

Pedagogic Criticality and English as a Lingua Franca

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This article discusses the pedagogic relevance of recent theory and research in the use of English as a Lingua Franca (ELF), particularly focusing on the implications of this field for language teacher education and development. Research in ELF has begun to pose some critical challenges to established principles and practice in English language teaching. The consensus among researchers is that ELF empirical data and theoretical discussions hold implications for all manner of professional concerns, including the language syllabus, teaching materials and language assessment. There has to date, though, been relatively little in-depth exploration of what teachers might do in order to respond to ELF in practice. Modifying the language syllabus or teaching materials in response to ELF requires substantial rethinking of current approaches. I report here on continuing attempts to incorporate an ELF perspective in the language classroom, using practitioner-oriented research to re-examine current methodologies and consider how we might develop materials and tasks that better incorporate aspects of English as used in lingua franca interactions. I examine the feasibility of developing an ELF orientation to language by adopting a critical approach to language pedagogy and professional development, exploring ways in which teachers might move beyond a conventionally norm-driven approach to additional language education.

Keywords: critical pedagogy; English as a lingua franca (ELF); English language teaching (ELT); language ideology; professional development; teacher education

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Criticalidad pedagógica y el inglés como lengua franca

Este artículo analiza la relevancia pedagógica de la teoría y la investigación sobre el uso del inglés como lengua franca (ILF), centrándose especialmente en las implicaciones de este campo para la formación y el desarrollo del profesorado de lengua inglesa. La investigación en ILF ha comenzado a plantear algunos retos críticos a los principios establecidos y a la práctica habitual en la enseñanza de lengua inglesa. El consenso entre los investigadores es que los datos empíricos y las discusiones teóricas del ILF tienen implicaciones para todo tipo de cuestiones profesionales, incluidos los programas de lengua inglesa, los materiales educativos

y la evaluación del idioma. No obstante, hasta la fecha no se ha explorado en profundidad lo que el profesorado debe hacer para responder al ILF en la práctica. Modificar los programas de lengua inglesa o los materiales educativos en respuesta al ILF requiere una revisión sustancial de los enfoques actuales. En el presente artículo repaso los constantes intentos de incorporar la perspectiva del ILF en el aula de lengua inglesa, utilizando una investigación orientada a sus hablantes para reexaminar las metodologías actuales y considerar cómo podemos desarrollar materiales y tareas que incorporen mejor aspectos del inglés utilizado en interacciones como lengua franca. Examinó la viabilidad de desarrollar una orientación hacia el ILF mediante la adopción de un enfoque crítico a la pedagogía de la lengua inglesa y al desarrollo profesional, explorando maneras en las que el profesorado pueda ir más allá de un enfoque tradicionalmente orientado a las normas y hacia una educación en lengua adicional.

Palabras clave: pedagogía crítica; inglés como lengua franca (ILF); enseñanza de la lengua inglesa (ELI); ideología en la lengua; desarrollo profesional; formación profesorado

1. INTRODUCTION

This paper considers the use of English as a global lingua franca, reflecting on the relevance of recent research developments in this area for current approaches to English language pedagogy. During the past decade and a half or so, there has been substantial growth in empirical and theoretical engagement with the globalization of English and English language teaching. This has led to the emergence of English as a lingua franca (ELF) as a distinct research paradigm, a development which loosely coincides with the publication of two seminal works in the field: Jenkins (2000), an investigation into the phonology of English in lingua franca interactions; and Seidlhofer (2001), which marks the launch of the first large-scale (and to date only publicly available) corpus of English as a lingua franca (VOICE—the Vienna Oxford International Corpus of English, <https://www.univie.ac.at/voice/>).

In the years since these publications, ELF has become established as a vibrant field of research, now with a dedicated journal (*Journal of English as a Lingua Franca*), an annual international conference (with the 8th, 9th and 10th conferences scheduled to take place respectively in Beijing 2015, Lleida 2016, and Helsinki 2017). In addition, there have been numerous edited collections of research papers focusing on various aspects of ELF (e.g., Mauranen and Ranta 2009; Archibald, Cogo and Jenkins 2011; Bayyurt and Akcan 2014). In terms of understanding the importance of ELF research for English language teaching (ELT), it is worth considering Seidlhofer's description of ELF as "the most extensive contemporary use of English worldwide" (2001, 133). More than a decade later, the use of English has become even more globally extensive. And the sheer volume of research in ELF now being carried out is a reflection of the continuing globalization of English. In addition to the VOICE corpus, there is the corpus of English as a Lingua Franca in Academic Settings (ELFA; www.helsinki.fi/englanti/elfa/elfacorporus), based at Helsinki University (see Mauranen 2003), and more recently, the Asian Corpus of English (ACE), established in Hong Kong, but involving a team of researchers across East and South East Asia (www.ied.edu.hk/rcleams) (see e.g., Kirkpatrick 2010). In other words, just like the use of ELF, research in this field has begun to "go global." In this paper I discuss the relevance of research findings in ELF for language pedagogy, most specifically examining how an ELF perspective on language use can be integrated in language teacher education.

