

English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL): Language education and migration

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Introduction

The teaching and learning of English for adults who are migrants to English-dominant countries (e.g. the UK, Australia, Canada, the US) is most commonly known as English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL, the term used in this chapter), and also as ESL (English as a *Second* Language). This chapter is about ESOL practice, and in particular the need to understand the social, political and individual factors that impinge on such practice. The chapter is not principally concerned with EFL: English as a Foreign Language, taught to and learnt by people in parts of the world which are not English-dominant, and (in those parts which are) by people who are not 'here to stay'.

Following this introduction, I locate the field of ESOL in the contemporary multilingual sociolinguistic setting. I then turn to how language education policies relating to adult migrants position ESOL students in certain ways. Subsequently, I sketch out a range of characteristics that relate closely to the ESOL student population and that typically affect their learning experience. The final section of the chapter focuses on practice in ESOL classrooms, as the sites where societal, political and individual concerns converge.

Migrants to English-dominant countries have two fundamental linguistic human rights, embedded in documents such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UN General Assembly, 1948). First they should be allowed to maintain the languages they grew up speaking, even as they and their families settle in a new country. Second, they are entitled to learn the main language of their new country, to learn to communicate in English. The central concern of ESOL is with the second of these: the right of newcomers to an English-dominant country to learn English, and the provision of opportunities for them to do so. Certain sectors of the media and some politicians present this right as an obligation, and even imply a reluctance on the part of some migrants to learn the language at all, as I discuss below. In fact, the majority of migrants to English-dominant countries do want to learn English (Rosenberg, 2007), but may face barriers of access to appropriate high-quality tuition (Simpson et al., 2011).

There is variation between countries which are English-dominant, at the scale of national policy, pedagogic practices and traditions, and the profile of the student body (Simpson and Whiteside, 2015). At root of this variety are many factors: whether the state is historically one of immigration (e.g. Canada, Australia, the US) or emigration (e.g. Ireland, Scotland); whether political and social structures are in place to enable and assist newcomers in settling in their new country; whether there is a history of coordinated language education for new non-English speaking arrivals; who the new arrivals actually are; and how those patterns change over time. Some countries have long experience of, and commitment to, publicly-funded ESOL and others less so; this is reflected in the level of development of curriculum and statutory provision. Some countries adopt a curriculum nationally, specifying the theoretical principles upon which it should be based, while for others curriculum development happens locally,

outside state policy structures. Questions of provision and funding are perennial for ESOL worldwide: Which bodies are responsible for ESOL provision? How much state funding is available for language classes for adults? Who is eligible for them, and for how long? Some countries stipulate that statutory funding will be limited to certain groups of adult migrants, for example permanent residents or those actively seeking employment. Others, such as Australia, have a set number of hours for which migrants are eligible for free English classes. Some countries organise funding centrally on a national level (for example England and Wales between 2001 and 2009), while in others it devolves to a provincial or local level (for example the fragmented picture in the US).

There are commonalities too: ESOL, wherever it is practised, is closely related to national government policy on migration, integration and the social inclusion of new arrivals. A phenomenon in many countries in the West is a tightening of the relationship between language, immigration, citizenship and national security, seen most clearly in the rise of language and citizenship testing and teaching. How host countries plan and provide for newcomers is often a sign of prevailing attitudes towards immigration in general, and towards broader issues such as race, ethnicity and social class, as I discuss below. Other points in common around the world of ESOL include its frequent alignment with adult basic skills, and a growing focus on preparation for the workplace (Cooke and Simpson, 2008). Moreover, the way governments respond to the language learning needs of adult migrants tends not to take into account their experiences 'on the ground', typically in linguistically and socially diverse urban areas. Policies that promote the learning of English do not always recognise its position in individuals' multilingual daily lives.

The distinctiveness of ESOL as a branch of ELT is evident therefore through an interplay of life, learning and migration trajectories, of history and of government policies, and the way these come together in practice. As this chapter will explore, there is a need to attend to how global processes relating to language and migration as well as language ideological debates are played out in students' life experiences, and in the warp and the weft of actual practice, both outside class and within.

