

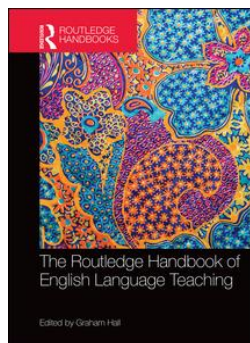
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Values in the ELT classroom

*Julia Menard-Warwick, Miki Mori, Anna Reznik
and Daniel Moglen*

Introduction

In this chapter, four authors based in a California university explore the ways in which teachers engage with questions of ‘values’ in English language classrooms across social contexts. First, we address the topic as it appears in previous literature, followed by an exploration of two data examples in which specific values are discussed in particular classrooms. We end with implications for understanding values in ELT.

We examine this topic first because teaching English always involves values. Teachers make decisions based on values, and, during lessons, students and teachers express particular values. Second, we discuss values because we recognise that talking about values often *is* a value within the popular methodological paradigm of communicative language teaching (CLT, further discussed in the following section). Since CLT values communication, *talking about values* is valuable insofar as this practice encourages students to communicate more extensively and passionately than they might otherwise. From this perspective, it may not matter *which* values an individual student articulates. At the same time, of course, many teachers hope that students will develop more ‘enlightened’ attitudes through discussing controversial topics (for examples, see below).

Framework and definitions

In recent decades, CLT has been the pedagogical approach most widely advocated in ELT training programmes around the world (see Thornbury, this volume). This approach considers communication, often via speaking, as the central way students learn a language (as opposed to grammar-based instruction, which focuses on acquiring rules). Thus, classroom activities encourage students to give their opinions on a topic. In order to address why sharing opinions is valued, we consider the larger framework, or belief system, in which CLT is situated. For that, we identify neoliberalism (Holborow, 2012a), the predominant ideology in globalised contexts, as one framework through which to understand ELT and the expression of values.

Defining ‘values’

Before elaborating on this framework, we will discuss our definition of ‘values’ and related terms, as well as how these differ from the understandings of others in the field. We use *values* to refer

to appraisals of rightness/wrongness (similar to Johnston, 2003), but we reserve *morality* for values within sustained, coherent systems of belief (e.g. religious prohibitions against engaging in sexual behaviour outside of heterosexual marriage). With Johnston, we define *ethics* as “codified standards and rules governing professional practice” (ibid.: 11), i.e. values within institutional contexts. An example is the common prohibition against plagiarism. However, whereas Johnston defines *ideology* as values within political contexts, we favour a linguistic anthropological definition of ideology as beliefs “constructed in the interest of a specific social or cultural group” (Kroskrity, 2000: 8). Moreover, we argue that ideologies are often instantiated in language as *discourses*, characteristic ways of referring to and evaluating particular topics (e.g. feminist discourse). Thus, values often enter classrooms in the form of competing discourses, which may clash with each other in classroom interactions (Menard-Warwick, 2013).

To better frame our discussion, we will distinguish *values about* and *values within*, where ‘values about’ refers to the evaluation of particular topics in classroom discussions and ‘values within’ refers to perspectives enacted through classroom interaction and pedagogical policies. For example, if students agree in a classroom discussion that women should pursue careers on the same basis as men, this is a value *about* gender; if participation structures in an English class encourage female students to speak out, this can be seen as a value *within* the pedagogy of this particular classroom.

Considering values in communicative language teaching

The debate on teaching values in the classroom (i.e. ‘values about’) can be traced back to Kelly (1986), who argued in favour of the *committed impartiality* approach, in which the teacher freely states her views on controversial issues and then allows “competing perspectives [to] receive a fair hearing through critical discourse” (p. 130). However, the inherent problem with this approach is the teacher’s role as an authority figure in the classroom with whom students may fear to disagree (Miller-Lane et al., 2006). Thus, teachers may aim for neutrality (not stating their own opinions) in order to avoid intimidating and silencing more sensitive students.

The teacher’s dilemma becomes even more pronounced in an ESL classroom, where learners may come from a wide variety of cultures. Oster (1989), while arguing in favour of teaching critical reading of literature, pointed out how self-disclosure may feel threatening to an ESL student, since the amount of information that is proper to disclose about oneself differs from culture to culture. Oster also noticed that the students’ cultural norms dictated their understanding of the texts: thus, a Chinese student’s family values resulted in her condemnation of a protagonist who did not behave with the respect understood to be due to one’s father, labelling him as someone who needs “a mental doctor” (ibid.: 92). Another dilemma that teachers face is their responsibility to students vis-à-vis their role as outlined by the institution. In Ajayi’s (2008) study, several teachers complained of the narrow scope of the ESL syllabus and stated that they avoided controversial topics, such as abortion, sex education etc., for fear of losing their jobs.

