a native language. As was noted above, the demographics of English use around the world today mean that non-native speakers outnumber native speakers significantly and thus, for a large proportion of interactions in which English is used, it has precisely this role, as a means for international dialogue in an increasingly globalised world.

Within scholarship focusing on English as a Lingua Franca, there is some debate about the scope of the term – whether it should include interaction which involves both native and non-native speakers (e.g. Firth, 1996) or whether it is best reserved for interactions where neither party have English as a native language. Given the complex patterns of mobility that now characterise the lives of great sections of the world population, an inclusive use of the concept seems most useful, focusing attention on how English is used in a variety of contexts and domains as the preferred medium for international communication. While early research on the topic looked to identify habitually used language features in ELF interactions (e.g. Dewey, 2007), recent research has moved to viewing ELF more as a function than a specific variety in its own right and to focusing on the range of strategies that people use in order to accommodate to each other's communicative practices (Jenkins et al., 2011; Seidlhofer, 2011). In essence, English as a Lingua Franca is an aspect of intercultural communication (see Kramsch and Zhu, this volume). Unlike varieties which are used by particular speech communities, it is better conceived of as something drawn upon by communities of practice who have shared interests, goals and emergent ways for engaging in these (Wenger, 1998). Research attention thus focuses on how people adapt their English usage to ensure that it is appropriate for the culturally and linguistically diverse contexts in which they are communicating. For example, those accustomed to using English in this way are likely to avoid the use of idioms, given that these are usually highly culturally specific; they will also adapt their pronunciation according to the audience they are addressing so as to ensure maximum clarity of expression.

In summary, both the above paradigms have had great influence in focusing research interest in, and raising general awareness of, the ways that English is actually used around the world today. Their findings have mapped out the diversity in form, function and beliefs about the language. In doing this they have played a role in countering attitudes which stigmatise usages that differ from standard British or American as being in some way 'broken' or imperfect. Thus, through the collection and analysis of empirical data, they have made the case for legitimising the diversity that is found in English around the world today. In the next section, we will go on to look at how our understanding of this diversity impacts on the teaching of the language.

Implications and challenges for ELT practice and practitioners

As we saw from both Kachru's and Schneider's models, the issue of norms – of how the systematised features of the language are spoken by a speech community – has been an important factor in how varieties are perceived and the status they are accorded. This is, of course, a crucial issue for ELT, as any language class needs to have a model of the language with which to work, and the insights from World Englishes and ELF both provide challenges for finding straightforward answers about what this model should be. In this section, we will examine the most prominent

of these challenges, addressing the questions of what form(s) of English should be taught, as well as who should teach it and how should it be tested.

What model of English should be taught?

The issue of teaching models is relevant for almost all those who speak the language, both native speaker and non-native speaker alike. Those for whom English is a first language acquire its spoken form as a natural part of their development, but in doing so they learn the variety that is spoken around them, which, for the majority of the population, means a regional or social dialect which differs in various ways from standard English. When they then enter formal education, they are most likely to be taught using a model based on a standard form of the language, both for their writing and speech. The standard model used in institutional education thus has a strong influence on the sociolinguistic habits of all those who pass through the school system and frequently figures as the subject of political debate about what precisely constitutes standard English and the way it is positioned within the curriculum.

In non-mother-tongue countries, a similar and equally influential process occurs. As noted above, the majority of English speakers around the world acquire the language initially via some sort of formal schooling, and thus the ELT profession operates as a key mediator for the way the language is introduced to them. A fundamental question for ELT professionals, then, is which variety is best taught to students? The answer to this question involves issues relating to consequences for the learning process, to the practices and perspectives of students and teachers and to the politics of the language as it exists within society more generally. Three broad approaches can be taken. The first is to opt for a native speaker standard, i.e. one spoken in an English-dominant country such as the UK or USA. The second is to adopt a local variety as teaching model. In other words, the choice of model is between one which looks to external norms, i.e. those used in native speaker countries, and one which uses norms that have developed as the language has become indigenised by the local community (Kirkpatrick, 2007). The third option focuses less on specific models (i.e. choosing an Inner Circle or local variety as a teaching standard) and more on intercultural communication strategies, drawing on research on the ways English is used in lingua franca contexts.

In taking a decision about which of these alternatives is likely to be more appropriate, there are a number of factors to take into consideration. The exact nature of these factors will, however, vary considerably depending on the circumstances in which the language is being taught. There is thus no straightforward correct or incorrect answer which is applicable for all ELT contexts, and teachers working within particular contexts will be in the best position to judge what works for their students, taking into account the following factors: (1) how suitable the variety or ELF strategies are as a means of communication in the context for which the language is being learnt; (2) what implications the choice of variety has for the practice of teaching in that context; and (3) how the decision relates to the cultural politics of the variety as this is manifest in that context. For each of these factors, there are both practical and ideological concerns which relate to the purpose for which the language is being learnt, the status accorded to different varieties in particular contexts, the availability and suitability of resources, implications over the cost of accessing or generating materials and pedagogic concerns relating to motivation and attainability. The relative balance of these issues will differ depending on the contexts in which English is taught, and the challenge for educators is to make informed decisions which navigate these various factors while taking into account the insights about the use of language in a global context which research into World Englishes and ELF provides. For the remainder of this section, I will look at these factors in further detail, beginning with arguments in favour of native speaker teaching models.

A first argument in favour of using native speaker varieties as teaching models relates to their current status both around the globe and within the ELT profession itself. One of the motivations for many people learning English is that it has a global reach, and an argument in favour of using a standard British or American variety is thus based on the belief that their current status and history mean they are better placed than other varieties for offering wide-ranging intelligibility. As global sociolinguistic trends evolve and alter, the affordances that these varieties currently possess may also change, of course, and different varieties may, at some stage, emerge as candidates for a preeminent international standard. For the moment, however, not least because native speaker varieties are currently used globally as teaching standards, these varieties are the ones which come closest to acting as international standards. Yet the question of whether an international standard is necessarily any better for intelligibility purposes is a moot point, and thus this argument is one which, in many ways, relates more to perceptions rather than practicalities (Seargeant, 2012: 40).

On the other hand, an issue which does have specific practical implications is that standard British and American Englishes are already extensively codified; there are a range of available dictionaries and grammars for them which act as reference resources for the teaching of the language. In addition, the UK and USA both have large ELT industries which supply English language education expertise around the globe and provide for a wide range of teaching resources. The availability of these pre-existing materials is thus both convenient and cost-effective for those working in the profession, providing as it does a ready-made support structure (for further critical discussion of the claims and controversies surrounding ELT materials, see Gray, this volume).

Practicality issues alone will not determine the choice over variety, however. There are ideological issues to take into account as well. In the current 'marketplace' of world languages, native speaker varieties of English have prestige and legitimacy in many parts of the world in a way that local varieties do not, and this in turn makes them an attractive choice both for individual learners as well as policy makers and educationalists. Furthermore, the prestige of these varieties is often a motivational factor for learning them, as students will associate these varieties with aspirational lifestyles or with a range of instrumental benefits (Seargeant, 2009). However, the obverse of this is that a native speaker model is unlikely to be something a student will ever perfectly attain, and if acquisition of this model is the goal for the student, the learning journey may prove to be frustrating and, ultimately, disheartening (Kirkpatrick, 2007).

