The education of teachers of English as a lingua franca: a transformative perspective

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The article responds to the emerging need for a general framework for ELF (English as a lingua franca) teacher education that would appropriately inform and sensitize ESOL (English for speakers of other languages) practitioners about ELF teaching matters. The teacher education model put forward is based on the transformative framework for adult education suggested by Mezirow and has five phases. The framework aims at bringing about the much-needed paradigm shift in postmodern ESOL pedagogy by transforming ESOL teachers' worldviews about English and English language pedagogy and empowering them in bringing about the necessary changes in their own teaching context.

Keywords: English as a lingua franca, teacher education, reflective teaching, transformative learning

Η εργασία ανταποκρίνεται στην αναδυόμενη ανάγκη ανάπτυξης ενός γενικού θεωρητικού πλαισίου για την εκπαίδευση των διδασκάλων τής Αγγλικής ως διεθνούς γλώσσας επικοινωνίας (lingua franca). Σκοπός τού πλαισίου αυτού είναι τόσο η ουσιαστική ενημέρωση όσο και ο βαθύτερος προβληματισμός των διδασκάλων τής Αγγλικής σε ομιλητές άλλων γλωσσών πάνω σε θέματα που άπτονται τής διδασκαλίας τής Αγγλικής ως lingua franca. Το μοντέλο εκπαίδευσης το οποίο προτείνεται εδώ βασίζεται στο μετασχηματιστικό πλαίσιο εκπαίδευσης ενηλίκων τού Jack Mezirow και χωρίζεται σε πέντε στάδια. Το πλαίσιο αποσκοπεί στο να επιφέρει την πολυαναμενόμενη μετατόπιση παραδείγματος στη μετανεωτερική παιδαγωγική επιστήμη τής διδακτικής τής Αγγλικής ως ξένης γλώσσας μέσω τού μετασχηματισμού των κοσμοθεωρήσεων που έχουν διαμορφώσει οι διδάσκοντες την Αγγλική σχετικά με γλωσσολογικά όσο και αμιγώς παιδαγωγικά ζητήματα. Απώτερος στόχος είναι η ενδυνάμωση των διδασκόντων ως προς την συνειδητοποιημένη αναγνώριση από μέρους τους των απαραίτητων αλλαγών που πρέπει να επιφέρουν στο δικό τους διδακτικό περιβάλλον.

Λέξεις κλειδιά: Αγγλική ως διεθνής γλώσσα επικοινωνίας (lingua franca), εκπαίδευση καθηγητών Αγγλικής, ανακλαστική διδασκαλία, μετασχηματιστική μάθηση

Introduction

The spread of English on a global scale has greatly impacted ESOL research. In the past few years, such research has provided vital information on the use of English by international (or 'non-native') users around the world (Crystal 2003; Graddol 1997, 2006). It has concentrated on areas such as the sociolinguistics of English as a global, international or world language (Melchers and Shaw 2003) and raised issues that emerge from international and intercultural communication via English, such as the ownership of the language by its users (Widdowson 1994) or the processes involved in the negotiation and projection of their identity (Pavlenko and Blackledge 2004). Some studies have shed light on the historical processes that contributed to bringing about the global character of English (Phillipson 1992, 2003; Pennycook 1994, 1998; Brutt-Griffler 2002), while others have focused on the shifting roles of 'native' speakers (NSs) and 'non-native' speakers (NNSs) (Leung, Harris and Rampton 1997; Davies 2002), the nature of standard language (Widdowson 2003; Crystal 2003; papers in Rubdi and Saraceni 2006), or the attitudes and beliefs of learners and teachers around the world regarding different aspects of this phenomenon (e.g. Sifakis and Sougari 2005; Timmis 2002).[1]

Despite the fact that reference to the international use and influence of English has been around in the ESOL literature for the past thirty years (Smith 1976), the vast complexities of the issue are still very "new" and far from resolved. This is probably why there is still a lot of debate concerning basic terminology (see e.g. the discussion on the proper terming of the different facets of NNS English in Seidlhofer 2004: 210ff.). Nevertheless, a lot of research in the past few years is providing increasing evidence of lingua franca discourse (Mauranen 2003) that gives important insights into ELF lexicogrammar (Seidlhofer 2001, 2004), pronunciation (Jenkins 2000) and pragmatics (House 1999). There are also substantial contributions on teaching (McKay 2002; Pennycook 1999) and language teaching policy (e.g. Canagarajah 1999, 2005; Phillipson 2003).