ESOL students in the sociolinguistic setting

A feature of 21st Century globalisation is the growth of movement of people from one country to another. Around one in 35 people in the world are migrants, and the reasons for their migration vary. People move to a new country because of a shortage of labour in certain sectors, to be with their families, or as refugees to escape war, civil unrest, poverty, or fear of persecution. While most refugees stay relatively near their home countries – the top four hosts for refugees in 2013 were Pakistan, Iran, Lebanon and Jordan (UNHCR 2014) – migration to more peaceful and prosperous countries continues to grow, despite attempts by the governments of some of those countries to curtail it.

Countries around the world hosting ESOL students have experienced differing patterns of migration. Britain, for example, has since the nineteenth century experienced successive waves of migration (Rosenberg, 2007). The mid-twentieth century saw the arrival of migrants from the former colonies – particularly the Indian sub-continent and the Caribbean – who had a right to settle in Britain in response to the post-war demand for labour. Migration today differs in range and scale from these earlier waves, at least

in part due to processes of globalisation associated with late modernity (Appadurai, 1996, Giddens, 1999). These include increased mobility, and movement of people towards the developed West. Hence, Britain in recent years has seen inward migration from places such as Somalia, Congo, Iraq, Afghanistan and Syria, where the political and economic situation has driven people to uproot. While the picture is similar in other countries, also apparent are idiosyncratic patterns in the development of migration (and associated policies) related to divergent geographical, historical and ideological factors (see chapters in Simpson and Whiteside, 2015). In terms of geography, the long, sparsely populated US/Mexico border has facilitated the historical exploitation of Mexican guest workers (*braceros*) and undocumented labourers in the US. Canada, with its vast under-populated areas, has embraced immigration (though recently with financial strings attached), while Australia has a history of exclusionary migration policies targeting non-Europeans (McNamara, 2012). Post-colonial ties with 'sending' countries have characterized much policy, though not in countries with no such historical relationships. Countries with long histories of inward migration like the US and the UK, and with diverse populations, contrast with historically sending countries such as Ireland, which is legislating for language diversity for the first time (Sheridan, 2015).

Globalisation and migration help to shape the demographic make-up of English-dominant countries, which are experiencing *superdiversity* at a scale never before encountered (Vertovec, 2006, 2012; Blommaert and Rampton, 2011). Today's language use too, therefore, is affected by migration, as documented in a developing sociolinguistics of mobility (Pratt, 1997; Baynham, 2011; Canagarajah, forthcoming) and of globalisation (Blommaert 2010). Notions such as *translanguaging* (Creese and Blackledge, 2010) and *metrolingualism* (Pennycook and Otsuji, 2015) are gaining currency in a communicative era where people with a range of multilingual resources are in contact (see also Carroll and Combs, and Pennycook, both this volume). Li Wei and Garcia define translanguaging thus:

translanguaging is an approach to the use of language, bilingualism and the education of bilinguals that considers the language practices of bilinguals not as two autonomous language systems as has been traditionally the case, but as one linguistic repertoire with features that have been societally constructed as belonging to two separate languages.
(Li Wei and Garcia, 2014:2)

Perhaps of all the branches of ELT, ESOL has the closest link to the consequences of migration and globalisation, processes which have brought large numbers and also huge variety to ESOL classes. Approaches to pedagogy which draw upon notions such as translanguaging for their theoretical bases would seem to be particularly fitting in educational settings in the global cities of today, where students may well be developing their competence in English as part of a multilingual repertoire (see also May, 2013).

How adult students engage with English outside class, in the broader sociolinguistic setting, is relevant for teachers. Approaches to language teaching generally should encompass a concern with students' needs. In the case of ESOL, this entails recognising the complexities inherent in students' daily lives. Newcomers to a country differ in terms of the degrees of integration they feel, for instance. Some suffer extremes of

isolation and speak very little to anyone, even in their expert languages. Others move in large multilingual networks of migrants and refugees, while yet others have busy lives in large ethnic minority communities. Most people attending ESOL classes, however, express a certain sense of frustration at their progress and lack of opportunities to practise English with expert speakers of the language (Cooke and Simpson, 2008).