Indeed, when political considerations enter the classroom, the situation becomes increasingly complicated. Canagarajah (1993, 1999) conducted one of the first in-depth explorations of clashing values in ELT, specifically examining dilemmas inherent in the use of Western textbooks and CLT methodology in rural Sri Lanka. Describing students’ conflict as “how to learn English . . . without being inducted into the values embodied by the language and (Western-influenced) curriculum” (1999: 96), he found that his students refused to participate in classroom ‘communicative’ activities which were based on discursive values that they did not share, such as the importance of budgeting money for future needs.

While Canagarajah’s work is situated in a local context and deals mostly with cultural politics, Johnston (2003) expanded the discussion of values in ELT classrooms to a wider variety of issues,

including assessment, L1 use in the classroom, and the teacher's personal beliefs. As an example of a value-laden (both 'values within' and 'values about') dilemma at the heart of CLT, Johnston offered the example of a teacher who asked students for their opinion about the rules of driving ('values about'); however, when no one volunteered, he said "say something, it does not matter, it is not important" (ibid.: 29). While there is no overt conflict here of the kind illustrated by Canagarajah, there nevertheless seems to be opposing messages about what should be communicated in a classroom and how. This leads to a missed opportunity: unable to inspire an exchange of ideas, the teacher creates the impression that language is learned only for its own sake ('values within'). Central to Johnston's work is the teacher's inner conflict as s/he faces these issues, and he argues that this conflict does not have a simple, one-fits-all solution; rather, the solution depends heavily on the situation and on the values held by a particular teacher.

Although we agree with Johnston that solutions to pedagogical dilemmas will vary depending on context, we additionally argue that these kinds of conflicts and missed opportunities in ELT classrooms arise most frequently when English instruction transmits practices and values associated with globalisation (Menard-Warwick, 2013). Tending to originate in Western society, these lifeways have spread around the planet in recent years as English becomes the *de facto* lingua franca of the world (see Seargeant, this volume). Products from corporations such as Coca Cola, Starbucks and McDonald's, along with widely accessible American TV and movies, allow people around the world to glimpse (and in some cases adopt) Western language and culture (see also Pennycook, this volume).

Considering the scope of neoliberalism in ELT

While this globalised culture is hardly uniform, many of its values can be seen as manifestations of neoliberal ideology. Bell Lara and Lopez define neoliberalism as "the premise that freedom of choice and the rational calculation of economic actors . . . is the principle underlying human behaviour" (2007: 18). From this perspective, individuals are responsible for their own futures and should expect nothing from the larger global society – other than the protection of rights, especially property rights (Hershberg and Rosen, 2006). While neoliberalism has primarily been linked to the free market principles on which the global *economy* is based, the definition given by Bell Lara and Lopez suggests the broader implications for *lifestyles* based on freedom of choice. As Holborow points out, in this discursive context, the economic metaphor of entrepreneurship is now being applied to a wide range of fields, "from social work to personal development" (2012b: 53). She additionally notes that "within applied linguistics. . . neoliberalism has been seen to intersect with English as a dominant language" (2012a: 26).

Thus, because English is the dominant language of financial transactions within the globalised economy, it also necessarily dominates the 'linguistic market', in which language has a monetary exchange value, both metaphorically and practically. In this way, English and English language teaching themselves have become commodities. Similarly, it has long been argued within cognitive linguistics that the *conduit metaphor* for communication is embedded in the structures of the English language, as seen in expressions like 'I *gave* you that idea', or 'your concept *came across* beautifully' (Reddy, 1970: 311–312). In this view, language serves as a conduit for ideas and texts that become commodified packages that are passed (or potentially sold) from one interlocutor to another. The terms *input* and *output*, widely associated with ELT around the globe, have been critiqued from a sociocultural perspective as based in the conduit metaphor (Platt and Brooks, 1994; see also Nequeruela-Azarola and García, this volume). In this version of CLT, it doesn't matter what's *in* the package, as implied by the teacher that Johnston observed (2003). Moreover, with language commodified, the need arises for regulation and surveillance to protect intellectual

property in the linguistic marketplace (Bloch, 2012); we shall return to this issue shortly, when discussing value dilemmas surrounding plagiarism in student writing.