While there is a great deal of information on the international spread of English, there seems to be much less debate regarding the education of teachers who would be interested in teaching English as a lingua franca (ELF), i.e. English intended for communication mainly between non-native users (Jenkins 2006a: 169; Sifakis 2004). Nevertheless, the demand for a comprehensive orientation for ELF teacher development is increasing (see e.g. Jenkins 2005; Seidlhofer 2004; Snow, Kamhi-Stein and Brinton 2006, papers in Gnutzmann and Intemann 2005). No specific proposals have been made to date (but see Seidlhofer 1999), as prominent ELF scholars such as Jenkins and Seidlhofer seem to believe that more data should be gathered before specific suggestions for teacher education are put forward. While this is certainly true, current ELF research already raises issues that could challenge many established beliefs and preconceptions of ESOL practitioners,

and this is unlikely to change with more research. There is an eminent need for a general framework for ELF teacher education that would inform and sensitize ESOL practitioners about ELF matters.

Such a need becomes clear when one considers, for example, the disagreement between Quirk and Kachru concerning the meaning and importance of Standard English and the role of native speakers that took place in 1990–91 on the pages of *English Today* (Quirk 1990; Kachru 1991; for a presentation of the controversy, see Seidlhofer 2003). There are further examples of a mismatch between what ESOL teachers seem to believe about the English that they teach to non-native learners and the competences and abilities that they believe these learners need when communicating with other non-native users (see e.g. the research presented in Sifakis and Sougari 2005). What current research shows is that, when it comes to actual teaching concerns, most ESOL practitioners around the world seem to share the more traditional, established beliefs regarding the importance of a single variety (usually British English or General American) for their teaching situation.

It comes as no surprise, therefore, that all this research has reduced, to some extent, some teachers' and materials designers' prioritization of the native-speaker element but "has not so far led to noticeable changes in English teaching and teacher education policy" (Jenkins 2006a: 169). According to Seidlhofer, raising teachers' awareness about ELF-oriented issues and preparing them for the complex decisions they have to make should be a major, and far from easy to achieve, concern for teacher educators:

> Teachers of English need to understand the implications of the unprecedented spread of the language and the complex decisions they will be required to take. While in a traditional foreign language teaching framework it has been possible to rely on fairly clear and stable norms and goals, these certainties have been called into question by the recognition of the global lingua franca role English has to serve. As a result, the teaching of English is going through a truly postmodern phase in which old forms and assumptions are being rejected while no new orthodoxy can be offered in their place. This state of affairs makes the familiar distinction between education and training more relevant than ever: Rather than just being trained in a restricted set of pre-formulated techniques for specific teaching contexts, teachers will need a more comprehensive education which enables them to judge the implications of the ELF phenomenon for their own teaching contexts and to adapt their teaching to the particular requirements of their learners. Such teacher education would foster an understanding of the processes of language variation and change, the relationship between language and identity, the importance of social-psychological factors in intercultural communication and the suspect nature of any supposedly universal solutions to pedagogic problems. (Seidlhofer 2004: 227–8)