What then are the issues relating to the teaching of a local variety instead? As suggested above, one of the arguments given against local varieties is their lack of international intelligibility. As noted, though, evidence that this is actually the case is, at most, slight, and varietal difference need not be an impediment to international communication. Moreover, if the language is going to be predominantly used in local contexts – as is the case in Outer Circle countries where it is an official language – the local variety will probably be the more appropriate choice. Furthermore, from a motivational point of view, a local model is likely to be not only more familiar to the students but also more attainable.

Another issue to take into account with local varieties is that, whereas standard US or UK varieties are well codified, many local varieties are either only in the very early stages of this process or have not begun it at all. As such, teaching resources such as textbooks and assessment instruments do not exist for many local varieties, with possible financial and workload consequences for educators. However, adopting a local variety as a teaching model can lead to further codification projects, and thus, from a language policy perspective, the choice of a local variety can have long-term advantages in terms of enhancing its status and providing secure foundations for its identity as a distinct and legitimate variety. There are also other, more general, political

arguments for the use of a local variety to act as a counter to the hegemony that US and UK varieties, and the cultures with which they are associated, continue to have in the world and which continue to have implications for issues related to global social inequality (see Pennycook, this volume).

The third approach to the issue reframes the question to concentrate less on the notion of alternative varieties and more on strategies for intercultural communication. Drawing on research into the way that people use English in Lingua Franca contexts, this approach aims to ensure that teaching is sensitive to the ways in which speakers co-create meaning using English as a resource (Jenkins et al., 2011).

Who should teach English?

Along with the question of which variety or strategy to use as a teaching model, there is also the issue of who should do the teaching. As different teachers speak differing varieties, they are often seen to represent differing cultural associations of English; thus, they can be viewed as an embodiment of the diversity in the language, and their own linguistic profiles can act as a key variable in the educational process. For example, a teacher's linguistic profile often plays a part in hiring practices in educational institutions and, in certain parts of the world, also becomes co-opted as part of the promotion of what counts as successful language teaching. Issues around this topic are again a mixture of the practical and ideological, while also having an ethical dimension.

As with the debate over teaching models, a basic distinction for categories of English language teacher is made between native-speaker teachers, i.e. those emanating from one of the English-dominant countries, and local teachers who have English as an additional language (see Llurda, this volume). Decisions over who teaches the language have effects both for learners and for teachers themselves. From the perspective of students, a native speaker teacher is often seen to be able to model what is viewed as an authentic form of the language as it is spoken in English-dominant countries and is also thought to have an intuitive knowledge about norms of usage. Additionally, if English is being learnt as part of the culture of one of the mother tongue countries, the native speaker's personal background provides an exemplar of that culture. This is, however, a rather simplistic view of the situation and does not correspond to the diversity of linguistic practices even within Inner Circle countries; nor does it reflect the patterns of mobility in modern societies.

An argument in favour of non-native speakers is that they are likely to be familiar with local educational and cultural practices in a way that teachers from outside the community are not and can also act as role models of successful later-life acquisition in that they have experience of learning English in circumstances similar to those of their students. They are also likely to be more attuned to the communicative strategies used in ELF encounters and thus have practical knowledge about how the language operates for these purposes.

There are also implications for teachers themselves from decisions around this issue. In many regions of the world where a standard British or American model is held in high esteem, there is often a tradition of ELT instructors being hired solely on their status as native speakers and of them having little or nothing in the way of professional teaching qualifications. This practice can obviously be to the detriment of the local teacher population – it can deprive them of work and also undermine their own status as professionals, not to mention the professional status of the teaching industry in general. The teaching of a local variety, on the other hand, can professionally favour local teachers and avoid a situation where promotion of a native speaker model has the effect of framing local teachers as imperfect speakers of the language. Additionally, local teachers will, by definition, be multilingual (knowing both the local language(s) and English) and will

have been English learners themselves; this is likely to have positive benefits for their teaching (for further discussion, see Llurda, this volume).

How should English be tested?

The final element of the education process I wish to look at is testing, and here again, the pedagogy and politics of World Englishes and ELF are of relevance. Testing has an important role both within and beyond the classroom. As part of the education process, it acts as a means of evaluating learning as well as bringing into focus the aims of the curriculum. Beyond the classroom, it has an influential role in social organisation. These two roles relate to the effects of what are known as washback and impact. Washback is the effect the content of the test has on the teaching process. In other words, in so far as teachers shape their teaching to prepare students for passing tests, the content of the test will determine what is being taught. Impact, on the other hand, refers to the effects felt from the shape and role of the test in society more generally. For example, an immediate and practical purpose of learning English for many students is to pass what are known as high-stakes tests, i.e. those which regulate access to things such as employment and further education opportunities or act as determinants for people's right to citizenship in a country (McNamara and Roever, 2006). Tests such as these play an important role in the political regulation of society and have very real consequences for the lives of those who take them (Shohamy, 2006; see also Fulcher and Owen, this volume).

The salient issues around testing English are similar to those relating to its teaching. The majority of tests are based on the idea that English is composed of a set core of correct usages (usually understood as those of the idealised native speaker) and that design of the test is able to check for understanding of these usages. Within the context of World Englishes and ELF research, one major concern relating to mainstream English language tests therefore is that they are structured around linguistic norms which do not accurately represent the range of varieties and communicative strategies used around the globe (Davidson, 2006). A fundamental question for testing thus becomes: what norms should provide the standard for the test?

Here again, there are two traditions of answer, the first advocating the use of a standard native speaker variety, the second the ability to communicate fluently according to local communicative norms. The arguments for each are much the same as those outlined above for different teaching models. Recent research relating to ELF, however, has led to certain people, such as Suresh Canagarajah (2006), suggesting that this traditional dichotomy oversimplifies the way the language is actually used in the present day. Canagarajah's argument is that because English is a language of such diversity in today's world, proficiency in it necessitates being 'multidialectical', i.e. people need access to different types of English as they move from context to context. Tests, he therefore suggests, should examine communicative strategies which allow people to negotiate this diversity, and in this way their washback will influence teaching in such a way that it better prepares students for the actuality of modern-day globalised English use. Thus their impact will stop promoting the hegemony of native speaker varieties and help democratise the use of English around the world.

Conclusion

The challenges for ELT from the theoretical perspectives and empirical research provided by World Englishes studies and ELF are all to do with context. The overriding theme from this research is that English today is multiplex. It has different identities in different communities and operates on multiple levels, both local and translocal. In contexts where it is used as a lingua

franca, it has an identity which is no longer tethered to any particular culture or nation and instead has become a functional means of communication which interlocutors can draw on for transactional purposes. In other contexts, localised varieties are embedded within the culture of the places in which they are used, and the language has come to reflect this local culture and become a part of its identity. This multiplex nature of English has implications for the way that it is taught, for decisions about who teaches it and for how it is tested. Given this multiplex nature, it is not possible to advocate straightforward approaches that will apply equally to all contexts. Instead, teachers and other ELT professionals need an awareness of the nature of the contemporary profile of the language and of the issues it raises – both in their context and globally, and for both learners, institutions and policy makers – and with this they can then tailor their professional practice to the particular circumstances of their students and to the contexts in which those students will be using the language.

Discussion questions

- What are the implications of the demographics of English speakers globally for the teaching of English?
- In what ways does the global spread of English complicate the notion of a single standard of the language?
- What practical implications can teachers draw from the theoretical insights of World Englishes and English as a Lingua Franca?
- In what sense will decisions about which variety should act as a teaching model be based on both practical and ideological concerns?
- In what ways is English used in your own local context? What functions does it fulfil, and what form does it take?