The major premise underpinning my discussion here is that research in ELF has begun to pose critical challenges to some long established principles and practices in ELT. There is broad consensus among researchers that ELF empirical data and theoretical discussion hold major implications for the ELT profession, including the language syllabus, teaching materials, language assessment, and of course teacher education. To date, however, there has been relatively little in-depth examination of what teachers can do to respond to ELF in the classroom. This paper explores the value of incorporating an ELF perspective in the language classroom, drawing on practitioner-focused research to re-examine current perspectives regarding ELT methodology, accepted notions of (communicative) competence, and a predominantly norm-centred orientation to language. I report on

recent research, examining ways in which we might move beyond the conventional normativity of language pedagogy by adopting a critical approach.

2. EXPLAINING ELF

There have been a number of points of controversy regarding the nature and scope of ELF communication and ELF research, so it is worth outlining briefly here what exactly I refer to when using the term. For the purposes of my discussion, it is helpful to think of ELF according to three levels (see also Cogo and Dewey 2012, chapter one): first as a contextual setting; second as the interactional practices that take place in these settings; and finally as a research paradigm. In short, an ELF context is any communicative situation in which speakers from two or more linguistic backgrounds use English as a contact language. Research into ELF communication focuses on the language forms (which tended to be the basis of earlier research in the field) and the pragmatics of ELF interactions, with more recent work predominantly interested in understanding the communicative strategies of speakers engaged in ELF communication. (While some recent research has begun to focus on written language use, see e.g., the corpus of written academic ELF at the University of Helsinki, <http://www.helsinki.fi/englanti/elfa/welfa.html>, ELF research to date has predominantly been concerned with spoken interaction).

Given how exceptionally widespread the use of English is in contact language situations, it is not possible to be very precise about the nature of ELF settings, except to say that they typically comprise a high degree of linguistic and cultural diversity. ELF research has focused on detailing the language use patterns and communicative properties of lingua franca interactions, a major focus of which has been the extent to which speakers' linguistic repertoires are not only diverse but are also drawn on in dynamic and inventive ways. There has been considerable empirical work to date documenting how speakers in multilingual speech environments do not simply *use* English, but in fact also modify language by drawing on various other language resources, combining and adapting these in a collaborative process of expressing and interpreting meaning. In light of this, the most important premise underpinning ELF research, as well as that underpinning my approach to examining its relevance for language learning and teaching, is the inherent dynamicity of language(s).

On the face of it there is nothing unique about the use of English in this way. There are and have been many lingua francas other than English, but the global extent to which English has become a contact language is entirely unprecedented. ELF has emerged as the first truly “globalinguistic” phenomenon, leading researchers into what Mauranen (2012, 1) describes as “unchartered territory.” Historical lingua francas and other contemporary contact languages, no matter how widespread, have ultimately operated at a local or regional level. Never before has a language operated in a lingua franca role on such a worldly scale. As a result, communication in English often occurs in contexts of exceptional linguistic and cultural heterogeneity. It has now long been argued that English is spoken in more

lingua franca contexts than conventional “native” ones. This of course must have major consequences for English language learning and teaching.

I will not go into specific details regarding the properties of ELF here—for a relatively recent overview, readers can consult Jenkins, Cogo and Dewey (2011), which provides a fairly extensive account of research and debate in the field. In summary though, research has tended to highlight the following characteristics of ELF communication: interactions in ELF settings occur across rather than within conventional sociolinguistic boundaries; speakers make extensive use of accommodation, drawing on multilingual repertoires in a largely collaborative, listener oriented way; meaning is often explicitly oriented to, with speakers providing and seeking explanation, paraphrase and repetition; code-switching is frequent; use of linguistic resources in a flexible (often non-standard) way can enhance the effectiveness of communication. In addition, ELF research has increasingly focused on the fluidity with which speaker relations and interactional settings are formed. ELF communication often occurs in evolving, transitory contexts. This tends to result in highly variable language use, where English is reshaped in response to the immediate communicative surroundings. These research findings have begun to present a number of important challenges to conventional beliefs about good practice in ELT.

The fluidity and hybridity noted in ELF research is particularly at odds with the customary characterization of language in educational settings. In researching teachers’ awareness and understanding of ELF I have conducted a number of empirical studies in which I have sought to examine teachers’ perceptions regarding knowledge of and approaches to English in language teaching (see e.g., Dewey 2012). In discussions with language teachers, and via examination of the syllabus documents for language teaching awards (see e.g., Dewey forthcoming) as well as several reviews of current teaching materials (and see further discussion below), the following ELT principles come to light. In second language pedagogy, grammar is predominantly seen as a precondition for communication. In short, grammatical accuracy is regarded as an important factor in determining communicative success, and so intelligibility is conceptualized as being norm dependent. In other words, if learners are not able to reproduce language “accurately,” that is, according to a pre-determined set of norms (based on standard British and/or American English), then they are deemed to be unsuccessful language users. In addition, considerable emphasis is placed on tests of language proficiency, with the result that teaching is often predominantly assessment focused. In practice, accuracy is widely favored as the most important dimension in the assessment of language competence, with “failure” in this dimension closely linked to notions of who is and is not identified as a speaker of English (see McNamara 2005 on language tests and identity). As a consequence, teaching is essentially norm driven. Learning and teaching English is based—practically exclusively—on the promotion of the norms of a limited number of varieties (British and American English), and there is little scope for an appreciation of linguistic diversity.