The advantages of speaking English in a new home in an English-dominant country (as well as in a globalised world), and speaking it well, are more than apparent to the majority of migrants, and many are highly motivated to learn. Bonny Norton (2000, 2011, 2013) proposes the construct of *investment* as appropriate to describe migrants' language learning, to complement more established understandings of language learner motivation (see Lamb, this volume). Investment signals 'the socially and historically constructed relationship of learners to the target language and their often ambivalent desire to learn and practice it' (Norton, 2011: 322). For ESOL learners, this ambivalence relates to the way they, as migrants, settle into life in a new country. As Norton writes elsewhere (2006: 96), 'while adult ESOL language learners may strive to make a productive contribution to their new societies, unless the host community is receptive to their arrival, they will struggle to fulfil their potential.'

A question to ask of ESOL, therefore, is how do new arrivals invest in the language practices of the classroom and the local community? There are multiple reasons why those settling in a new country are motivated to learn English, ranging from the urgency of finding a job to the desire to socialise. Another motivational factor is the day-to-day difficulty of being a low level speaker of English. Some ESOL learners experience fear, isolation and a feeling of disadvantage or incompleteness. Moreover, institutions such as government employment offices, welfare offices and banks loom large in the lives of linguistic minority people, and students' interactions in English can be coloured by miscommunication, hostility and sometimes racism. Encounters with service providers or bureaucrats are by their nature unequal and do not provide environments conducive to developing either spoken or listening competence. The power imbalances inherent in many such interactions have implications for the development of their understanding (Bremer and Roberts et al., 1996; Carrier, 1999). At the same time, a feeling commonly reported by beginner learners of ESOL is discomfort at their dependence on interpreters, friends or even their own children to help with bureaucratic and medical encounters; many talk of their language learning achievements in terms of breaking this dependency (Baynham, Roberts et al., 2007). This is why ESOL lessons remain important: instruction makes a difference generally (Norris and Ortega, 2000), and critical examination of daily encounters should be included in the context of such instruction in ESOL contexts, as we shall see later in the chapter.

ESOL and political discourse

Migration to English-dominant countries across the West outpaces the development of policies and infrastructure which address the presence of new migrants, and the linguistic diversity that their arrival entails. National policies concerning language education for new arrivals tend to be inconsistent, contentious and contradictory (see below), responding in uneven ways to the dynamic diversity associated with migration. That said, national governments generally accept that new arrivals should use the dominant language of their new country. Indeed, political and public rhetoric frequently

makes reference to the obligation that migrants have to ‘speak our language’, often in the name of national unity. Such discourse is informed by deeply entrenched language ideologies, i.e. ‘beliefs, feelings, and conceptions about language structure and use which often index the political interests of individual speakers, ethnic and other interest groups, and nation states’ (Kroskrity, 2001: 1). The ideology of a standard language that should be used in the public (and even private) sphere across a country is particularly well-established (Wright, 2004). This ‘one nation, one language’ ideology is interlaced with other beliefs about national identity, for example the ideal that the nation state should be as homogeneous – and as monolingual – as possible.