As English reigns as the language of science, business and travel within the global linguistic ‘free market’, the number of L2 learners is rapidly increasing. Certainly, English learners come from a multitude of backgrounds and study English for various purposes, but the hegemony of English (Edge, 2006) as cultural capital in the global marketplace creates the general context for student learning. Moreover, the international dominance of the language reveals itself in the classroom through the curriculum, such as in the widespread focus on gatekeeping assessments such as TOEFL/TOEIC. While English-only classroom policies (see Carroll and Combs, and Kerr, this volume) enact the ideology that standard English is *the* sole essential form of cultural capital in the global marketplace (Menard-Warwick, 2013), the predominance of English increases resistance to what is widely considered to be the language of colonialism or imperialism (Canagarajah, 1999; Kumaravadivelu, 2006; Menard-Warwick, 2013; see Pennycook, this volume, for further discussion).

Indeed, the privileging of Western cultural practices in the context of contemporary global neoliberalism has a profound effect on conflicts over values in English classrooms. Perspectives on gender and sexuality that are discursively connected to ELT tend to promote individual free choice within commodified lifestyle options, with some lingering bias towards ‘mainstream’ Western-style heterosexual relationships. This has been especially well-researched in Japan, where commercial language schools market conversation classes taught by attractive Anglo males to women who dream of Hollywood-style romance (Takahashi, 2013; see also Kramsch and Zhu, this volume, for further discussion of the links between language, culture and ELT in the contemporary world).

However, especially (but not only) in Islamic contexts, researchers have noted alarm at the prospect of ELT promoting the global free market in gender and sexuality. In an analysis of essays by Moroccan English majors, Sellami (2006) found negative representations of English-speaking societies. Students portrayed Westerners as “slaves of sex, money, and alcohol” (ibid.: 179), individually seeking pleasure. In response to this cultural threat, ELT professionals in the Middle East have organised *TESOL Islamia*, an organisation with stated goals “to promote ELT in ways that best serve the . . . interests of the Islamic world” (Kumaravadivelu, 2006: 14). In this way, although English is recognised as linguistic capital, it is separated from Western culture. To further explore conflicts relating to values in ELT, in the next section we examine data collected in classroom settings.

Classroom data on conflicting values

In this section, we use classroom observation data to explore value-laden issues that impact ELT. First, we examine comments by California teachers that construct plagiarism as ‘danger’, in juxtaposition with interview and essay data where a student expresses uncertainty about academic citation standards and is found to be quoting without attribution. Then, we analyse discussions in Californian and Chilean classrooms, where competing ideologies of the family affect attitudes toward divorce. All names in this section are pseudonyms, except for researchers Miki and Julia.

Values within the classroom: plagiarism and writing practices

Within contemporary global society, the commodification of language has led to increased attention toward plagiarism in student writing, as an ethical issue based on the social constructs of privatisation and ownership (Thompson and Pennycook, 2008; Bloch, 2012). From this perspective,

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inappropriate use of quoted material becomes metaphorically ‘theft’ or ‘crime’. In classrooms, talking about the ‘dangers’ of plagiarism (see data section below) shows teachers’ participation in the discourse of intellectual property (Bloch, 2012). In reviewing citation practices for writing assignments in Western academic contexts, teachers and students frequently discuss plagiarism in terms of ownership and stealing. Students are always ‘in danger’ of plagiarising, and teachers are positioned ‘to police’ student writing (Anson, 2008). At times the very choice of vocabulary suggests a potential breach of trust between teacher and student (Buzzelli and Johnston, 2002). In observations of two California university writing classrooms conducted in 2012, Miki examined how the issue of plagiarism was presented by teachers to students from a wide variety of linguistic and cultural backgrounds.

Teacher perspectives

For example, Teacher Karla cautioned her students about the slippery slope between paraphrasing and plagiarism:

You have to be really careful when you paraphrase, it’s sort of the most dangerous area for plagiarism. You have to compose your own sentences completely and you have to be careful not to just use the author’s sentence . . . and replace every 4 words or something. That’s called patchwriting and that’s technically plagiarism.

In another classroom, while similarly noting the danger of plagiarism, Teacher Ann emphasised the importance of correct citation:

You also want to say ‘I’ve done my homework. I know what’s out there’ and you want to make sure the bibliographic information is correct so you’re not being accused of plagiarism, which means you’re not giving credit correctly to somebody.