The above characterization of English in ELT conflicts with the contemporary sociolinguistic realities of the language worldwide. Increasingly, learners of English

as an additional language will encounter speakers who have been exposed to different varieties (or versions) of English, most of whom will not be native speakers (NNS) of the language (so why continue to base language models and norms exclusively on NS English?). What has also come to light as a result of research in this area is that as learners become more proficient in English they exploit the resources available to them, often in innovative ways, in order to meet the specific communicative demands of actual settings. Contrary to current practice, with its strong emphasis on “accurate” reproduction of standard NS norms, effectiveness in communication in English is often best served by speakers’ ability to be sensitive to the speech of their interlocutors and ability to adapt language forms accordingly. In fact, a number of studies have shown that conforming to a norm is not always the most effective way of ensuring successful communication (see e.g., Hülmbauer 2010), with some even showing that it is precisely the unmonitored use of NS English by NNS themselves that can impact on intelligibility (see e.g., Kolocsai 2009).

The truth is that, regardless of the continued promotion of NS norms, ELF is continuing to evolve of its own accord. What we see in ELF speakers’ language adaptations is simply the contemporary manifestation of age-old processes of language ecologies (see Mufwene 2008 on language evolution and language contact). What is most different in the case of ELF is the scale and scope of these processes on the one hand, and—most significantly—the agency of the speakers who lead this process. In the contemporary use of English it is non-native speakers (NNS) who are leading the way in terms of current developments. Until now, all second language pedagogy has been based on the assumption that the goal of learning an additional language is for communication with and possibly integration into a “target” community of NS. The situation has now changed dramatically, but current practice in ELT has not yet moved on very far. In the remainder of this paper I consider ways in which we might do more to address this imbalance.

3. ELF IN LANGUAGE PEDAGOGY

A good deal has already been said about the pedagogic “implications” of ELF in the literature. Many scholars have argued that it is essential that teachers are made aware of recent research and current debate regarding the globalization of English (see among others, Mauranen 2012, Seidlhofer 2011). It is also clear from recent research studies that there is a growing awareness of ELF and Global Englishes and their potential impact on pedagogy, especially among experienced language teachers. In a recent survey of teachers enrolled on a Master’s program in Applied Linguistics in the UK (an entry requirement of which is a minimum 3 years’ teaching experience),¹ when asked about the nature of English

¹ The participant responses described here are gathered from a study of the professional development experiences of 18 practising language teachers who were enrolled on a Master’s degree in English Language and Applied Linguistics for the academic year 2012-13, and who had elected to follow a module in teacher education.

in the world, teachers typically comment on aspects of its global role, as in the following: “Due to the globalization and the new media, English is the predominant language used in business, on internet, in academic publications.” Teachers also describe some of the more important consequences of this, as in the following comment on the concept of ownership: “English does not belong to the ‘native’ speakers, it belongs to all people who use it.” It is evident from the use of the scare quotes in the latter comment that the teacher is also expressing awareness of the critical treatment that the concept of nativeness has been given in recent years. Elsewhere, I have reported that ELF has begun to feature prominently in teachers’ perceptions of English (e.g., Dewey 2012). However, for the most part, to date teachers have tended only to come into contact with ELF in a systematic way on higher-level in-service teacher education programs, typically on MA TESOL modules. Where such modules are available they tend to concentrate on ELF research and theory, with relatively little consideration of the practical aspects of incorporating ELF in the classroom. There are several exceptions to this, but so far most attention to ELF in practice has tended to deal with phonology, the most notable source of which is Walker (2010), the first book-length publication providing guidelines for teachers who wish to incorporate an ELF approach into their pronunciation teaching.

Research into teachers’ perceptions of ELF and its relevance to pedagogy thus suggests that awareness raising is not sufficient for an ELF perspective to be taken up in any lasting or practical sense.² Instigating change in educational practices is never an easy task. As Suzuki (2011) reports in relation to her attempts to increase awareness of linguistic diversity among a group of English language teachers in Japan, although teachers were shown to develop a better understanding of diversity, they continued to express reluctance to make scope for varieties of English in future practice. Suzuki concludes that “single-shot instruction” (2011, 151), that is, a one-off module focusing on diversity, is unlikely to be sufficient to bring about change in teachers’ thinking. Suzuki ascribes this to “deeply ingrained beliefs that there is a single useful form of English for international communication . . . , i.e., American and British English (in their eyes)” (2011, 151).