For many, understanding and using the dominant language of the new country is a *sine qua non* of integration and social cohesion. This stance assumes that acquiring competence in the standard variety of a language equips newcomers with the means to navigate a fresh social context. This extends to competence in reading and writing: an assumption is easily made that literacy in the standard variety is a pre-requisite for daily life and is the route to a successful future. From here, it is but a short step to another easy assumption – one that many learners also make – that once competence in the language has been achieved, all the problems one faces as a migrant will be solved, as if all social groups using the standard variety are natural allies. Yet the notion of a stable distribution of languages following national boundaries – and indeed the notion of languages themselves as stable and bounded – runs counter to lived language experience. As I have suggested, daily language use in migration contexts inevitably involves individuals drawing upon their multilingual repertoire as situations demand (Creese and Blackledge, 2010, 2011). But although multilingualism is the norm on the ground, monolingualism is hegemonic in many places: that is, it is accepted as an unquestioned common sense ‘given’ by the majority of people that one language stands above others as having particular status as the national language of the country. Monolingualist policies appeal to, and resonate with, everyday understandings of the importance of a standard language as a unifying ‘glue’ for a nation, and battles over monolingualist stances (e.g. the ‘English only’ movement in the US) abound. From such a perspective, the business of unifying (or homogenizing) the nation is equated with positioning English as the only acceptable language of the public sphere (Ricento, 2003). The mobility of contemporary globalization certainly presents something of a problem to the idea of the nation as a fixed entity. The imagined homogeneity of a nation (in linguistic terms) is maintained by national policy and political discourse, but is challenged by mobility and diversity.

In the UK, policy and public rhetoric in recent years promotes the dominance of standard English to counter religious and political extremism (Simpson and Whiteside, 2012; Simpson, 2015). In Australia, where an understanding of cultural pluralism has only recently developed, the learning of English has historically been considered part and parcel of the process of assimilation into an Anglo-Australian culture (Nicholas, 2015). Adult migrant language education and immigration policy in the US, though confused, is underpinned by a largely unquestioning acceptance of English as the *de facto* national language (Wrigley, 2015). It should come as no surprise, then, that the understanding of language education for migrants at the scale of national policy rarely embraces multilingualism, that is, the development of competence in the dominant language as part of a multilingual repertoire. Even in places where multiculturalism and diversity are embraced, such concern tends not to extend to linguistic diversity.

In sum then, across the developed West, language education for adult migrants has in recent years become closely intertwined with policy on immigration and citizenship. Recent studies of language policy consider it not as a formation created at an abstract scale, however, but as multiple processes (Ricento and Hornberger, 1996) and as locally-situated sociocultural practice (McCarty, 2011; Johnson, 2013). This raises questions of how ‘needs’ in ESOL are understood, whose stake in the identification of needs is most prominent, and what are the consequences for ESOL students in classrooms and in their out-of-class lives. In ESOL pedagogy, there is a tradition of appropriating and subverting imposed policies, interpreting them in new ways in local contexts of practice. I give an example later in the chapter, where I describe an approach to ESOL pedagogy which adopts a far broader, student-defined notion of integration. Before that, however, I turn to ESOL students, and the factors that distinguish them in practice.

ESOL students

As noted earlier, the world’s urban centres now host multilingual and multicultural populations from potentially anywhere. Any particular group of adult migrants learning English will be equally diverse. This diversity is most notable perhaps in terms of language background and geographical origin, but also educational trajectory and schooled experience, command of literacy in their expert languages, immigration status and reasons for migrating, age and gender, and employment. Individuals who share a similar background differ as well of course, in terms of personality, a sense of agency, investment in learning, and aspirations for the future. In this section, I sketch out this range, identifying those salient issues which typically impinge on ESOL students’ language learning and therefore on classroom practice.

Baynham, Roberts and colleagues (2007) describe an intermediate-level class of English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) in North London with students from Spain, Brazil, Somalia, France, Turkey, Columbia, Albania, Chad, Congo, Cyprus and India. In 2013, an equivalent class at the same college again has students from Brazil, Somalia and Turkey, but also from Yemen, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Angola and China. The profile of these classes reflects fast-moving patterns of migration. The picture also varies from country to country (depending on overall migration patterns), city to city, town to town, and neighbourhood to neighbourhood. An intermediate ESOL class in Sydney or Toronto, or elsewhere London, or in a large regional city, or in a rural area, would most likely exhibit a different but possibly equally varied profile.