She emphasises the social value of recognising another person’s ideas by explicitly acknowledging them in a text. Such values influence ethical considerations for how to ‘handle’ transgressive acts, with many educational institutions mandating disciplinary sanctions that range from failing grades for essays to expulsion from the academy. However, Karla’s use of ‘technically’ in ‘technically plagiarism’ and Ann’s employment of an agentless passive, ‘being accused of’, suggest distancing from university policies and a lack of commitment to the underlying values that drive them.

To illustrate, during a subsequent interview, Ann explained her recent enforcement of the university plagiarism policy:

And actually I turned someone in for plagiarism in our class. Even after I went over citation two or three times . . . it was more like sloppy citation like, you could tell there was a source but the writer never . . . referenced it at all.

She mentioned this during a discussion about student abilities, where she explained that many students have insufficient knowledge of citation rules. Nevertheless, Ann did report the student, and she explained her decision by saying that she ‘went over citation two or three times’. However, she seemed to be giving something of a ‘confession’: she did not want to turn in the student for plagiarism but found it her duty to enact the ethics of the academy. Teachers in such cases are involved in a conflict of values, the solution to which is not always clear-cut, especially when dealing with English learners.

Student perspectives

With regard to student perspectives, an interview with Alejandro, an L1 Spanish bilingual student from Ann's class, showed that students may share similar values and ethics as the academy but lack the skills to demonstrate these values. In this interview, he discussed the second draft of his essay, in which two sentences were taken directly from a book. Not realising the source of the sentences, Miki, the interviewer, asked why he had put a quotation mark at the end though not at the beginning. Alejandro replied, 'I don't know why I put a quote; it's more kind of like paraphrase' then added, 'I haven't looked up how to cite yet.' The sentences remained citationless in the final draft, and Miki later discovered that Alejandro had copied them directly (thus committing plagiarism). However, this transgression of the rules was only noted as part of her research (Mori, 2014), and she declined to report him.

In a follow-up email, Alejandro said that he preferred to paraphrase rather than quote so as not to 'have to worry about plagiarising'. In Miki's analysis, Alejandro understood the importance of citation, but his drafting practices prevented him from quoting and citing correctly. Like one student chronicled by Thompson and Pennycook, he perhaps "struggled to come to terms with the version of language and knowledge that looked to (him) like the privatization of natural resources rather than the use of shared commodities" (2008: 134).

In the context of plagiarism and writing, neoliberal discourses of language as an individual commodity (Bloch, 2012) or a "privatiz(ed) natural resource" (Thompson and Pennycook, 2008: 134) compete with broader ideas of language as social, learned from others and belonging to no one (Thompson and Pennycook, 2008). In addressing plagiarism, ELT practitioners may want to consider if there is "more value in educating the student than in punishing (him)" (Johnston, 2003: 8), and in doing so, they have to rely on their personal values as well as their knowledge of the particular students' situation. Such cases perhaps call for balancing the ethical perspectives of the institution, the instructor and the students.

Values about a topic: discussing divorce in the classroom

While plagiarism can be seen as primarily an *ethical* issue, with plagiarism prevention policies enacted as a value *within* classrooms at the behest of educational institutions, the next two examples illustrate *moral* conflicts in which values *about* family life are explored in the classroom. The data excerpts highlight the power inequality between teacher and students and, therefore, students' right to remain silent or to make their voice heard (Buzzelli and Johnston, 2002). Julia conducted both of these classroom observations in 2005, the first in California and the second in Chile.

The classroom in California

In the first of these classroom interactions, Melinda, an Anglo teacher of a linguistically and culturally diverse class of adult immigrants in California, led an ESL activity on greeting cards ('Anglo' is a Californian term for a person with European ancestry and an L1 English-speaking background). She started by asking her students when they usually sent greeting cards; as the students listed festive occasions, she added 'divorce' to the list. When several students protested that they had never seen such a card, she erased her suggestion, but then wrote it again, on the top of the list, making it a topic for discussion:

Melinda: What would a card say if it was all about congratulations and divorce?

Students: ((laughing))

- Tina:** I never see that.
Melinda: A lot of people are happy when they get a divorce.
Student: Not all people.
Melinda: Not all people, but some people. What would it say?
Tina: Hurray ((laughing)).
Melinda: Okay.
Tina: I never see that card before. I am still married.
Andre: I saw it.
Melinda: You saw it, Andre? You've seen them?
Andre: Yes.
Melinda: Uh-huh.
Lena: Enjoy, enjoy your single life again.
Melinda: Okay, 'Hurray, enjoy your single life again.' That was pretty good.