Related topics

Bilingual education in a multilingual world; ELT materials; Language and culture in ELT; 'Native speakers', English and ELT; Politics, power relationships and ELT

Further reading

Kirkpatrick, A. (2007) *World Englishes: Implications for international communication and English language teaching*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. (This introduces issues and debates around World Englishes, with a specific focus on the implications of the spread of the language for teaching and education.)

McKay, S. (2002) *Teaching English as an international language: Rethinking goals and approaches*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. (As with the Kirkpatrick book, this also focuses on the issues involved in teaching English in contexts where it operates as an international language.)

Seargeant, P. (2012) *Exploring World Englishes: Language in a global context*. Abingdon: Routledge. (This book examines issues around World Englishes from an applied linguistics perspective, focusing specifically on real-life challenges that are faced by language professionals in contexts such as language education and language planning.)

Seargeant, P. and Swann, J. (eds) (2012) *English in the world: History, diversity, change*. Abingdon: Routledge. (This is an introductory textbook about the global spread of English, tracing its historical development and examining its diversity today. It includes chapters by leading scholars such as David Crystal, Kay McCormick and Miriam Meyerhoff.)

Seidlhofer, B. (2011) *Understanding English as a Lingua Franca*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. (This provides an overview of the issues and debates relating to the use of English as an international lingua franca, including a chapter dedicated to implications of ELF for English language teaching.)

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2

Politics, power relationships and ELT

Alastair Pennycook

Introduction: power and politics in ELT

That English language teaching (ELT) is inextricably bound up with multiple power relationships is indisputable. English did not spread globally as if it had a capacity to take over the world without human help. It was pushed by many forces that saw an interest in its promotion and pulled by many who also perceived value in acquiring it. A language only spreads because people learn it, and where learning happens, teaching is often (though not always) involved. So the global spread of English, with its connections to colonial exploitation and the contemporary inequalities fostered by globalisation and neoliberal ideologies (an emphasis away from equity, welfare and government spending towards privatisation, deregulation and the rule of the market; see Holborow, 2015; also Menard-Warwick et al., this volume), as well as its relations, for example, to travel, popular culture, technology and religion, cannot be understood outside such global forces. ELT, therefore, with its audience of 'Others' (a division between teaching English and speakers of other languages is embedded in acronyms such as TESOL) is inescapably caught up in questions of power.

As Joseph (2006) has observed, language is steeped from top to bottom in relations of power, or in other words it is profoundly political (the political here refers not so much to the tawdry battles fought out in our national parliaments but to the everyday struggles over whose version of the world will prevail). And because of its involvement in so much of what is going on in the world, English and ELT are even more so. Rather than the bland terms in which English is often understood – as a neutral medium of international communication, a language that holds out the promise of social and economic development to all those who learn it, a language of equal opportunity, a language that the world needs in order to be able to communicate – we need to understand that it is also an exclusionary class dialect, favouring particular people, countries, cultures, forms of knowledge and possibilities of development; it is a language which creates barriers as much as it presents possibilities.

Tollefson (2000: 8) warns that "at a time when English is widely seen as a key to the economic success of nations and the economic well-being of individuals, the spread of English also contributes to significant social, political, and economic inequalities." Bruthiaux (2002: 292–293) argues convincingly that English language education is "an outlandish irrelevance" for many of

the world's poor, and "talk of a role for English language education in facilitating the process of poverty reduction and a major allocation of public resources to that end is likely to prove misguided and wasteful." As ELT practitioners, therefore, we cannot simply bury our heads in our classrooms and assume none of this has anything to do with us. Nor can we simply adopt individually oriented access arguments on the basis that any improvement in learners' English will likely bring them benefits. There is much more at stake here. For those "who do not have access to high-quality English language education, the spread of English presents a formidable obstacle to education, employment, and other activities requiring English proficiency" (Tollefson, 2000: 9), so ELT may have as much to do with the creation as the alleviation of inequality.

Ramanathan's (2005: 112) study of English and Vernacular medium education in India shows, how English is a deeply divisive language, tied on the one hand to the denigration of vernacular languages, cultures and ways of learning and teaching, and, on the other, dovetailing "with the values and aspirations of the elite Indian middle class". While English opens doors to some, it is simultaneously a barrier to learning, development and employment for others. Ferguson (2013: 35) explains that there is a "massive popular demand not just for English but for English-medium education" based on the reasonable assumption in the current global economy that "without English-language skills, one's labour mobility and employment prospects are restricted"; yet at the same time, English language education has many deleterious effects, including distorting already weak primary education sectors, advantaging urban elites over rural poor, constraining the use of other languages and diverting resources from other areas.

So for those of us involved in ELT, we need to consider how all that we do in the name of English teaching is inevitably connected to power and politics. What are the wider implications of promoting an English-only policy in a classroom, of choosing a textbook with glossy images of international travel, of deciding that 'furnitures' is acceptable or unacceptable, of choosing to work at a private language school, of knowing or not knowing the first language(s) of our students, of choosing to hire 'native speakers' at a school? In the next section, I will provide a brief overview of the prevailing paradigms for looking at the global spread of English – World Englishes, English as a Lingua Franca and Linguistic Imperialism – and point to their general shortcomings for understanding power and ELT. The following section will then look at local manifestations of ELT, ways in which ELT is bound up with local economies and education systems, racial and linguistic prejudice, styles of popular culture and economies of desire. The final section of the chapter will discuss the implications of all this for the practice of ELT.

Prevailing discourses: World Englishes, ELF and Linguistic Imperialism

Despite the evident connections, power has not always been sufficiently part of discussions of ELT. There are several reasons for this, including the lack of attention to power and politics in linguistics, applied linguistics and educational theory, and the role ELT plays as a form of service industry to globalisation. Discussion of the global spread of English has been dominated in recent times by the World Englishes (WE) (Kachru, 1992), and more recently English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) (Seidlhofer, 2011) frameworks (for further discussion, see Seargeant, this volume). Although Kachru's model of Three Circles of English – the Inner Circle where English is widely spoken as a first language, the Outer, postcolonial Circle where it is used internally as a second or additional language, and the Expanding Circle, where it is largely used for external, foreign language communication – has changed the ways in which we view varieties of English and norms of correctness (giving us multiple Englishes), and although the ELF programme has usefully drawn attention to the ways in which English is used in daily interactions among multilingual

speakers, both approaches have been criticised for eschewing questions of power and presenting instead a utopian vision of linguistic diversity.

Kachru's (1992) Three Circle model of World Englishes posits a new list of standard varieties – based rather confusingly on a mixture of social, historical and geographical factors – but tends to overlook difference within regions. As Martin (2014: 53) observes in the context of the Philippines, there are at very least circles within circles, comprising an Inner Circle "of educated, elite Filipinos who have embraced the English language", an Outer Circle who may be aware of Philippine English as a variety but are "either powerless to support it and/or ambivalent about its promotion" and an Expanding Circle for whom the language is "largely inaccessible". Tupas (2006: 169) points out that "the power to (re)create English ascribed to the Outer Circle is mainly reserved only for those who have been invested with such power in the first place (the educated/the rich/the creative writers, etc.)." Thus, as Parakrama (1995: 25–26) argues, "the smoothing out of struggle within and without language is replicated in the homogenising of the varieties of English on the basis of 'upper-class' forms. Kachru is thus able to theorise on the nature of a monolithic Indian English." Whilst appearing, therefore, to work from an inclusionary political agenda in its attempt to have the new Englishes acknowledged as varieties of English, this approach to language is equally exclusionary. Ultimately, concludes Bruthiaux, "the Three Circles model is a 20th century construct that has outlived its usefulness" (2003: 161).