Language background

An obvious difference between ESOL learners lies in the languages they speak. In England, a survey of ESOL classes (Baynham, Roberts et al., 2007) found over 50 languages spoken by 500 ESOL students in London and the North of England; Simpson et al. (2011) found a similar number in a single area of one city alone. A ‘census’ view of languages however does not encapsulate the full complex picture of language use amongst ESOL students, nor that many of the learners are multilingual and multi-literate. Multilingualism, as well as multi-literacy (including literacy in more than one script) is taken for granted by many ESOL learners, so much so that they often fail to

mention it on official forms. As I have already stressed, ESOL learners are often surrounded by many languages, use several languages themselves, and move between them (*translanguage*) as a matter of course, or use English as a *lingua franca* with speakers from diverse backgrounds. (See Makoni and Pennycook, 2007 for a trenchant critique of ‘census ideology’ regarding language use.)

Educational background and literacy

Moreover, diversity extends beyond countries of origin and first languages claimed. Also far from uniform amongst ESOL learners is their educational background and prior experience of literacy (see Wallace and Paran, this volume). It is not unusual to find in the same class people who have received a university education together with people with very little schooling and therefore with little literacy in their first languages. The teaching of literacy for new readers and writers is considered by many teachers to be the most challenging area of ESOL pedagogy (see for example Young-Scholten, 2015; Crevecoeur-Bryant, 2011). This is not surprising considering that such students are learning to read and write for the first time, as adults, and in a new language. Language learning for adults without foundational literacy in a first or expert language also presents cognitive demands on other aspects of language processing, as described by Tarone and colleagues (2009). The reasons for ESOL students not acquiring literacy as children vary: there are political, social, economic and cultural barriers to schooling. The upheaval caused by military conflict and war is a reason why some children do not attend school, even in societies where the literacy rate was previously relatively high. Others may come from societies which do not have a strong literate tradition, such as Somalia (Bigelow and King, 2015), or from a tradition which does not prioritise the education of girls (Kouritzin, 2000). Others still may have been deprived of an education because of poverty. For whatever reason, lack of access to literacy has huge implications in the literacy-saturated world of the adult migrant. Cooke and Simpson (2008) quote Kamal, an ESOL student from Sri Lanka living in London:

Say if I get a letter from the immigration people today, I can't read that letter properly, I can't understand the meanings correctly and if I misread the words there'll be a lot of problems. (Kamal, in Cooke and Simpson 2008: 92)

Adult migrants to the English-dominant West who had not previously regarded their literacy (or lack of it) as a problem are faced with a pressure to learn to read and write in English, their second or third language, sometimes at the very time that they are confronting the stresses of migration (Baynham and de Fina, 2005). Other students who arrived many years ago may have worked in jobs which required little from them by way of literacy; now unemployed, however, they are facing new demands from potential employers in the increasing textualisation of even the most unskilled manual work (Scheeres, 2004; see also Duchêne, Moyer and Roberts, 2013). That is, even menial jobs now entail employees having to negotiate written texts. And there are potentially serious problems for people unable to read English when they are faced with the bureaucratic demands made of migrants in English-dominant countries. This is particularly true for asylum seekers and refugees such as Kamal. Many people have access to community networks and resources to help them process important bureaucracy such as letters from the immigration authorities; they might also have recourse to official interpreters and translators. However, as mentioned earlier, one of

the reasons people attend ESOL classes in the first place is to break their sense of dependency on formal or informal support.

Gender

ESOL is a gendered field: in the surveys cited above, two thirds of students were female. Migration and asylum affect women in different ways to men, and this extends to their experience of ESOL, impinging on their ability to access ESOL classes. For example, people-trafficking as part of forced prostitution affects women and girls almost exclusively (Eaves Poppy Project, n.d.; Mai, 2013). A less obvious but still important issue is the change in family patterns associated with migration. Traditional family patterns go through many shifts during and after migration. These are sometimes to the benefit of women but sometimes not; for example, many women migrants are single mothers who have been widowed due to war and conflict in their home countries and are therefore living in situations at odds with the traditional norms for their communities, as well as coping with increased poverty. A lack of access to childcare is a particularly acute problem for women wishing to raise young children and attend regular full-time ESOL classes. Consequently their learning happens in a piecemeal way over a much longer period of time.