In view of the above, ELF teacher education should stand for a radical change in the worldviews of ESOL teachers. To achieve this, it is my position here that a truly transformative approach to ELF teacher education is called for. By 'transformative', I am referring to teachers' need to confront and change a whole range of long-held and deeply rooted viewpoints on many levels concerning: the importance of Standard English, the role of native speakers and the negotiation of non-native speakers' identities in cross-cultural communication; the imposition of an imperialistic attitude permeating ESOL course design and pedagogy (Phillipson 1992); and the particular pedagogical decisions that need to be made (Sifakis 2004). For such a transformation to occur, mere exposure to and awareness of the relevant literature will not be enough. It should also involve a seriously critical outlook and a reflective overview of past learning experiences and previous and current teaching (i.e. curricular and pedagogical) situations (Freeman and Johnson 1998). It goes without saying that, for such a transformation to be successful, it is likely to be time-consuming and far from easy (Holliday 2005). Teachers will be expected to become exposed to excerpts of authentic lingua franca communication and understand for themselves the processes involved.

In following a transformative approach to ELF teacher education, I am adopting the perspective put forward in the transformative learning framework of Jack Mezirow. Mezirow's theory of *transformative* (or, as it is sometimes called, *transformational*) *learning* builds on and expands Freire's (1970) emancipatory model of *social transformation* and Boyd's (1991) analytical *transformative education* perspective. It has been implemented in many diverse domains that involve adult learning, which vary from peacemaking to AIDS education, and from social justice to spiritual education (see case studies in Mezirow and Associates 2000). It has also been extensively adopted in many programs in adult ESOL literacy and numeracy (e.g. Comings, Garner and Smith 2004) and cultural awareness (e.g. Silver, Klyne and Simard 2003), and to some extent in ESOL teacher education (e.g. Pickering 2003; Crosby 2004). It aims at bringing participants to confront and change their established viewpoints about a particular issue by providing hands-on information and asking them to (a) realize and critically examine their assumptions, (b) openly explore new terrains by trying new roles, (c) plan a course of action, (d) acquire knowledge and skills for implementing that plan, (d) build self-confidence in the new roles, and (e) become reintegrated on the basis of conditions dictated by the new perspective.

The proposed perspective is viewed within the broad teacher education framework put forward by Freeman and Johnson (1998). It integrates current theorizing in ESOL action research and critical social theory (Fairclough 1989; Pennycook 2001) and adopts the model of narrative reconstruction of teachers' experiences suggested by Golombek (1998). It will be argued that transformative learning in ELF teacher education will result not only in

whole-hearted engagement with the issues raised in ELF research but also in participants' essential empowerment as users of English and as pedagogues. Such an approach to teacher education will have great experimental and research interest in that it can contribute substantial information on teachers' varied practices in different local contexts, ultimately helping to establish an ELF teacher community of practice (Lave and Wenger 1991; Johnson 2006).

In what follows, I first present a brief overview of the ELF situation, followed by a list of concerns that should problematize an ELF teacher education program. I then present an overview of reflective learning and action research procedures and discuss the transformative model for adult learning put forward by Mezirow. I further problematize the necessity of integrating the transformative learning perspective for ELF teacher education programs and put forward a preliminary model of ELF teacher education. Throughout this discussion I will refrain from using the terms 'training' and 'trainer', as these tend to bring to mind a much more rigid process than the one I am referring to here. I will instead be using the terms 'education' (to refer to the transformative learning process in action), 'educator' (to refer to the organizer, leader or facilitator of this process) and 'participant' (to refer to the teacher-practitioner going through the transformative process).

English as a lingua franca – basic considerations

This is not the place to present a full theory of ELF. Interested readers can consult the exhaustive discussions in Jenkins (2006a), Seidlhofer (2004) and McKay (2002). For our purposes, it should suffice to say that ELF refers to the (mainly spoken) English used in communication among the so-called 'non-native' users of the language. Such communication raises issues that can be broadly distinguished into two categories: those that are immediately evident by looking at samples of ELF discourse (let us call those *primary*), and those that require more extensive awareness of communication and attitudinal, cultural, policy-related, history-related and pedagogical concerns (let us call those *secondary*).