Melinda pursued this controversial topic, despite her students' puzzlement at the framing of divorce as a happy occasion. She established her position by stating that 'A lot of people are happy when they get a divorce' (as a teacher, her authority to express an opinion was unquestionable). When a student protested, 'Not all people', she persisted until a student proposed a satisfactory line, after which she changed the topic.

In an interview after the lesson, Melinda stated that she had no plans to talk about divorce and that her motivation for doing so was to 'be goofy', to relieve the boredom of a conventional activity, since students pay better attention to something that is 'a little shocking'. However, she added that she wanted her students to think critically about an issue that 'has a lot of acceptability here, . . . and not necessarily where they're from'. At the same time, we should note that Melinda herself is divorced; in the interview, she stated that she routinely answers students' inquiries of her marital status as being a 'happily divorced woman' (Menard-Warwick, 2013: 112). In light of this information, the class discussion can be seen not only as a conflict of ideologies between contemporary California and 'where the students are from' but also between the teacher's personal values and those of at least some of her students. Melinda's insistence on the fact that 'not all people, but some people' can be happy after a divorce may reflect more than a desire to make students think critically about a value-laden issue; it could also stem from a desire to validate her personal choices. At the same time, Melinda's position of power in the classroom could explain the students' reticence. In any case, her emphasis on the potential benefits of marital dissolution seems to originate from the ideology, widespread in globalised contexts, that individuals are primarily responsible for their own happiness (Hershberg and Rosen, 2006).

The classroom in Chile

In another 2005 observation, Julia saw how the issue of divorce was handled in an EFL class in Chile, where, unlike in Melinda's classroom, the students and teacher all came from similar national, linguistic and cultural backgrounds. The term *moral* in this case is appropriate since the issue of divorce, for some students, is linked to their religious beliefs. A traditionally Catholic society, Chile was the last country in the Western Hemisphere to legalise divorce (Ross, 2004), approximately a year before this observation. Such cultural changes in Chile are widely seen as resulting from globalisation, while English learning has been promoted by the Chilean government as an important means of participation in the globalised world (Menard-Warwick, 2013).

The students in this class were practising English teachers themselves, but *also* English learners, since they were enrolled in a professional development course designed to improve

their speaking skills in the language. Their professor, Genaro, had spent most of his life teaching English in Chile but had earned a doctorate from a US university and was thus familiar with both traditional Chilean and contemporary ‘globalised’ perspectives on gendered issues. The lesson topic was job interviews for schoolteachers, and the students were to engage in role-play. Genaro divided the class in groups and asked them to come up with questions for prospective candidates ‘regarding controversial topics nowadays’. The following dialogues then took place:

1. **Maricela:** Are you married? Do you live with your family?
Paola: I live with my husband and my daughter, and I consider family a very important factor because students need the support of their families.
2. **Sofia:** Are you married, do you have a family?
Carmen: Yes, I am married and I have two boys. I live near the beach.
Sofia: Are you happy?
Carmen: Yes.
3. **Marco:** I am the headmaster here, I am interested in a person to teach our children. What do you think about divorce?
Renate: I believe in the family living together, both mother and father living together. But nowadays life has changed a lot, and everyday we see more and more people divorced and that affect our children very much, and I think there is nothing we can do to avoid it, we have to work and do our best with those children.

(Menard-Warwick, 2013: 213. Reproduced with permission)

It is interesting to note that of the three women roleplaying interviewees, Paola and Renate were separated from their husbands. Therefore, one may wonder about the motives that made them profess belief in traditional family values.

One clear reason was mentioned by Genaro in an after-class interview: the conflict between the women’s lifestyles and what is perceived to be moral by the larger society, where the Catholic Church remains influential.

- Julia:** People have to hide it [being divorced] in an interview like that?
Genaro: No, not necessarily, [. . .] but perhaps if you are going to, if you are applying for a post in a religious school, probably they are going to consider it more carefully, [. . .] for example I remember the first, well it was more than 30 years ago, but anyway, things have changed a lot, [. . .] I began working at the Catholic school run by nuns, and the first question she asked me, even before asking me where I had gotten my degree, was ‘are you married?’