Employment

One of the most pressing reasons learners invest in English is for employment. ESOL students bring with them a wide array of qualities and attributes which would normally give them status in society – what Bourdieu (1986) termed *cultural capital*. This cultural capital includes previous education, language and literacy, a range of qualifications, skills, knowledge and prior experience. Skilled tradespeople and highly qualified professionals can certainly be found in ESOL classes. But ESOL learners who find work in their new country tend to be employed below their professional level and may remain in this position for years to come. Finding that their cultural capital has less value than it had at home can have an impact on their social identity (Simpson and Cooke, 2010). Moreover, people sometimes lack the linguistic and cultural knowledge to negotiate gatekeeping procedures such as job interviews. Roberts and Campbell (2006) have shown that job interviews present a major barrier to second language speakers and contribute to high levels of unemployment amongst linguistic minority people. As I detail below, ESOL practice addresses the interactional demands of events such as job interviews only imperfectly.

In some parts of countries such as the UK, the US, Canada and Australia, the foreign-born population outnumbers the local-born population. Thus the points about difference and diversity made in this section will be familiar and even obvious to some readers, above all to ESOL teachers in the West's global cities. However, when it comes to teaching and learning, ESOL students are often treated as one 'group', so responding to their diverse needs, experiences and aspirations becomes an essential part of the work of the ESOL teacher and a major challenge to curriculum planners. With ever greater demand for ESOL classes and a high level of insistence from governments that migrants learn English for purposes of integration, the job of ESOL teachers goes way beyond teaching the forms and structure of the English language.

ESOL classes

Now we arrive at ESOL lessons and consider ways in which teachers might approach the challenges and maximise the opportunities offered by the remarkable mixture of people in their classrooms. Given the variation sketched out above, it is clear that no one method is appropriate for all ESOL students; no unified lesson content or single set of topics, activities, or materials will cater for their diverse needs. Nonetheless, although some teachers of ESOL draw on other approaches, most have been influenced in some way by Communicative Language Teaching (CLT; see Thornbury, this volume) to a greater or lesser degree, either directly through their professional training, or indirectly through materials and textbooks written according to CLT principles. In communicative classrooms, there is an emphasis on effective communication in language that is appropriate to its contexts of use. Unlike for most EFL students, for ESOL students those contexts usually relate to their immediate concerns of daily life as well as to future aspirations. An issue for ESOL students is that daily concerns present language challenges that are frequently beyond their ascribed 'level'. Here, I first consider appropriate materials for ESOL, then turn to the matter of how the interactional challenges from outside class might be addressed in practice. Finally, I give examples of how ESOL teachers can productively enable aspects of their students' out-of-class lives to be brought into the classroom, where they can be critically examined.

Materials for ESOL

ESOL materials tend to reflect the political trends of the time. In Britain, for example, ESOL developed in response to the needs of large numbers of non-English speaking people who migrated from the 1950s onwards, especially from the Indian sub-continent. Students needed to be prepared for daily life; materials were home-produced and heavily functional, dealing with basic survival and adjustment to life in the new country, and with activities such as shopping, going to the doctor's and filling in forms for welfare benefits. 'Survival English' was later criticised by writers such as Auerbach (1986) and Tollefson (1986) for its reliance on materials based on unreal situations in which problems are easily solved and people in positions of power are co-operative and helpful, and for its hidden curriculum 'which prepares students for subservient social roles and reinforces hierarchical relations both in and outside the classroom' (Auerbach and Burgess, 1985:475). Perhaps inevitably, echoes of survival English can be seen in materials and methods used in the ESOL classrooms of today.

ESOL teachers also draw upon commercially-produced materials, such as the type of textbooks commonly used in the teaching of EFL around the world. EFL is a commercial endeavour so coursebooks have to accommodate the globalising trends of English language learning and publishing. It is in publishers' interests to make coursebooks appeal to as wide a market as possible, hence the emergence of generic English Language, or 'global' coursebooks that can be marketed and sold anywhere ELT is practised. However, the extent to which global textbooks are appropriate in ESOL classrooms is questionable. In particular, the sort of apolitical, carefree and overwhelmingly middle class culture that such coursebooks present opens them up to criticism (Gray, 2002, 2013, and this volume).