The primary issues raise mainly linguistic and communication concerns that bear upon ELF discourse itself. This covers elements of the ELF lexicogrammar such as the non-use of the third person singular marker, the use of all-purpose question tags, and the heavy reliance on verbs of high semantic generality (for more extensive lists, see Seidlhofer 2004: 220 and Jenkins 2006a: 170). It also includes generalizations about the pragmatics of ELF regarding, for example, the importance of intelligible discourse and the scarcity of misunderstandings or L1 interference, the use of communication strategies such as rephrasing and repetition, and the overall mutually supportive cooperation among interlocutors (Seidlhofer 2004: 218).

The secondary issues raise more general concerns (cf. Seidlhofer 2004: 214; Jenkins 2006a):

- the hegemonic role of the native speaker of English;
- the notion of Standard English vis-à-vis the different 'types' of English found around the world (e.g. global English, World Englishes, World English, indigenized English as an international language, English for intercultural communication);
- the "legitimacy of variation in different communities of use" (Seidlhofer 2004: 214), its usefulness in communication among non-native users and the negotiation of language users' identities;
- the imperialistic characteristics of ESOL policies and pedagogies (Phillipson 1992; Pennycook 1998);
- the widely different ESOL teaching situations found around the world (English for testing, English for specific purposes, English for young learners, etc.) vis-à-vis methodological approaches (emphasis on correctness, e.g. Doughty and Williams 1998) and learners' needs;
- implications for literacy (McKay 2002: 125ff) and testing (Jenkins 2006b).

Reflective teaching and transformative learning

Reflective teaching and action research

The great advantage of integrating adult education models in ESOL (and ELF) teacher education is that the implementation of these models can prompt us to realize, review and change the uncritically assimilated beliefs, judgments and feelings that we may have about key issues in our pedagogy (Johnson 2006). This is the aim of autonomous and reflective teaching that is grounded in Dewey's (1933: 9) definition of reflection as the "active, persistent and careful consideration of any belief or supposed form of knowledge in the light of the grounds that support it and the further conclusions to which it tends". Reflection does not simply consist of a series of steps or processes that teachers should use but "is a holistic way of meeting and responding to problems, a way of being as a teacher . . . that involves more than logical and rational problem-solving processes . . . intuition, emotion, and passion" (Zeichner and Liston 1996: 9).

Dewey identified the basic characteristics of the reflective teacher-educator to be open-mindness, whole-heartedness and responsibility (see also Schön 1983). Knowing particular subject-matter does not guarantee that it will be applied or taught efficiently, which is why teachers should actively examine their practices, self-assess their teaching and evaluation techniques, keep abreast of and try out new ideas. The process of appreciating, acting and re-appreciating their practice (Schön 1983, 1987; Jay and Johnson 2002) can also lead to effective educational and social change (Elliott 1991; Greenwood and Levin 1998).

In the TESOL field, these processes have been integrated in the action research models adopted by the emerging L2 teacher research movement

(Edge 2001; Freeman 1998; Wallace 1998), which stresses the importance of active reflection and collaboration in ESOL pedagogy (Burns 1999; Freeman and Richards 1996) and implements a variety of instruments (Mackey and Gass 2005; Richards and Lockhart 1994; Richards and Nunan 1990) as a means of achieving teacher autonomy (Little 1995). As we saw above, in the ELF domain many well-established beliefs and pedagogical practices are under scrutiny. While there is as yet no definitive ELF pedagogy, it is certain that a more radical approach to teacher education is called for that would integrate the reflective and action research frameworks described above to help ELF teachers appreciate the issues involved in ELF discourse and work autonomously towards a reconceptualization of their worldviews about ESOL teaching.

In the rest of the article, I present a framework for ELF teacher education that prioritises active reflection, based on Mezirow's model of transformative learning.