Similar beliefs are also reflected in my own research. In a questionnaire study in which teachers were asked to comment on: a) their understanding of ELF and related concepts, and then b) ways (if at all) these were perceived to be relevant in practice, participants tended to express interest in ELF conceptually but express skepticism towards any practical application. This can be seen in the following comment, which was quite typical of participants’ responses.

² I use “perspective” here as opposed to, say, “approach,” as the latter term tends to suggest an established methodology, replete with firm ideas about relevant techniques and procedures. In the case of developing a pedagogic response to ELF, in my view, this should be much more a question of adopting a particular perspective on—or orientation towards—language in the classroom. Once it is understood what this perspective entails, it then becomes a question of applying the principles underpinning this to pedagogic resources and procedures (i.e., designing and/or adapting texts, tasks and so on, and drawing on the full range of classroom activities), very much in line with Kumaravadivelu’s (1994) notion of a postmethod condition (see my discussion of this in Dewey 2012).

It is good to raise teachers' and students' awareness towards different varieties of English. However, it is still important to teach the Standard form, as in reality, it is the form of English used by the gate-keeper in universities, in the academic world, in many kinds of careers.

It is the responsibility of teachers to teach students the 'accepted' and 'recognized' variety, that is Standard English. This is the best for the students' future development in terms of further study and career. (Also qtd. in Dewey 2012, 152)

Raising awareness of ELF can indeed lead to a better understanding of current sociolinguistic realities, and it does lead to a certain amount of reflection. But as can be seen from the comments above, teachers' orientation to Standard language norms is very strong. It is therefore paramount that we do not stop simply at discussing the "implications" of ELF. It is not sufficient to say that it is up to teachers to develop practices in response to ELF; instead, further engagement with practitioners is needed in order to better incorporate ELF in teachers' professional development. Educating teacher educators themselves will be an essential aspect of this, since not all practitioners will have taken an MA-level course with a focus on ELF and/or Global Englishes.

The challenge, then, for practitioners aware of ELF and interested in adapting practice in line with current developments in sociolinguistics can be seen as a question of learning to move between theory and practice. Research among experienced practitioners suggests that this is a particularly pressing issue for language teachers, many of whom may be entirely receptive to the idea of ELF in theory, but who struggle to translate this into possibilities for actual classroom practices. During my recent research I have noted a certain degree of frustration among MA qualified teachers who report that they want to connect what they learn about during their studies with what they do in practice but feel constrained by prevailing norms. In part, any attempt to instigate change in practice can be inhibited by existing educational systems and the ideologies underpinning these. In the remainder of this article I first look into the nature of these ideologies and then discuss ways in which they might be overcome by initiating a more critical pedagogic perspective.

4. LANGUAGE IDEOLOGIES IN PEDAGOGIC PRACTICE

The teacher comments presented so far cannot simply be seen in isolation. Yes, these are the responses of individual teachers to questions about their beliefs and practices. Key to understanding where some of these ideas come from in the first place is the notion that professional preparation is in part a process of socialization into a certain way of thinking and doing. As Burns and Richards point out, "becoming an English teacher means becoming part of a worldwide community of professionals with shared goals, values, discourse, and practices" (2009, 3). The extent to which these goals are in fact shared, and the extent to which they remain relevant worldwide in light of recent developments regarding the globalization of English are disputable. Or at least this should be the case, as many of the assumptions, principles, and values conventionally promoted in ELT have now

been widely contested. However, there is certainly still a very widely shared professional belief in the value of NS norms. This is much in evidence in current teaching materials.

With only a passing review of contemporary English language textbooks published in the UK, it is relatively obvious that pedagogic materials continue to orient to language in a predominantly normative way. As already suggested, language models and language practice activities are exclusively based on the norms of a limited number of NS standard Englishes (British and/or American). Two current textbook series marketed internationally by probably two of the more influential ELT materials publishers in the UK are as follows: *English Unlimited* (Cambridge UP) and *Global* (Macmillan). As with other contemporary materials (see Dewey 2014 for further discussion), the syllabus in both is predominantly based on standard NS norms, with the content essentially little changed from much earlier titles produced by the same publishers. The only change to reflect current developments in English language appears to be in the way these materials are now marketed, and to a degree in the way tasks are designed. The most obvious differences from earlier materials concern primarily superficial matters, i.e., the graphics and page layout, rather than anything substantive such as linguistic content. On the face of it, textbooks are being promoted as courses that aim to help learners communicate in English as an international/global language, as clearly reflected in the Macmillan title, *Global*. Many contemporary teachers' resources are marketed on the basis of claims about an international scope to course content. In the case of *English Unlimited* this manifests itself in the following statement on the website of Cambridge UP.