The more recent work on English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) (e.g. Jenkins, 2006; Seidlhofer, 2011) is perhaps a little more promising in that it does not work with either nation-based nor class-based linguistic models (though there is still insufficient attention to what we might call 'English from below' or the everyday interactions of non-elites). As O'Regan (2014: 540) notes, however, there is a "profound disconnect between the desire to identify and promote 'ELF' features and functions and the practical necessity of dealing with the structural iniquities of a global capitalism which will by default always distribute economic and linguistic resources in a way which benefits the few over the many and which confers especial prestige upon selective language forms". Thus while the ELF approach has been able to avoid some of the problems of the World Englishes focus on nation- and class-based varieties and can open up a more flexible and mobile version of English, it has likewise never engaged adequately with questions of power. While the WE approach has framed its position as a struggle between the former colonial Centre and its postcolonial offspring, the ELF approach has located its struggle between so-called native and non-native speakers (see Llurda, this volume). Yet neither of these sites of struggle engages with wider questions of power, inequality, class, ideology or access.

Phillipson's (1992, 2009) Linguistic Imperialism framework, by contrast, developed "to account for linguistic hierarchisation, to address issues of why some languages come to be used more and others less, what structures and ideologies facilitate such processes, and the role of language professionals" (1997: 238), places questions of power much more squarely in the picture. There are two discernible strands to Phillipson's argument. On the one hand, linguistic imperialism is concerned with the ways in which English is constantly promoted over other languages, the role played by organisations such as the British Council in the promotion and orchestration of the global spread of English (it was far from accidental), and the ways in which this inequitable position of English has become embedded in ELT dogmas, such as promoting native speaker teachers of English over their non-native speaker counterparts or suggesting that the learning of English is better started as early as possible (a trend that is continuing worldwide, with English language teaching occurring more and more at the primary and even pre-primary levels; see Enever, this volume).

On the other hand, linguistic imperialism "dovetails with communicative, cultural, educational, and scientific imperialism in a rapidly evolving world in which corporate-led globalisation

is seeking to impose or induce a neo-imperial world order" (Phillipson, 2006: 357), thus drawing attention to the relation between English, neo-liberalism and globalisation. At stake, therefore, in this vision of English linguistic imperialism is not only the ascendency of English in relation to other languages but also the role English plays in much broader processes of the dominance of forms of global capital and the assumed homogenisation of world culture. For Phillipson (2008: 38), "acceptance of the status of English, and its assumed neutrality implies uncritical adherence to the dominant world disorder, unless policies to counteract neolinguistic imperialism and to resist linguistic capital dispossession are in force."

While Phillipson usefully locates English within inequitable relations of globalisation, there are several limitations to this view. Park and Wee (2012) explain that a "problem of linguistic imperialism's macrosocial emphasis is that it does not leave room for more specific and ethno-graphically sensitive accounts of actual language use" (p.16). As Holborow (2012: 27) puts it, in order to equate imperialism and linguistic imperialism, Phillipson has to "materialise language", a position that cannot adequately account for the ways in which English is resisted and appropri-ated, and how English users "may find ways to negotiate, alter and oppose political structures, and reconstruct their languages, cultures and identities to their advantage. The intention is not to *reject* English, but to *reconstitute* it in more inclusive, ethical, and democratic terms" (Canagarajah, 1999: 2). Phillipson's version of linguistic imperialism assumes processes of homogenisation without examining local complexities of cultural appropriation and language use (Pennycook, 2007; Bruthiaux, 2008). It is essential, as Blommaert (2010: 20) notes, to approach the sociolinguistics of globalisation in terms of a "chequered, layered complex of processes evolving simultaneously at a variety of scales and in reference to a variety of centres".

In order to place ELT – teaching practices, curricula, materials, tests – in the wider context of the global spread of English, it is essential to understand English in relation to globalisation, neoliberalism, exploitation and discrimination. But we need an understanding of language in relation to power that operates neither with a utopian vision of linguistic diversity nor with a dystopian assumption of linguistic imperialism. While we ignore Phillipson's warnings at our peril, it is important to develop a multifaceted understanding of the power and politics of ELT. Phillipson's critique of the global spread of English has compelled many to reflect on global inequities in which English plays a role, but his insistence that this should be seen in terms of imperialism has also narrowed the scope of the debate. The equation of a linguistic imperialism thesis with a critical standpoint, and the frequent dismissal of this totalising version of events on the grounds that it overstates the case, draws attention away from the necessity to evaluate the global spread of English, and the role of English language teachers as its agents, critically and carefully. What is required, then, is a more sensitive account of power, language and context and the implications for ELT.

Locality, desire and contingency: the embeddedness of English

A theory of imperialism is not a prerequisite to look critically at questions of power and politics in ELT, but if we reject linguistic imperialism for its monologically dystopian approach to lan-guage and culture in favour of the utopian visions of diversity in WE or ELF frameworks, we are equally poorly served. More important in relation to the power and politics of English are close and detailed understandings of the ways in which English is embedded in local economies of desire and the ways in which demand for English is part of a larger picture of images of change, modernisation, access and longing. It is tied to the languages, cultures, styles and aesthetics of popular culture, with its particular attractions for youth, rebellion and conformity; it is enmeshed within local economies and all the inclusions, exclusions and inequalities this may entail; it is

bound up with changing modes of communication, from shifting Internet uses to its role in text-messaging; it is increasingly entrenched in educational systems, bringing to the fore many concerns about knowledge, pedagogy and the curriculum. We need to understand the diversity of what English is and what it means in all these contexts, and we need to do so not with prior assumptions about globalisation and its effects but with critical studies of the local embeddedness of English.

As Borjian (2013: 166) shows, English education in post-revolutionary Iran has been a "site of struggle, in which multiple forces compete". One major aspect of this was the state and religious (closely combined) opposition to Western forms of modernity, leading to an attempt to create "an indigenized model of English education, free from the influence of the English-speaking nations" (Borjian, 2013: 160). It is important to understand, then, that *indigenisation* of English education was not so much a local movement to make English their own but rather a state ideology to oppose Western influence. Meanwhile, the privatisation of ELT provision led to an opposing trend that tended more towards Anglo-American models of ELT. The point here, once again, is that ELT is always caught up in a range of political, religious, cultural and economic battles. In Algeria, by contrast, the growth of English education sits in a different set of complex historical and political relations, involving both French as the former colonial language as well as postcolonial processes of Arabisation. English, as a "new intruder in Algeria's sociolinguistic scenery", suggests Benrabah (2013: 124) may bring the benefits of helping Algerians to see both that there are other alternatives to French and that other languages, such as Berber, have much to offer alongside Arabic. Language conflicts around English, French, Berber and Arabic in Algeria, Benrabah shows, are always bound up with the complexity of other local political struggles.