Mezirow's 'transformative learning'

This theory was first introduced by Jack Mezirow in 1978 and has since evolved "into a comprehensive and complex description of how learners construe, validate, and reformulate the meaning of their experience" (Cranton 1994: 22). Based partly on psychoanalytic theory (Boyd and Fales 1983) and partly on critical social theory (Mezirow 1989), the transformative learning model breaks down the adult mind into sets of habits and expectations that have been formed as a result of experience over time.

These habits and expectations are of two types. On the one hand, they are what Mezirow calls *meaning schemes*, which are "made up of specific knowledge, beliefs, value judgments, and feelings that constitute interpretations of experience" (Mezirow 1991: 5–6). Meaning schemes are tangible determinants of particular views or behaviors that inform our evaluation of and reaction to all kinds of different life events, (e.g. a musical concert, someone's joke or a particular governmental policy). They are tangible in the sense that they are "known" to us and can therefore be consciously monitored by us, and are easy to change in the sense that an individual can add to or integrate experiences and ideas within an existing scheme. On the other hand, they are what Mezirow calls *meaning perspectives* or *frames of reference*, which refer to higher-order

> sets of habitual expectation . . . created by ideologies, learning styles, neurotic self-deceptions [and] constitute codes that govern the activities of perceiving, comprehending, and remembering [by providing us with] criteria for judging or evaluating right and wrong, bad and good, beautiful and ugly, true and false, appropriate and inappropriate. (Mezirow 1991: 4, 44)

As meaning perspectives constitute "the structure of assumptions and expectations through which we filter sense impressions" (Mezirow 2000: 16), their transformation leads to transformative learning and, due to the demanding processes involved, takes time. Our immediate beliefs and expectations (meaning schemes) can continue to change while our overall worldview (frame of reference) remains unaltered. To return to ESOL, teachers can easily recognize the need for intelligibility in NNS–NNS communication (and other primary features of ELF discourse) but may refuse to change their established teaching practices with their own learners (Sifakis and Sougari 2005). Teachers' worldviews about ESOL pedagogy may be shaped by many factors, e.g. their previous learning and teaching experience, learners' needs, sponsors' interests, local culture, and inherent beliefs about their role as custodians of Standard English (Widdowson 2002).

When meaning schemes and meaning perspectives are found to be inadequate in accommodating some life experience, the transformative process can be used as a means of prompting the emergence of new schemes and new perspectives that would be "more inclusive, discriminating, open, emotionally capable of change, and reflective" (Mezirow 2000: 7). In order for the new schemes and perspectives to emerge, it is necessary for adults to engage in critical reflection regarding their values, beliefs, and assumptions:

> Reflective learning involves assessment or reassessment of assumptions. Reflective learning becomes transformative whenever assumptions or premises are found to be distorting, inauthentic, or otherwise invalid. Transformative learning results in new or transformed meaning schemes or, when reflection focuses on premises, transformed meaning perspectives. (Mezirow 1991: 6)

In order for transformative learning to occur, adults should engage in "greater autonomy in thinking" (Mezirow 2000: 29). This cannot be achieved by simply making them aware of a particular problem or by prompting them to experience it. It is necessary to also involve them in critically reflecting on that experience and critiquing their established ways of defining a problem (Mezirow 1998: 186). It is important to point out that, despite Mezirow's methodical attempts to model the entire transformative process in a comprehensive way, it can only be experienced at the implementation phase. Such a process is quite demanding, can vary widely from individual to individual, and can have different results in different practitioners. This means that all the "weight" of the transformative model falls on the participant-practitioner rather than on the training methodology as such. For this reason, the implementation phase in this context has all the characteristics and demands of reflective education, which are usually far removed from what we have come to expect from our typical short-term teacher training seminars.