English Unlimited is an innovative, general English course for teachers who want a course that teaches learners the English they will need outside the classroom. Centred on purposeful, real-life objectives it prepares learners to use English independently for global communication. (<http://www.cambridge.org/gb/cambridgeenglish/catalog/adult-courses/adult-general-english/english-unlimited>)

However, explicit claims to this effect are not borne out when we consider the model of English being promoted, which continues to be somewhat exclusive and not particularly international. Despite considerable discourse about globalism, the language syllabus itself has not been modified to reflect this. The focus on language in contemporary materials appears to make no provision for language diversity or for any of the pragmatic strategies found to be important in lingua franca interaction, such as the use of accommodation skills. As mentioned above, far from being the most appropriate models of language use in ELF settings, it can often be the NSS who have most to learn when it comes to adjusting their speech for lingua franca interaction.

Yet in existing pedagogic resources, being a NS of English continues to be predominantly regarded as having inherent value. The approach taken in *English Unlimited* and *Global* reinforces this notion. Although in both textbook series NSS are present in the syllabus, and even though NNSE (non-native speaker English) is described as “authentic” in the

teacher's guide, there is little evidence of this being taken up in practice. In *Global* approximately 50% of the units for each level contain a section entitled "Global English." These consist of short texts and reading tasks with a focus on various contexts of English use worldwide, designed for the purpose of raising better awareness of the diversity of English globally. However, in most of these the vocabulary samples are taken from varieties that are predominantly located in contexts that would conventionally be defined as NSE.

There are also sections in some of these units that are entitled "Global Voices," which consist of listening tasks based on recordings of NNSS. This at first glance seems very promising from an ELF perspective. However, the audio recordings tend to be relatively short when compared to those appearing in other units, and they are quite limited in number (for the intermediate level course book only 17 out of a total 91 audioscripts included in an appendix involve recordings of NNSS). Most significantly though, the NNS audioscripts are in no way exploited pedagogically and the NNSS are not positioned as models of English. They simply seem to be present in order to add a little "color"—not a particularly "global" approach to English then. In short, all language modeling is NS-based, and is particularly norm oriented—each of the listening tasks is followed by accuracy-based language activities (such as gap-fills etc.). There is no account of how these speakers might communicate in English with each other (all the "Global Voices" are monologues).

In *English Unlimited* there is a larger proportion of NNS voices present in the listening materials, and these comprise relatively longer passages of text. This is encouraging. In addition, the teacher's guide explicitly describes the importance of this from the point of view of awareness raising. Listening sections use recordings of speakers with a range of accents, in order to familiarise learners with the experience of hearing both native and non-native speakers from a wide variety of places. The teacher's guide then goes on to state the following about the NNS audio recordings in the coursebook: "all non-native speakers are competent users of English and should provide learners with strong and motivating role models to help them progress and achieve greater confidence in English."

In both *Global* and *English Unlimited*, the inclusion of NNSS in the audio recordings is clearly an encouraging development. Both textbook series provide a relatively diverse range of speakers from quite varied linguacultural backgrounds, particularly *English Unlimited*, which deliberately sets out to extend the types of English that learners will encounter. As can be seen in the above extract from the teacher's guide, the authors appear to do this from a principled position—one that is compatible with an ELF perspective.

Nevertheless, the extent to which NNSE is regarded as a valuable pedagogic resource is once again very limited. After introducing the principle of familiarizing learners with a variety of English speakers, the teacher's guide eventually explains that all NNSE present in the materials has been carefully monitored to ensure that it is "error free." There is thus a strong juxtaposition of NNSS as "competent users" on the one hand with reference to their language in relation to the extent to which it contains or does not contain "errors." The authors also state that "for the purpose of language production, taught grammar,

vocabulary and pronunciation follow a British English model;” in other words, not exactly an English that is “*un*-limited.”

The two book series considered demonstrate that in (many) contemporary materials there is thus some value assigned to language variety (although almost exclusively in relation to accent). In summary, NNSE is regarded as a resource, but only in so far as this can raise better awareness of accent differences. However, language that is not produced by NSS is simply still not seen as a potential source of pedagogic models, which is a considerable pity. From the point of view of ELF research, especially in terms of what this has told us about the value of NNSE in lingua franca interaction, it remains unclear how uniquely promoting a British English model for language production can enhance a learner’s ability to communicate.

It is also the case that teaching resources and approaches are increasingly linked to the CEFR (Common European Framework of Reference for Languages), which, as has been widely observed, is heavily biased towards reproducing “target” NS norms (see e.g., Mauranen 2012 for a critique). Despite some claims to the contrary in its introduction, the CEFR defines learner competence predominantly in relation to “native-like” or “near native” language use. The reference scales and descriptors used to determine levels of proficiency rely heavily on assumptions about NSE that are somewhat idealized. There are no accounts anywhere of what “native-like” is in fact, but the reliance on the term is in evidence throughout the CEFR document (see also Dewey 2014 on this matter). That our concepts of language competence are still so inextricably tied to NS norms belies the promotional discourses of ELT materials publishers, who are increasingly making claims about the global diversity of English but continually basing language resources on NSE models. There is thus relatively widespread awareness of the lingua franca status of English but very limited take up of this in any practical sense. The implications of adopting an ELF perspective in pedagogy are not being realized particularly well. The language ideologies underpinning ELT materials and methods production are both pervasive and resilient.