There are several implications for ELT, since these perspectives force us to rethink what we mean by the idea of English. No longer can we consider it to be a pre-given object that we are employed to deliver; rather, it is a many-headed hydra (Rapatahana and Bunce, 2012) enmeshed in complex local contexts of power and struggle. From the relation between English and other languages in the Pacific (Barker, 2012) to its role in countries such as Sri Lanka (Parakrama, 2012), the position of English is complex and many sided. To understand the power and politics of ELT, then, we need detailed understandings of the role English plays in relation to local languages, politics and economies. This requires meticulous studies of English and its users, as well as theories of power that are well adapted to contextual understandings. As ELT professionals, we are never just teaching something called English but rather are involved in economic and social change, cultural renewal, people's dreams and desires.

There are therefore many Englishes, not so much in the terms of language varieties posited by the World Englishes framework but rather in terms of different Englishes in relation to different social and economic forces. In South Korea, for example, where 'English fever' has driven people to remarkable extremes (from prenatal classes to tongue surgery and sending young children overseas to study), English has become naturalised 'as the language of global competitiveness', so that English as a neoliberal language is regarded as a "natural and neutral medium of academic excellence" (Piller and Cho, 2013: 24). As a new destination for such English language learners, the Philippines markets itself as a place where 'authentic English' (an Outer Circle variety) is spoken, yet its real drawcard is that its English is "cheap and affordable" (Lorente and Tupas, 2014: 79). For the Philippines, like other countries such as Pakistan (Rahman, 2009) with low economic development but relatively strong access to English, the language becomes one of commercial opportunity, so that businesses such as call centres on the one hand open up jobs for local college-educated employees but on the other hand distort the local economy and education system and perpetuate forms of global inequality (Friginal, 2009).

As ELT practitioners, we need to understand not only these roles English plays in relation to the economy but also student motivations to learn English, which may concern more than just pragmatic goals of social and economic development (Kubota, 2011). Since English is often marketed in relation to a particular set of images of sexual desire, it is important to appreciate the gender and sexual politics involved in English language learning and the ways in which English, as advertised for language schools and presented in textbooks, "emerges as a powerful tool to construct a gendered identity and to gain access to the romanticized West" (Piller and Takahashi, 2006: 69). As Motha and Lin (2014: 332) contend, "at the center of every English language learning moment lies desire: desire for the language; for the identities represented by particular accents and varieties of English; for capital, power, and images that are associated with English; for what is believed to lie beyond the doors that English unlocks." The ELT practitioner, therefore, may become an object of desire, a gatekeeper, a constructor or destroyer of dreams.

Like Darvin and Norton's (2015) understanding of *investment* as the intersection between identity, ideology and capital, this notion of desire is best understood not as an internal psychological characteristic but rather, as Takahashi (2013: 144) explains in her exploration of Japanese women's 'desire' for English, as "constructed at the intersection between the macro-discourses of the West and foreign men and ideologies of Japanese women's life-courses in terms of education, occupation, and heterosexuality". Focusing on the ways in which these discourses of desire implicate white Western men, Appleby (2013: 144) shows how "an embodied hegemonic masculinity" is constructed in the Japanese ELT industry, producing as a commodity "an extroverted and eroticised White Western ideal for male teachers". Any understanding of the motivations to learn English, therefore, has to deal with relations of power not only in economic and educational terms but also as they are tied to questions of desire, gender, sexuality (Nelson, 2009), and the marketing of English and English language teachers as products (see also Gray, this volume).

An appreciation of the complicities of power – the ways in which ELT is tied up not only with neoliberal economic relations but also other forms of power and prejudice – sheds light on the ways in which assumptions of native speaker authority privilege not only a particular version of language ideology but are also often tied to particular racial formations (white faces, white voices) (Shuck, 2006; Ruecker, 2011). "Both race and nativeness are elements of 'the idealized native speaker'" (Romney, 2010: 19). People of colour may not be accepted as native speakers (who are assumed to be white): "The problem lies in the tendency to equate the native speaker with white and the non-native speaker with non-white. These equations certainly explain discrimination against non-native professionals, many of whom are people of colour" (Kubota and Lin, 2009: 8). Indeed, since teaching "second or foreign languages entails complex relations of power fuelled by differences created by racialization" (Kubota and Lin, 2009: 16), the field of ELT might be reconceptualised "with a disciplinary base that no longer revolves solely around teaching methodology and language studies but instead takes as a point of departure race and empire" (Motha, 2014: 129).

Before ELT practitioners consider the politics of their classroom, therefore, it is important to consider the local and contingent politics of English (Pennycook, 2010). It is often said that language and culture are closely tied together, that to learn a language is to learn a culture, yet such a proposition overlooks the contingent relations between linguistic and cultural forms or the local uses of language. Attention has been drawn to the connections, for example, between English language teaching and Christian missionary activity. As Varghese and Johnston (2007: 7) observe, the widespread use of English and the opportunities this provides for missionary work dressed up as English language teaching raises "profound moral questions about the professional

activities and purposes of teachers and organizations in our occupation". In a post-9/11 world and with "American foreign and domestic policy driven increasingly by imperialist goals and guided by an evangelical Christian agenda" (ibid.: 6), English language education and missionary work present a contingent set of relations between language and culture.

The point here is not that to learn English is to be exposed to Christian values – as Mahboob (2009) argues, English can equally serve as an Islamic language – but that English may be called upon to do particular cultural and ideological work in particular pedagogical contexts. The promotion, use and teaching of English in contexts of economic development, military conflict, religious struggle, mobility, tertiary access and so on have to be understood in relation to the meanings English is expected to carry, as a language of progress, democratic reform, religious change, economic development, advanced knowledge, popular culture and much more. These connections are by no means coincidental – they are a product of the roles English comes to play in the world – but they are at the same time contingent. That is to say, they are a product of the many relations of power and politics with which English is embroiled.

Power, politics and pedagogy: responses to the politics of ELT

When we talk of English today we mean many things, many of them not necessarily having to do with some core notion of language. The question becomes not whether some monolithic thing called English is imperialistic or an escape from poverty, nor how many varieties there may be of this thing called English, but rather what kind of mobilisations underlie acts of English use or learning? Something called English is mobilised by English language industries, including ELT, with particular language effects. But something called English is also part of complex language chains, mobilised as part of multiple acts of identity and desire. It is not English – if by that we mean a certain grammar and lexicon – that is at stake here. It is the discourses around English that matter, the ways in which an idea of English is caught up in all that we do so badly in the name of education, all the exacerbations of inequality that go under the label of globalisation, all the linguistic calumnies that denigrate other ways of speaking, all the shamefully racist institutional interactions that occur in schools, hospitals, law courts, police stations, social security offices and unemployment centres.

Whether we see English as a monster, juggernaut, bully or governess (Rapatahana and Bunce, 2012), we clearly need to do something about this pedagogically. As Gray suggests, "ideologies associated with English which take it as self-evident that it is perforce the language of economic prosperity and individual wealth are also those of the ELT industry itself" (2012: 98). While we might, like ostriches (Pennycook, 2001), be tempted to bury our heads in the classroom and refuse to engage with these issues, we surely owe more to the educational needs of our students than to ignore the many dimensions of power and politics in ELT. One level of pedagogical response to the dominance of English is to see ELT not so much as centrally about the promotion of English but rather as a process of working out where English can usefully sit within an ecology of languages. When we observe the growth of Southeast Asian economies – their increased roles in the global economy and the resultant pressure to teach English earlier and younger in a region with wide linguistic diversity – there are real causes for concern that current language education policies favouring only the national language plus English will lead to Asian multilingualism being reduced to bilingualism only in the national language and English (Kirkpatrick, 2012).