Genaro defended his choice of topic; even though he stated that ‘things have changed a lot’; this emphasis on cultural changes, often connected to gender, emerged as a common theme in Julia’s research (Menard-Warwick, 2013). It is interesting to hear Marco, roleplaying the headmaster, confirm his position by implying a direct relation between the candidate’s family values and the possibility of employment. The three women who played candidates agreed in this mock interview that traditional marriage was an important value for them. While Carmen simply stated that she was happily married, Paola stressed the importance of family support for her students, and Renate brought up the negative effects of divorce on students’ lives (although she avoided mentioning her own marital status).

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In a research interview, Renate articulated her understanding of the effects of family breakdown on her students:

They are not interested in studying [...] most of them come from really poor families [...] single parent, mono-parental in Spanish [...] they spend the whole day alone because the mother or the father is working, [...] I feel they are not interested in learning anything, they just (get) home and turn the television on and watching those stupid programmes they have here.

Therefore, Paola's pretending to be married, as well as Renate's avoidance of the issue during her mock interview, may result from a real moral dilemma: the fact that they do espouse traditional values and that divorce remains a painful topic for them.

Comparing the two classrooms

While Melinda's class discussion illustrates how some teachers try to encourage students to adopt 'liberalised' global values on gender and sexuality, Genaro's roleplay activity reminds us that many English learners are embedded in traditional structures of authority, where open adoption of globalised perspectives remains risky. In any case, like Melinda, Genaro exercises his authority by making his students engage in a value-laden discussion. One may argue that he is motivated by the students' needs, trying to prepare them for real-life job interviews, just as Melinda's students may benefit (she argues) from a clearer understanding of California culture.

However, taken together, the two examples demonstrate that ELT practitioners need to approach topics of moral complexity with utmost care, being aware of the goals that they are trying to achieve while remembering that students may have had painful experiences with issues like divorce. Teachers may be unable to avoid having plagiarism policies, as this represents a value *within* their classrooms; however, it is far rarer for teachers to need classroom policies on issues like divorce (values *about*). Nevertheless, they should consider how best to address controversy in the classroom, as we discuss in the final section of this paper.

Implications, challenges, future directions

In this section, we make recommendations for how educators can best approach value conflicts in their classrooms, while also suggesting directions for future research. Our central argument is that conflicting values in the ELT classroom should be examined and made explicit: we are not arguing for or against neoliberal ideologies; we take no specific position on the Islamic concerns, plagiarism policies or divorce controversies cited above (Kumaravadivelu, 2006; Sellami, 2006; Menard-Warwick, 2013; Mori, 2014). However, we do recommend that teachers critically address their own ideologies and those of the curriculum while integrating sociohistorical considerations into pedagogy.

The self-reflecting teacher

Critical self-reflection while teaching can create a starting place for effectively addressing values in the classroom. Practitioners can begin by considering their upbringing and education, including their training for English language teaching. In our experience, when instructors' deconstruct their personal and educational histories, this creates leverage for teasing apart values in the classroom. We recommend that teachers focus on specific experiences and try to be explicit in

interpreting how these experiences inform their pedagogy. That is, teachers might first ask themselves how they learned academic citation practices or became socialised into particular views on gender and sexuality – and next reflect on the extent to which they can or should promote these perspectives in their current ELT context. In this way, teachers can develop awareness of their own social and cultural identities and the constraints and resources these provide for their teaching (Menard-Warwick, 2013).

In reflecting on their educational practice, teachers also need to consider how values impact the classroom through policies and structures of the educational system – for example, tests and grades. While teachers may have little latitude to change such practices, they nevertheless should ponder the extent to which examinations index a lack of trust or grading reflects the value of individual competition (Buzzelli and Johnston, 2002). Individually or collectively, teachers might consider how policies likewise determine how ideologies and values affect student agency. As Buzzelli and Johnston write, the teacher, as the authority in the classroom, has the power to “make B do something that B would not ordinarily do” (2002: 70). However, these authors emphasise that with authority comes responsibility: teachers need to be sure that they indeed have students’ best interests at heart. In this regard, it is essential that practitioners factor into their reflections the socio-historical characteristics of their particular classroom, such as geographical location, learner goals, local traditions and institutional setting.