5. INVESTING IN CRITICALITY: A SOCIOCULTURAL APPROACH TO TEACHER DEVELOPMENT

To understand the continued attachment to normativity and to rather narrow definitions of what it means to learn and speak English, the concepts of prestige, status and social learning as discussed in evolutionary psychology offer valuable insight. Henrich and Gil-White (2001) for example explain that prestige is an indispensable human trait that is fundamental to how we have evolved socially. Prestige is an evolutionary consequence of direct social learning capacities. In other words, our perceptions of status and prestige are central to the development of human cultural capacity, which will of course include language. Henrich and Gil-White postulate that the flow of information within a given society is facilitated by assigning prestige. This is also undoubtedly a central aspect of the

way knowledge and skills are approached conceptually in language teaching and language teacher education.

In one study reported in Henrich and Gil-White (2001), for example, research participants were found to more accurately recall what was said by an individual when told he or she occupied a position of authority. It has also been found that we are more likely to be influenced by the attitudes and opinions of others where these differ from our existing beliefs if these are assigned to individuals who are reported to be in high-status positions. In short, “prestigious” individuals are perceived as being: highly competent; instrumental in the diffusion of novel ideas and practices; and ultimately influential not only in relation to—but also beyond—their own domain of expertise. The assignment of prestige is undoubtedly of considerable relevance to our evaluation of language use (see especially Milroy and Milroy 2012 on “authority in language”). Applied to second language pedagogy it is not difficult to see how an imagined “native” speaker is attributed status and influence, including in contexts (such as lingua franca settings) where they may not in fact have any demonstrable expertise.

One very important way language ideologies and notions of prestige operate in ELT can be seen in the relative levels of value ascribed to NESTs (native English speaking teachers) and NNESTs (non-native English speaking teachers). Despite NNESTs comprising the large majority of English language teachers worldwide, in many contexts teachers continue to report experiences of discrimination in current recruitment practices and quite widespread inequity with regard to conditions of employment. NNESTs’ knowledge, expertise, professionalism and qualifications can become undermined by what has been termed the “myth of the native speaker” and ideologized notions of NES competence. Despite efforts to dispel this myth (see e.g., Llorca 2005), perceptions continue to disproportionately favour NESTs, and to usually do so regardless of levels and type of experience and professional qualifications. As the myth goes, NESTs are generally reified for the following: a supposed implicit knowledge of language rules; their “intuitive” grasp of meaning; their ability (which is perhaps best re-interpreted from an ELF perspective as the *permission*) to use language creatively; and their ability to pass judgment on acceptability. By contrast, NNESTs are positioned as having to defer to the NS for models and norms. They are conventionally considered to lack sufficient knowledge of language rules, to be less reliable judges of what counts as acceptable or appropriate, and are often as a result professionally marginalized. This leads to a situation in which many qualified and experienced NNESTs end up struggling to self-identify as legitimate and valued English language professionals (see e.g., Kirkpatrick 2007 on this).

Overcoming this state of affairs requires a considerable rethink in terms of the current situation regarding theory and practice. I have already argued that ELF entails a certain amount of reconceptualization of established views about language and the predominant assumptions underpinning approaches to learning and teaching. In relation to moving beyond the default position regarding prestige and professional expertise in ELT, there is much to be gained from engaging with sociocultural

perspectives (e.g., Johnson 2009; Lantolf 2009) and critical pedagogy (e.g., Norton and Toohey 2004; Pennycook 2001) in order to rethink current practices in second language teacher education in a way that better aligns these with research findings in ELF/Global Englishes.

A common perception among teachers—especially during higher-level in-service programmes—is that there is a strong divide between theory and practice (see Widdowson 2010 on closing this perceived gap). Teachers regularly complain that when they have opportunity to read about and discuss theories and approaches to teaching, this is on a university campus, that is, when they are separated from their particular teaching context and removed from day-to-day classroom realities. This is especially true of undergraduate degrees in pedagogy and MA TESOL programmes. When there is a practicum or internship this is often at the very end of a programme, and when there are more integrated practical components, microteaching is the most common means of achieving this. But microteaching has many shortcomings (c.f. Johnson 2009): First, teaching is conceptualized as a discrete set of behaviours, which can thus be isolated and imitated; it lacks professional authenticity as a pedagogic context since the complex nature of teaching cannot be accounted for; and finally, the ultimate impact on teacher development may be quite negligible. Most importantly for my discussion, the social, institutional and historical factors endemic to teaching are absent.

Adopting a sociocultural perspective is one way in which we can move beyond a technicist view of teacher preparation and take much better account of the relevant social factors. In relation to adopting a sociocultural approach, Johnson and Arshaksaya comment that “the responsibility of teacher education, from a sociocultural perspective, is to present relevant scientific concepts to teachers but to do so in ways that bring these concepts to bear on *concrete practical activity, connecting them to their everyday knowledge and the activities of teachers*” (2011, 169; emphasis added).