As ELT professionals, therefore, we would do well to question the linguistic, educational and pedagogical ideologies behind "the one-classroom-one-language pedagogical straitjacket" (Lin, 2013: 540) that many current ELT approaches continue to endorse, and embrace instead a

broader, multilingual approach to our classrooms. Approaches such as communicative language teaching are far from neutral pedagogical technologies (Pennycook, 1989) but are rather "intimately linked to the production of a certain kind of student and worker subjectivity suitable for participating in a certain kind of political economy" (Lin, 2013: 540). Rather than focusing so intently on English as the sole objective of our teaching, we can start to reimagine classes as part of a broader multilingual context, and, indeed, following Motha (2014), to engage in a project of *provincialising English*. Such multilingualism, furthermore, needs to be understood not so much in terms of separate monolingualisms (adding English to one or more other languages) but rather in much more fluid terms (see also Carroll and Combs, and Kerr, this volume).

Drawing on recent sociolinguistic approaches to *translanguaging* (García and Li, 2014) and *metrolingualism* (Pennycook and Otsuji, 2015), we can start to think of ELT classrooms in terms of *principled polycentrism* (Pennycook, 2014). This is not the polycentrism of a World Englishes focus, with its established norms of regional varieties of English, but a more fluid concept based on the idea that students are developing complex repertoires of multilingual and multimodal resources. This enables us to think in terms of ELT as developing resourceful speakers who are able to use available language resources and to shift between styles, discourses, registers and genres. This brings the recent sociolinguistic emphasis on repertoires and resources into conversation with a focus on the need to learn how to negotiate and accommodate, rather than to be proficient in one variety of English. So an emerging goal of ELT may be less towards proficient native-speaker-like speakers (which has always been a confused and misguided goal) and to think instead in polycentric terms of resourceful speakers (Pennycook, 2012) who can draw on multiple linguistic and semiotic resources.

Focusing on the politics of the classroom itself, it is important to understand on the one hand the permeability of the classroom walls – that is to say that what goes on inside the classroom is always tied to what goes on outside – and the local questions of power and politics within the classroom (Pennycook, 2000). Benson (1997: 32) outlines the ways in which "we are inclined to think of the politics of language teaching in terms of language planning and educational policy while neglecting the political content of everyday language and language learning practices". Shifting our thinking, he suggests, entails a political understanding of the social context of education, classroom roles and relations, the nature of tasks and the content and language of the lesson. According to Auerbach (1995: 12), "dynamics of power and inequality show up in every aspect of classroom life, from physical setting to needs assessment, participant structures, curriculum development, lesson content, materials, instructional processes, discourse patterns, language use, and evaluation."

Everything in the classroom – from how we teach (how we conduct ourselves as a teacher, as master, authority, facilitator, organiser), what we teach (whether we focus only on English, on grammar, on communication, on tests), how we respond to students (correcting, ignoring, cajoling, praising), how we understand language and learning (favouring noise over silence, emphasising expression over accuracy), how we think of our classroom (as a place to have fun or a site for serious learning), to the materials we use (off-the-shelf international textbooks, materials from the local community), the ways we organise our class (in rows, pairs, tables, circles) and the way we assess the students (against what norms, in terms of what language possibilities) – needs to be seen as social and cultural practices that have broader implications than just elements of classroom interaction. The point here is not that choosing what we might consider the preferable options listed above absolves us of questions of power, but that all these choices are embedded in larger social and ideological formations.

Critical pedagogical approaches to ELT (Morgan, 1998; Benesch, 2001; Crookes, 2013 and also this volume) have sought in various ways to address many of these concerns. Critical

pedagogy itself embraces a range of different approaches. For Crookes (2013: 9), it is "teaching for social justice, in ways that support the development of active engaged citizens", that is to say a form of critical ELT that focuses on social change through learning English. Chun's (2015) overview of commonalities in critical literacy practices includes drawing on students' and teachers' historically lived experiences, viewing language as a social semiotic, focusing on power both within and outside the classroom, engaging with commonsense notions of the everyday, developing self-reflexive practice, renewing a sense of community and maintaining a common goal. There has been considerable resistance to such critical approaches to education. The classroom should, from some perspectives, be a neutral place for language learning, and to teach critically is to impose one's views on others. Such a view both misses the larger political context of the classroom and also underestimates the capacity of students to resist and evaluate what is before them (Benesch, 2001). Given the power and politics of ELT, a politically acquiescent position as an English language educator is an equally political position.

Other work has sought to develop critical responses to textbooks (Gray, 2012 and also this volume). Gray (2010: 3) shows how global coursebooks inscribe a set of values in English associated with "individualism, egalitarianism, cosmopolitanism, mobility and affluence", or the very cultural and ideological formations with which English is connected in international contexts. It is important from this point of view for teachers and students to work against the ways English-language classes interpellate students into particular ways of thinking, talking and being through these corporatised ELT materials. Testing is perhaps the hardest domain to struggle against, so powerful are the interests and operations of major language tests (Shohamy, 2001). The point for any of these critical approaches to pedagogy, literacy, materials or testing is not that they provide any easy solution to the complex relations among classrooms, language and power but that they address such questions with power always to the fore. Critical approaches to ELT view the politics of ELT as a given – not a given to be accepted but a given against which we must always struggle.

Conclusion

Discussions of ELT all too often assume that they know what the object of ELT is: this system of grammar and words called English. But clearly this is not adequate, since English is many things besides. The global spread of English and the materials and practices of ELT that support it cannot be removed from questions of power and politics. But to understand these political implications, we need an exhaustive understanding of relations of power. Rather than easy suppositions about domination, about some having power and others not, or assuming ELT inevitably to be a tool of neoliberalism, we need to explore the ways in which power operates in local contexts. Such an approach by no means turns its back on the broader context of globalisation but rather insists that this can never be understood outside its local realisations.

Such an understanding urges us on the one hand to acknowledge that what we mean by English is always contingent on local relations of power and desire, the ways that English means many different things and is caught up in many forms of hope, longing, discrimination and inequality. It also allows us on the other hand to avoid a hopelessness faced by immovable forces of global domination and instead to see that we can seek to change inequitable conditions of power through our small-scale actions that address local conditions of difference, desire and disparity, seeking out ELT responses through an understanding of translingual practices in the classroom, critical discussions of textbooks and ideological formations, questioning of the norms of ELT practices and their interests. Power and politics are ubiquitous in language and language education, but resistance and change are always possible.

Discussion questions

- Describe a classroom context with which you are familiar. Using a series of concentric circles (or arrows, or boxes or whatever works for you) show all the other factors involved in this interaction, from the gender and ethnicity of the participants and their hopes and desires, to the local and regional language policies and broader economic factors at play.
- What pedagogical responses do you consider would be appropriate and effective to deal with the issues outlined in the first question?
- It has been said that one is never 'just' an English teacher on two counts: English is never just English, and teaching is never just teaching. Describe to what extent you agree with this analysis, and explain what it implies for ELT generally.
- Using examples from your own experience, to what extent do English learning and use perpetuate inequality, open up opportunity, homogenise cultures and/or create diversity?

Related topics

Educational perspectives on ELT; Language and culture in ELT; 'Native speakers', English and ELT; Values in the ELT classroom; World Englishes and English as a Lingua Franca.