Addressing conflicts for values about and values within a classroom

To give an example of a value *within* classroom pedagogies, CLT emphasises the right for students to speak in class, and such a *voice* can create opportunity for *choice* (Buzzelli and Johnston, 2002), discussed earlier as being central to neoliberal intersections with ELT. However, simply advocating free choice does not necessarily lead to voice, as many students have little desire to speak up in classrooms. However, if choice is taken seriously, students must retain the right to be silent. Moreover, if students are seen as having a right to *voice/choice* in the language classroom, the question arises as to whether this voice is (allowed to be) multilingual. An important area to explore with students is the language ideologies in the institution or societal context that shape policies around classroom language use (see also Carroll and Combs, this volume). However, this will only be possible when teachers have first examined their own language ideologies and are able to articulate them (Menard-Warwick, 2013).

To give another example, values *about* gender roles and sexual orientation create controversy in many global contexts, as seen in the divorce discussions above. While explorations of these issues will be most compelling when connected to the social histories of the students, they are often too personal and controversial to simply ask students for their own experiences. Furthermore, teachers need to consider how content and activities in a text are often rife with value-laden and ideological messages regarding what is normal and expected in an English language classroom and/or English medium setting. Aside from divorce, another set of potentially divisive issues revolve around gender identities and the assumed importance of heterosexual coupling (Takahashi, 2013; see also Gray, this volume). To avoid imposing globalised values on their students, we recommend that teachers raise gender issues in ways that connect with students’ own backgrounds but that do not require self-disclosure. A good example is Ó’Móchain’s (2006) use of local ‘queer narratives’ to frame discussions of sexualities in an English class at a Japanese college. This would be a fruitful area for future research.

The complex relationship between language, nationality, race and culture is another site of classroom conflict in need of increased attention by researchers and teachers. Discussions in this area often assume that such categories are valid, fixed and mutually exclusive, so that each

student necessarily represents a particular nationality, race and culture. However, nations can contain multiple races and ethnic groups, such as in China (Han, Tibetan, Uyghur etc.), while any conclusions on ‘Asian culture’ assumes the similarity of three billion people (Chinese, Indian, Japanese etc.) (Kumaravadivelu, 2003). Ideologies around these topics often interact with power dynamics regarding multilingualism, legitimacy and prestige, as well as with the language learning process, such as what gets taught and who participates. Whenever multiple languages and cultures come in contact, teachers are faced with determining the boundaries of acceptable language – especially given many students’ goal to acquire ‘standard’ English as cultural capital in the global marketplace (Menard-Warwick, 2013) or simply to pass high stakes examinations (Canagarajah, 1993).

Considering conflicts and adjusting curriculum

Finally, we recommend that ELT practitioners address the potential conflicts between their own identities as reflective teachers and their students’ socio-historically situated goals for learning. Although teachers vary widely in the amount of control they have over the course curriculum and approach to teaching, they need to feel that they have (some) agency in their classrooms – while at the same time ensuring that their students do as well. To this end, Auerbach (1992) describes a family literacy programme for immigrants in which language development was situated within the larger process of social change in immigrant communities. In these classes, English learners were included in curricular decision-making, while discussion activities aimed to bring oppressive social structures into conscious awareness so that learners could collectively take action for social improvement. This pedagogical method, referred to as the *participatory approach*, stems from the groundbreaking work by Paulo Freire (1999), which emphasises dialogue between teachers, students and texts (see also Simpson, this volume).

While participatory curriculum development is only possible in a few teaching contexts, the emphasis on dialogue, which is its most important feature, is more widely applicable (Kramsch, 1993). To resist tendencies that silence students, we recommend that teachers promote dialogue aimed at problematising values (Kubota, 1999) with the goal of facilitating students’ ability to comprehend value-laden issues from multiple perspectives (Byram et al., 2002). Teachers may worry that such discussions will only reinforce students’ original prejudices, but, in our experience, teacher facilitation can help students broaden their views without necessarily changing them (Menard-Warwick, 2013).

In some classrooms, curricular demands or political situations may make it impossible to problematise controversial issues. Nevertheless, teachers should recognise the value for learners of exploring controversial topics in order to communicate better with individuals from different backgrounds. To draw upon an example from the research literature which we have previously noted, if Moroccan students see English speakers as prototypically “slaves of sex, money, and alcohol” (Sellami, 2006), it is going to be difficult for them to work with the Canadian visiting professor at their university or the Australian tourist who checks into their hotel or hospital. While teachers in such contexts should feel under no obligation to promote ‘mainstream Western values’ on sex, alcohol or financial planning (Canagarajah, 1993), it would be helpful for students who are offended by trends in the global media to understand the diversity of perspectives that exist in English-speaking countries and to realise that it is possible to find points of agreement as well as disagreement with English-speaking individuals.