The key is, though, how do the relevant concepts we want teachers to consider connect with or may be made to connect with everyday practices and activities? One important means of working towards this is through further engagement with teachers’ existing beliefs. As argued by Borg (2006), teachers enter the profession with certain notions about how and what to teach. These may not be articulated by novice teachers, but according to Borg they may nevertheless be deeply ingrained. Another essential factor to bear in mind is the extent to which these beliefs are constructed socially. As Reiss (2011) comments, the social construction of beliefs is subject to empowering and disempowering discourses in which the professional identities that are seen as legitimate may be very narrowly conceived.

For professional development to properly occur through a process of making connections between theory, research and everyday practices, it is thus essential that teachers are encouraged (and given necessary support) to develop critical awareness and critical practices. Without a critical perspective, it seems unlikely that the gap between classroom realities (as underpinned by language ideologies and socially inherited notions

of prestige) and recent research findings can be sufficiently reduced to enable teachers to rethink their practices.

6. CRITICAL PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT THROUGH NARRATIVE INQUIRY

There is considerable value potential in drawing on narrative inquiry (see e.g., Connelly and Clandinin 1990; Clandinin 2007) as a means of developing a more pedagogic response to ELF and global Englishes, especially with regard to the *what* (the nature of the subject matter itself) rather than the *how* (matters related to methodology) in ELT. Through a narrative inquiry approach teachers can be prompted to produce personal stories of experiences, an enterprise which can enable the re-examination of beliefs and practices. This is key for further teacher development. Undertaking a narrative inquiry entails teachers becoming compelled to confront how their understanding of teaching came about in the first place. This is, according to Johnson and Golombek (2002), a question of “re-seeing” both *what* and *how* teachers know in practice. Professional development thus consists of “reshaping” teachers’ existing knowledge, beliefs and practices rather than simply imposing new theories, methods or materials (Johnson and Golombek 2002, 2).

However, despite substantial developments in language teacher education, with much greater account given to teachers’ individual pedagogic beliefs and practices, for the most part there has still been very little attention drawn to the subject matter itself, English. In terms of the language syllabus, there has thus far been relatively little account of content knowledge in studies that have explored teacher beliefs and narrative accounts. In the remainder of this section I will report on a project which adopts a narrative inquiry approach to explore teachers’ experiences of language learning and teaching, with a specific focus on teachers’ notions of language knowledge and competence. The principal aim of my work in the project was to explore teachers’ perceptions of English in order to develop critical awareness of the current mismatch between how English is used around the world and how it continues to be defined in pedagogic theory and practice. Ultimately, my concern is to explore how teachers might use research findings in ELF to reconfigure existing classroom practices.

The data reported in this section was gathered as a result of my involvement in a European project in which there were seven partner institutions collaborating on the collection of language autobiographies in a project entitled PLURI-LA (Plurilingualism–Language Autobiographies), which was funded with support from the European Commission as part of the Lifelong Learning Programme (for more details, visit the project website at <http://pluri-la.webnode.pt/>). My involvement consisted of collecting written narratives and conducting interviews with NNESTs, with a particular focus on their experiences of migration and professional practice as NNESTs working in a NEST dominated environment. The narratives were approached as a means of enabling teachers to recognize what beliefs they held about their own professional expertise and

subject knowledge as English language teachers. The purpose of this was to explore the consequences of these beliefs with regard to current practice.

Participants talked often, both in written and oral accounts of their experiences, of what they saw as a struggle to assert a professional identity as expert language teachers. A number of participants commented on how they had experienced moments in which their level of expertise was either questioned (including by potential employers, colleagues and existing students) or explicitly negated. One participant in particular, a Korean English language teacher, Taehyun (her pseudonym), commented at some length on how her level of professional preparation and her knowledge base had been a matter of some concern at various stages of her career. At the time of the study Taehyun was coming towards the end of her doctoral thesis in the UK, after having previously lived in Australia and the USA for, respectively, her undergraduate and taught postgraduate studies in linguistics and language teaching. Taehyun positions herself as someone who has traveled extensively and who is thus different from typical expectations of what it means to be considered a Korean. In her written autobiography she says the following: “These experiences of staying abroad in conjunction with very liberal and Western culture of my family made me a very different person compared with Koreans who had no or limited contact with Western culture. The way I act is very different from normal Koreans.”

Taehyun also refers to her own “peculiarity” and of experiencing feelings of not “belonging” when she considers how she identifies and is identified by others as Korean. She also reports on having feelings of not belonging to what she describes as “group oriented Korean traditional culture” when discussing her professional development in the interview. What is of most interest here though is a particular episode she recounts in her interview in which she comments on completing her MA degree in the US and then returning to Korea to take up her English language teaching career.

Extract 1

T: so: then (.) after I graduated my: university I became English teacher right away (.) and I started teaching (.) and one of the incidents that lead me to study in Hawaii is the (.) so: the government started to: expect- I mean ask the English teachers to teach *in* English in: (.) from 2001(?)