Tackling real world challenges in the ESOL classroom

Moreover, global textbooks do not prepare students for the real world challenges faced by students as they adjust to life in a new, English-dominant country. The demands of the world outside the classroom range from everyday activities such as shopping to encounters with medical professionals, interactions with officials in settings such as welfare offices and employment bureaux, and interviews for employment. ESOL-specific materials writers do attempt to cater for the daily needs of ESOL students. For example, the authors of the materials developed to accompany the Adult ESOL Core Curriculum in England draw on the traditional ways in which English language pedagogy has attempted to prepare learners for real life interaction, for instance through the use of dialogues such as this, in which learners hear an exchange in a doctor's surgery:

Receptionist: Hello. Ashlea Surgery
Filiz: Hello, can I make an appointment for my daughter to see Dr Green please?
Receptionist: Yes. What's the name?
Filiz: Gulay Akpinar
Receptionist: Can you spell her first name please?
Filiz: Yes. It's G-U-L-A-Y. Gulay Akpinar.
Receptionist: OK. Dr Green's next appointment is on Thursday morning.
Filiz: Thursday. OK.
Receptionist: Right. Is 9.30 OK?
Filiz: Yes, that's fine. Thank you very much.
(DfES 2003 *Skills for Life ESOL learning materials Entry 1*)

In class, students might go on to use a dialogue such as this as a model, modify it with their own details, rehearse it, and perhaps learn it by heart to perform in front of the class. However, ESOL teachers often have a feeling that these dialogues do not exactly 'work' as learning activities and somehow fail to hit the mark in terms of what really goes on in encounters outside the classroom. Research in Conversation Analysis (Drew and Heritage 1992) and Interactional Sociolinguistics (Sarangi and Roberts 1999) has shown that language in institutional interactions is usually very different from that given as models to learners; there is a wide gap between real spoken interaction on the one hand, with its pauses, hesitations, false starts, repair and unequal power relations (as mentioned earlier), and orderly classroom dialogues on the other, in which interactive tasks are accomplished with the minimum of misunderstanding and with the maximum co-operation between participants (Roberts et al., 2007). Learners themselves sometimes echo the same frustration. In the lesson where the dialogue above was presented (discussed in Roberts and Cooke, 2009), they lamented that in their own doctor's surgery they would never be able to get an appointment so easily at a time to suit them or with the doctor of their choice.

The reality in the outside world, whether in institutional domains or in general daily life, often differs greatly from the imagined interaction of classroom dialogues. The question arises, then, of how ESOL teachers can best prepare their learners for the challenges they face outside classrooms. To teach about high-stakes encounters such as job interviews, for example, requires teachers and materials writers to have a deep knowledge of the language practices of modern interviews, which they often do not possess. Materials which are based on authentic interaction (e.g. Roberts et al., 2007)

can at the very least raise awareness of real-life language issues. To do this comprehensively across interactional domains is dependent on more data being made available from different settings, which inevitably has implications for resources and funding, and therefore depends on the political will to fund such research.

Participatory pedagogy in ESOL

Language pedagogy for adult migrants requires innovative responses to linguistic and cultural diversity and to the new mobilities of the twenty first century. Descriptions of such responses can be found in chapters in two British Council publications focusing on practice in the UK (Mallows, 2012, 2014) and, with a global reach beyond ESOL, in Simpson and Whiteside (2015). A number of the chapters in these volumes promote an approach to ESOL teaching which can be described as broadly critical and participatory. Their authors recognise that many migrants are not only concerned with a wish to access English to enable them to operate effectively in daily life, but are engaged in a struggle for recognition and equality. Inspired by the writings of the Brazilian Marxist educator Paulo Freire in books such as *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1970), and others such as Elsa Auerbach, participatory pedagogy has been practised by some educators since the 1970s, particularly in the teaching of adult literacy. It was advocated for the teaching of ESOL in the 1980s (Baynham, 1988), but only recently has it been taken up seriously by ESOL practitioners. Participatory pedagogy advocates that participants set their own agenda, devise their own learning materials, take action on the issues which they identify as important and evaluate their progress and the effectiveness of their programmes as they go. The syllabus, therefore, is not brought along by the teacher but rather *emerges* from class to class; the direction of the instructional process is, as Auerbach (1992: 19) puts it, 'from the students to the curriculum rather than from the curriculum to the students'. (See also Menard-Warwick et al., this volume)