The utility of this approach to classroom learning and values comes from its recognition of values (and ideologies) and its promotion of possibilities for engaging, challenging and articulating such perspectives. In addressing these issues, teachers might ask opinionated students

to provide evidence for their views, while at the same time providing space for less proficient or outspoken individuals to join in on the reflection (e.g. by the use of their L1 or through journaling). It is not enough to value heated discussions in order to promote speaking practice. Rather, it is essential that discussions of ideologies, morals and ethics promote listening and comprehending and not merely the articulation of strongly held opinions (Kramsch, 1993). Teachers facilitating discussions may want to ask students to respond directly to the comments of other students or to assertions in texts, keeping in mind that the goal is not agreement but rather *understanding* (Byram et al., 2002; Menard-Warwick, 2013). Moreover, given classroom power dynamics, teachers need to recognise that student discomfort or resistance may appear in the form of silence and disengagement. For this reason, the promotion of reflective learning should go beyond addressing controversial issues (values *about*) but more importantly initiate conversations about values *within* teaching and the curriculum.

Conclusion

In sum, the consideration of values, ethics and ideologies in English language teaching is important, and it can be explored along a variety of lines. Given that these topics are challenging and difficult to embark on alone, engaging with other ELT practitioners may help instructors to understand the roles of values and ideologies in their work. Though some groundbreaking research has been done, more practitioners and researchers need to turn their attention to these often taboo and seemingly invisible aspects of English language classrooms. While the term ‘reflective teaching’ has perhaps been overused and used too imprecisely (Fat’hi and Behzadpour, 2011), we argue for increased research on how reflective teaching can inform pedagogical approaches to values in ELT. Therefore, practitioners need to focus not only on particular values in the classroom but also on how research and praxis can lead to a better understanding of values.

Transcription conventions

[...]	Text omitted
[text]	Author’s paraphrase or background information
()	Transcriptionist doubt
(())	Comment on paralinguistic features (e.g. laughter)

Discussion questions

- Consider a memorable classroom interaction that involved conflict. What values were demonstrated via the interaction? If values were discussed, what were they? Was there continuity between values enacted (i.e. observed) in classroom practice and those that were discussed by the students?
- In TESOL Islamia, the stated goal is “to promote ELT in ways that best serve the sociopolitical, sociocultural, and socioeconomic interests of the Islamic world” (Kumaravadivelu, 2006: 14). To what extent is it possible to separate the English language from the Western values associated with it? What are the advantages and disadvantages of doing so?
- What are some (implicit or explicit) language ideologies that you have encountered in language classes that you have taken or in your teacher training? How have these ideologies affected your own teaching?

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- Buzzelli and Johnston discuss a teacher's power to "make B do something that B would not ordinarily do" (2002: 70) with B's best interest in mind. What are some ways for a teacher to persuade students that, in introducing conflicting values, s/he is guided by their best interests?
- How should teachers react when they find their personal values under attack during a classroom interaction? Should their position of power prevent them from voicing their opinion?

Related topics

Bilingual education in a multilingual world; Communicative language teaching in theory and practice; ELT materials; Language and culture in ELT; Politics, power relationships and ELT; Questioning 'English-only' classrooms.

Further reading

- Edge, J. (ed.) (2006) *(Re)locating TESOL in an age of empire*. Houndmills, UK: Palgrave Macmillan. (A provocative collection of papers geared towards ELT practitioners and researchers interested in the impact of English in a globalised and conflicted world.)
- Howard, R. M. and Robillard, A. E. (eds) (2008) *Pluralizing plagiarism: Identities, contexts, pedagogies*. Portsmouth, NH: Boynton/Cook/Heinemann. (A variety of research studies on plagiarism and writing, including proposed pedagogical practices.)
- Johnston, B. (2003) *Values in English language teaching*. New York: Routledge. (The most comprehensive and focused treatment of the topic of this article.)
- Kumaravadivelu, B. (2007) *Cultural globalization and language education*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press. (Thoughtful discussion of the limitations of Western cultural norms for ELT in the age of globalisation.)
- Menard-Warwick, J. (2013) *English language teachers on the discursive faultlines: Identities, ideologies, pedagogies*. Bristol, UK: Multilingual Matters. (Contrasting case studies that examine how English teachers in Chile and California deal with value-laden issues.)

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