R: yeah

T: an:d (.) even before that there was an encouragement instituted informally

R: hm (.) so you were meant to teach the entire class in English?

T: yes (.) an:d so I tried this

Taehyun refers here to the growing trend among education policy makers to promote (in many cases impose) the use of English as the medium of instruction in schools. This is in part a reflection of the continued globalization of English and the resulting importance that ministries of education are attaching to instruction in English. It is also though a reflection of the expanding influence of what can be described as western TESOL based

practices (in this case the influence of a communicative methodology in which exposure to the target language is maximized by teaching English in English) on long established local practices. In numerous contexts, it has been shown that implementing communicative language teaching (CLT) can conflict directly with existing beliefs and practices (see e.g., Choi 2013 on the impact on Korean teachers of an educational policy aimed at promoting communicative methodology). In contexts where CLT is actively promoted, teachers are expected/required to use English (sometimes *only* English) as the medium of instruction, creating additional pressure in relation to teachers' perceived levels of proficiency. The impact this has on Taehyun's experience can be seen in the following extract, a continuation of the interview quoted above.

Extract 2

T: and one of the students when I was teaching English (,) he was a boy and he was acting out he was really mean and he said "why don't you stop trying to speak in English and just teach in Korean?" . . . which kind of shows that he was not happy with my: you know like kind of saying "your English is not good enough" you know...

In this passage it is clear how Taehyun's professional expertise, and more than that her right to position herself as a speaker as well as teacher of English, is openly challenged in the classroom by one of her own students. The promotion of a non-traditional, communicative based methodology is thus implicated in the institutionalized ideologies of language which privilege certain types of English language proficiency and denigrate other types of proficiency, further influencing in a negative way common perceptions of NNESTs' levels of expertise.

Taehyun also though talks about how she has been able to re-evaluate her own sense of professional identity and expertise as a result of her experience as a doctoral student in which she came into contact with critical accounts of current theory and practice. Her personal narrative includes several episodes where she comments on how her thinking has developed in response to her exposure to a critical perspective on pedagogy. She comments in her written narrative, for example, that coming into contact with recent research has helped her to reconsider her self-perception regarding English, explaining that this "has made me wish that the agendas put forward by researchers of ELF and World Englishes to be realized in reality because I get to see that it is not possible for me to 'master' the norms of English as used in England." She then goes on to comment on how this has begun to influence the way she sees her role as a professional.

Extract 3

T: Also, as a teacher trainer, I will try to help Korean English teachers to feel more confident with their own English use. Finally if I am given to change English education policy in Korea, I will make it sure that people do not necessarily be stressed out their idiosyncratic use of English.

The experiences reported by Taehyun provide an illustration of the value of engaging in narrative inquiry. It provides teachers with a means of pursuing professional development in a particularly reflective manner, facilitating, in my view, the adoption of a critical perspective on existing beliefs and practice.

7. IN SUMMARY

Research in ELF has inspired considerable debate regarding the pedagogic implications of the globalization of English and the role of the language in lingua franca interaction. There are numerous ways ELF has relevance for current practice in language pedagogy, but any implementation of change is a complex matter. For these implications to develop into classroom application, substantial re-examination—from a critical stance—of current approaches to language and pedagogy is required. Modifying syllabus content in response to ELF is particularly challenging given the extent to which findings in ELF contravene conventional notions of language competence. For teachers to consider how we might develop materials and tasks that better incorporate the language use patterns and pragmatics of speakers in lingua franca interaction, it is necessary to reflect at length on current beliefs.

Narrative inquiry is one way in which this critical reflection can be undertaken systematically and in depth. Engaging in narrative inquiry can provide a powerful alternative to more traditional knowledge-transmission based teacher education. Traditionally teachers were marginalized in discussions of the nature of professional knowledge and expertise. Recent developments have seen teachers becoming repositioned as “knowing professionals” (see e.g., Johnson 2009), and as agents of pedagogic change in their own right. As a result, a traditional “knowledge transmission model” can be disregarded as a decontextualized, exceptionally limited way of promoting professional learning.

Language and professional practice biographies and narrative inquiry can serve as a means of overcoming the limitations of more conventional approaches. This in turn can promote movement towards an informed but individually relevant pedagogy. Teacher choice—where there is any at all—has though generally been limited to decisions about methods and activity types rather than about the language models provided in class. There is thus still considerable scope for critical, reflective thinking to turn its attention to the linguistic and pragmatic aspects of teachers’ knowledge and practice.

Theory and research can provide the empirical evidence from which teachers can construct personal, practical pedagogic principles. Theory and research can suggest new insights that may challenge assumptions and “intuitive” practice. However, the practice-relevance of these insights cannot simply come about as the result of exposure to ideas. Theory and research need to be carefully mediated so that pedagogic practices can be effectively reconstructed, and preferably by teachers and researchers working in collaboration, and from a critical perspective. This is especially relevant in the case

of ELF and the potential controversies this represents when seen from a traditional perspective.

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