Further reading

Appleby, R. (2010) *ELT, gender and international development: Myths of progress in a neocolonial world*. Bristol: Multilingual Matters. (This volume provides good background for understanding the relations between English education and development.)

Chun, C. (2015) *Power and meaning making in an EAP classroom: Engaging with the everyday*. Bristol: Multilingual Matters. (A recent account of critical pedagogy in the context of English for academic purposes.)

Gray, J. (2010) *The construction of English: Culture, consumerism and promotion in the ELT global coursebook*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan. (A useful analysis of the global coursebook market.)

Motha, S. (2014) *Race, empire, and English language teaching: Creating responsible and ethical anti-racist practice*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press, Columbia University. (This book presents a strong case for understanding and resisting racism in ELT.)

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Language and culture in ELT

Claire Kramsch and Zhu Hua

Introduction

English language teaching (ELT), as it developed after World War II within the field of applied linguistics (Li 2014: 13), responded to the needs of an international market-based economy and the spread of an Anglo–Saxon form of democracy during the Cold War (Brutt-Griffler, 2002), and thus did not originally have much concern for culture (Corbett, 2003: 20). The link between language and culture in applied linguistics only became an issue in the 1990s with the identity politics of the time and the advances made in second language acquisition research. Until then, the research and methodological literature of ELT had, from the 1970s onwards, promoted the benefits of learning English through a functional, communicative approach based on democratic access to turns-at-talk and on individual autonomy in the expression, interpretation and negotiation of meaning (see Thornbury, this volume). This communicative approach had been deemed universal in its applicability because it was grounded in a view of language learners as rational actors, equal before the rules of grammar and the norms of the native speaker, and eager to benefit from the economic opportunities that a knowledge of English would bring. The negotiation of meaning that formed the core of the communicative approach applied to referential or to situational meaning, not necessarily, as was later argued (e.g. Kramsch, 1993), to cultural or to ideological meaning.

Since the end of the Cold War in 1990, and with the advent of globalisation, the increasingly multicultural nature of societies has made it necessary for English language teachers to factor 'culture' into ELT and to take into account the culture their students come from. Among the many definitions of culture, the one we retain here is the following: "Culture can be defined as membership in a discourse community that shares a common social space and history, and common imaginings. Even when they have left that community, its members may retain, wherever they are, a common system of standards for perceiving, believing, evaluating and acting. These standards are what is generally called their 'culture'" (Kramsch, 1998: 10). Risager (2007) has proposed the concept of *languaculture* to suggest that there is neither an "essentialist language–culture duality" (p. 162), nor a radical distinction between the two, but a "close connection, an interdependence, a complex relationship between language and culture" (p. 163).

In the case of ELT, therefore, which culture should be taught as part of the language's relationship with culture: for example, UK, US, Australian, Indian or Singaporean national culture? The global culture of commerce and industry? Or Internet culture? And, in increasingly multilingual

classrooms, which learners' culture should be taken into account: their national, regional, ethnic, generational or professional culture?

In this chapter, we first examine the socio-cultural and socio-political changes of the last twenty years in terms of the relationship of language and culture in ELT. Next, we examine the rise of the field of intercultural communication and its relation to language teaching. We then discuss the main current issues and key areas of debate concerning the role of culture in ELT. We finally discuss future developments in the study of language and culture as they relate to the teaching and learning of English.

The changing goals of ELT from a socio-cultural and socio-political perspective

Unlike the teaching of languages other than English, and despite the fact that many English teachers still focus on US or UK culture in class, English language teaching (ELT) has not been primarily concerned with the teaching of culture *per se*, since it has seen itself as teaching a language of economic opportunity not tied to any particular national or regional space or history (for reviews, see Kramsch, 2009a, 2010; also Pennycook, and Gray, this volume). Some educators have felt that English is a (culture-free) skill that anyone can appropriate and make his/her own. Indeed, twenty years ago, Henry Widdowson eloquently argued that the ownership of English was not (or was no longer) the prerogative of the so-called native speaker. He wrote: "You are proficient in a language to the extent that you possess it, make it your own, bend it to your will, assert yourself through it rather than simply submit to the dictates of its form. . . . Real proficiency is when you are able to take possession of the language, turn it to your advantage, and make it real for you. This is what mastery means" (Widdowson, 1994: 384). Widdowson decried the discriminatory employment practices in ELT that privileged educated native speakers, i.e. speakers for whom the English language was tightly bound with a native Anglophone culture. (However, the delinking of ELT from the native speaker model for learners of English has not eliminated the privileging of native speakers as teachers of English around the world [i.e. native speakerism, Holliday, 2006; see also Llurda, and Holliday, this volume], nor, in many places, the privileging of native-speaker varieties of English in the ELT classroom, as we shall see.)

Since the 1990s, the link between language and culture has become more complex due to the global mobility of capital, goods and people and to the growing multilingualism of human communication, both in face-to-face and in online environments. English is not, in fact, a culture-free language which people can just appropriate for themselves and use as a tool to get things done. It bears traces of the cultural contexts in which it has been used and contributes to shaping the identity of speakers of English. Making the language your own is already a difficult enterprise linguistically, but the process is rendered more problematic by the pressure in the media, the film industry, social networks and popular culture to adopt consumerist lifestyles associated with the use of English as a global language. For many learners of English, these lifestyles might remain out of reach.

Thus, today, there are four ways of conceiving of the link between language and culture in ELT:

• As language of interest in or identification with Anglo-Saxon culture – a language taught in schools around the world, which, like other national languages, is attached to the national culture of English-speaking nation states, e.g. British English taught in French secondary schools.

- As language of aspiration with a multinational culture of modernity, progress and prosperity. This is the language of the 'American Dream', Hollywood and pop culture that is promoted by the multinational US and UK textbook industry, e.g. ESL taught to immigrants in the US and the UK or in secondary schools in Hungary, Iraq and the Ukraine.
- As language of communication with a global culture of entrepreneurial and cosmopolitan individuals, e.g. English-as-a-skill taught in China, English taught at business language schools in Europe.
- Spanglish, Singlish, Chinglish and other multilingual, hybrid forms of English as language of diaspora, travel, worldliness, resistance or entertainment (e.g. Lam, 2009; Pennycook, 2010).

Each of these forms of English is associated with learners from different classes, genders, race and ethnicities, with different aspirations and purposes. And there is, of course, some overlap in the Englishes learners need, learn and use depending on the conditions on the ground. For example, some learners might entertain aspirations of modernity and prosperity as well as an identification with Anglo-Saxon culture, and some learners might, in addition to standard British or American English, also use hybrid forms of English as bridges to other, less modern or equally modern, cultures. Additionally, given the transnational training of many English teachers in Anglophone countries like the UK, US, Australia or New Zealand, the distinction between English as a foreign, second or international language is sometimes difficult to uphold; for example, when Hungary's national school system hires British-trained or native English teachers, and uses British textbooks to teach English in Hungarian public schools, is British English being taught as a foreign language in Hungary or as an international second language or lingua franca?