An example of a participatory ESOL initiative is the *Whose Integration?* project (Bryers et al., 2014 a, b, c; Cooke et al., 2015), whereby teacher-researchers explored critical participatory ESOL pedagogy with their adult migrant students in London. This is part of a movement in ESOL practice which relates language and literacy learning to the critical concerns of students' lives, on the students' own terms. This can equip students with critical skills which can be transferred beyond the classroom to effect social action. The project builds on work on speaking development in ESOL classrooms (Cooke and Roberts, 2007a and b). This work recognised firstly that development in oral competence required the production of turns of talk that were longer and more sophisticated than are typical in many ESOL classrooms (Swain, 2000). At the same time, the content of classroom discussions needed to suit students' out-of-class needs and interests. *Whose Integration?* addresses a contemporary concern – integration into a new society – of which 'ESOL students are often the referents, but about which they are rarely asked their opinions' (Cooke et al., 2015). The authors hold that the 'intensity of discussion in the classroom led some students to stimulate the same debates at home and with friends, and as teachers we found ourselves discussing the issues which arose in class long after the sessions were over.'

Conclusion

I conclude by stressing the mutually-informing interplay of the factors I have sketched out in this chapter. I maintain that ESOL teachers, teacher educators, and students with an interest in language education in migration contexts need to develop a knowledge of individual concerns (investment, learning and migration trajectories), of the sociolinguistic setting, and of the 'wider social, political and philosophical issues in education' (Lawes 2003: 24). In so doing, they will strengthen their ability to understand ESOL students, and to critically evaluate the policies and structures to which the field of ESOL is subject, and which – to a greater or lesser extent – the field shapes.

Discussion questions

- *Student interaction outside class.* What do ESOL teachers typically need to know about their students' interactions outside class? How might knowing this information affect the way they plan their courses?
- *Contemporary superdiversity and ESOL students.* What are some of the challenges and opportunities that the diversity of students outlined in the chapter might present to ESOL teachers and curriculum planners?
- *Reflection on gender.* What issues (in class and outside) might affect women ESOL learners in a different way from men?
- *The multilingual milieu.* English might be just one of many languages which ESOL students encounter day-to-day, and they may well be 'developing their competence in English as part of a multilingual repertoire'. How might ESOL teachers and their students address this new reality in their classrooms?

Related topics

Bilingual education in a multilingual world; Educational perspectives on ELT: society and the individual; traditional, progressive and transformative; ELT materials: claims, critiques and controversies; Politics, power relationships and ELT; Teaching literacy; Values in the ELT classroom

Further reading

Blackledge, A. and A. Creese (eds) (2014) *Heteroglossia as Practice and Pedagogy*. New York: Springer. (A collection offering theoretical interpretations and explanations of voice and heteroglossia, and its relevance to multilingual research and teaching.)

Cooke, M. and J. Simpson (2008) *ESOL: A Critical Guide*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. (A research-informed overview of ESOL for teachers and teacher-educators.)

Norton, B. (2013) *Identity and Language Learning: Extending the Conversation*. Bristol: Multilingual Matters. (The updated edition of a classic work on identity and language learning among adult English language learners in Canada.)

Simpson, J. and A. Whiteside (eds) (2015) *Adult language education and migration: Challenging agendas in policy and practice*. London: Routledge. (An edited collection comprising a critical examination of policy and practice in language education for adult migrants in nine countries around the world.)

Tarone, E. M. Bigelow and K. Hansen (2009) *Literacy and Second Language Oracy*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. (A book documenting the impact of low literacy skills on second language oral processing, an issue which disproportionately affects ESOL students.)

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