Thus, English both facilitates global citizenship and prompts a return to local forms of community membership. It can serve to liberate learners from their own oppressive historical and cultural past (e.g. Germany) by standing for democracy, progress and modernity or by offering the prospect of a cosmopolitan future. It can also trigger renewed pride in local cultures perceived as countering the instrumental and profit-making culture of globalisation (Duchêne and Heller, 2012). Furthermore, the link between language and culture in ELT has moved from a view of (national or multinational) speech communities to communities of local practice and loose networks of language users (Kanno and Norton, 2003; Pennycook, this volume). These associations of learners and speakers of English, in many ways, resemble "imagined (national) communities" (Anderson, 1983) and offer transient, multiple, sometimes genuine and sometimes illusory friendships that replace the deep, horizontal comradeship offered and taken for granted by the nation-state. These associations are reflected upon within the field of intercultural communication.

A new emphasis on intercultural communication

Language learning and teaching is an interpersonal and intercultural process whereby learners come into contact with teachers and other learners of diverse personal histories, experiences and outlooks either face to face or virtually. Language learning and teaching thus has close connections with the field of intercultural communication (ICC), in particular where the notion of culture is concerned.

From culture-as-nation to interculturality

Whilst having its roots in anthropology, ICC as a field of inquiry was established out of concerns for national security in the post-Second World War period during the 1950s. The

scholarly interest of that time was predominantly in understanding non-verbal and verbal aspects of communication of 'cultural' groups, which were used exchangeably with nationalities or indigenous people. In the 1970s and '80s, the scope of the field diversified to include interethnic and interracial communication (e.g. 'interethnic' in Scollon and Scollon, 1981; 'interracial' in Rich, 1974, and Blubaugh and Pennington, 1976). The change was the result of shifts of interests from building relationships with people from other cultures, including the cultures of enemy states, to addressing social tensions and understanding interactions among different races, ethnicities, gender, social classes or groups within a society. In the 1980s and '90s, however, ICC research became dominated by the comparative and positivist paradigms of cross-cultural psychology, in which culture is defined solely in terms of nationality and one culture is compared with another using some generalised constructs (e.g. Hofstede, 1991). Many broad, categorical terms used at the time in describing national cultures (e.g. individualism vs. collectivism, high- vs. low-power distance, masculinity vs. femininity, high vs. low uncertainty avoidance) have, in simplified and reductive form, taken root in public discourse and regularly appear in training manuals and workshops for people whose work may put them in direct contact with others of different nationalities. There were exceptions to this approach, however. Some publications (e.g. Meeuwis, 1994; Scollon and Scollon, 1995) began to question the notion of 'culture' and the nature of cultural differences and memberships. These studies challenge the practice of 'cultural account', which attributes misunderstanding in intercultural communication to cultural differences, and also raise the issues of stereotyping and overgeneralisation.

Since the 2000s, the field of ICC has shifted away from the comparative and culture-as-nation paradigm. Noticeable trends include a continued interest in deconstructing cultural differences and membership through interculturality studies, in which scholars seek to interpret how participants make aspects of their identities, in particular, socio-cultural identities, relevant or irrelevant to interactions through symbolic resources including, but not solely, language (e.g. Higgins, 2007; Sercombe and Young, 2010; Zhu, 2014). Scholars from a number of disciplines, such as sociolinguistics, critical discourse studies, education, ethnicity studies, communication studies and diaspora studies, have called for a critical examination of the way larger structures of power (e.g. situated power interests; historical contextualisation; global shifts and economic conditions; politicised identities in terms of race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, region, socioeconomic class, generation and diasporic positions) impact on intercultural communication (e.g. Nakayama and Halualani, 2010; Piller, 2011).

From being to doing culture: a discourse perspective to ICC

One significant new emphasis within ICC, which is the most relevant to language learning/teaching and to ELT, is a discourse perspective to understanding how culture is produced or made (ir)relevant to interactions, by whom that is accomplished and why (e.g. Scollon and Scollon, 1995, 2001; Piller, 2012; Zhu, 2014). The discourse perspective, as Scollon and Scollon (2001: 543–544) explain, approaches intercultural communication as 'interdiscourse' communication, i.e. the interplay of various discourse systems – based on, for example, gender, age, profession, corporate membership, religion or ethnicity – and focuses on the co-constructed aspects of communication and social change. The insights offered through this perspective are, first of all, that culture is not given, static or something you belong to or live with, but something one does, or, as Street described it, "culture is a verb" (1993: 25). Treating culture as a verb means that one should not think of participants as representative of the group they are associated with and start with cultural labels they are assigned to (e.g. American vs. Japanese). Rather, the focus should

be on the process of meaning making, that is, on what people do and how they do it through discourse (e.g. whether or how one orients to Japaneseness or Americanness in interactions) (Scollon et al., 2012).

The second insight from the discourse perspective is that discourse systems (including those of culture, gender, profession, religion, the workplace or the classroom) are multiple, intersect with each other and sometimes contradict each other as a reflection of the multiplicity and scope of identities that people bring along to or bring about through interactions. The identities that people 'bring along' are the knowledge, beliefs, memories, aspirations, worldviews they have acquired by living in a particular cultural community. The identities they 'bring about' in their interactions with native and non-native speakers emerge through the construction, perpetuation or subversion of established cultures through discourse (Baynham, 2015). They have been called *master*, *interactional*, *relational* and *personal* identities (Tracy, 2002), *imposed*, *assumed* and *negotiable* identities (Pavlenko and Blackledge, 2003), *audible*, *visible* and *readable* identities (Zhu, 2014), or self-oriented or prescribed-by-others identities (Zhu, 2014). Therefore, it is important to ask the question of how a particular kind of identity (e.g. cultural identity) is brought into interactions rather than, for example, how Americans and Japanese speak differently.

The third insight brought by the discourse perspective is that intercultural communication is *social* (inter-)action − a series of interrelated actions mediated by ideologies, societal structures, power (im)balances, self-ascribed and other-prescribed identities, memories, experiences, accumulated cultural knowledge, imagination, contingencies and the combined forces of globalisation and local adaptation and resistance. Seeing intercultural communication as social (inter)action means that we can no longer assume that the problems experienced in intercultural communication are merely cultural misunderstandings which can be made good or pre-empted if people can somehow see 'good intentions' in each other's actions or have sufficient cultural information or skills. These problems require intercultural competence, i.e. the ability to put yourself into others' shoes, see the world the way they see it, and give it the meaning they give it based on shared human experience. And we should remember that parties involved in intercultural communication are not necessarily in an equal power relationship, and they may not share similar access to resources and skills (e.g. linguistic skills, among others).

The discourse perspective to ICC raises questions about current practices in language learning and teaching. It decentres the notion of culture in the type of interactions that are usually described in textbooks and studied in the classroom and which are usually described as 'intercultural communication'; argues that not all the problems in intercultural communication are cultural; and moves away from *who* is involved in interactions and turns attention to the questions of *how* and *why* (i.e. how culture is done and made (ir)relevant, and for what purposes). It calls for an approach beyond the current integrated language-and-culture teaching practice which tries to integrate culture-as-discourse at all levels of language teaching. A case has been made: while it is important to know where the 'cultural faultlines' are (the term used by Kramsch, 2003; for example, the different reactions of the American and the German media to the 9/11 attacks in the USA), it is not good enough to explain everything a German or an American says by referring to their 'German' or 'American' culture. What is more important is the larger picture and a critical understanding of what is going on in social interactions *in situ* and how meaning is made, identities are negotiated, 'culture' is brought in and relationships are transformed discursively. What seems to be missing from communicative or task-based language teaching is a process- and context-oriented approach that is politically and ideologically sensitive, that goes beyond the here and now of problem solving and the negotiation of immediate tasks, and that raises historical and political consciousness.