Mezirow (1991: 107–8) distinguished between three types of reflection on experience. The first, *content reflection*, focuses on the actual experience itself,

i.e. our very perceptions, thoughts, feelings and actions that bring to life that experience. For example, deciding that Standard English is the ideal model for our learners is the outcome of a series of mental processes (what Mezirow calls a 'thoughtful action', 1991: 107) that are based on personal experience or prior learning. The second type, *process reflection*, addresses the ways in which an experience is worked upon in our mind and involves examining our perceptions, thoughts, feelings and actions and assessing their efficacy. For example, we might reconsider the circumstances that led to our forming the impression that Standard English is the ideal model. Finally, *premise reflection* involves careful reviewing of the foundations of our perceptions, thoughts, feelings and actions by referring, when necessary, to long-held, socially constructed assumptions, beliefs, and values about a particular experience or problem. It means seriously questioning whether 'standard' and 'ideal model' are adequate, appropriate or fair concepts for understanding communication in English among NNSs.

According to Mezirow (1998), it is only by engaging in the latter type of reflection that adult learners foster transformative learning. Such reflection refers to assumptions that we have concerning ourselves ('narrative'), the cultural systems in which we live ('systemic'), our workplace ('organizational'), our ethical decision making ('moral-ethical') and our feelings and dispositions ('therapeutic'). The transformative process "always involves critical reflection upon the distorted premises sustaining our structure of expectation" (Mezirow 1991: 167).

In the adult education domain, transformative learning means engaging in a series of processes that merge all three types of reflection mentioned above and culminate in premise reflection (Mezirow 2000). Participants in adult education programmes respond to a variety of tasks that prompt them to bring their assumptions concerning that experience or problem to the fore and then critically reflect on and assess those assumptions. The aim of these tasks is the "fundamental questioning and reordering of how one thinks or acts" (Brookfield 2000: 139). The whole process is triggered by participants experiencing an initial problem or "disorienting dilemma" that makes them aware of certain thoughts and feelings they may have concerning a particular experience or problem. At this stage, the learner engages in self-examination that is often accompanied by "feelings of fear, anger, guilt or shame" (Mezirow 2000: 22). In the next stages, learners are asked to critically examine these reactions, share their feelings with the rest of the group, explore possibilities for adopting new roles, relationships and actions, and plan a course of action that would help them build up competence and self-confidence in their new roles and relationships. The final stage of the transformative process calls for a reintegration of the new perspective into the participants' life and practice. It is essential that participants act upon that new perspective and do not merely critically reflect on these new ideas (Taylor 1998). If the process is successfully fulfilled, transformative learning leads to the participant's autonomy, self-learning and, ultimately, empowerment.

In order for transformative learning to occur, participants should engage in rational and reflective discourse. Rational discourse is that specialized use of dialogue devoted to searching for an understanding and assessment of the justification of an interpretation or belief. It involves assessing reasons advanced by weighing the supporting evidence and arguments and by examining alternative perspectives. Reflective discourse involves a critical assessment of assumptions. It leads toward a clearer understanding by tapping collective experience to arrive at a tentative best judgment (Mezirow 2000: 10–11). In order for such discourse to be effective, it is important for learners to have complete information at hand, be able to evaluate arguments freely and objectively (Merriam 2004: 62–3) and "offer a perspective about their own perspective" (Mezirow 2003: 61).

Such mental activity can be quite heavy-going and time-consuming, in the sense that it involves the engagement of learners' "whole self" in the search for "a common understanding and assessment of the justification of an interpretation or belief". This also "involves assessing reasons advanced by weighing the supporting evidence and arguments and by examining alternative perspectives" (Mezirow 1995: 53), and coming to terms with deeply rooted beliefs that were never before questioned. Because it is demanding, it requires a certain willingness on the part of the adult learner to carry out such a search and the cognitive maturity to "set aside bias, prejudice, and personal concerns . . . to arrive at a consensus" (Mezirow 2000: 10). Discussing and evaluating participants' beliefs and experiences through rational discourse will be their vehicle to transforming their meaning perspectives. Critical reflection of this demanding type means engaging in "some sort of power analysis" that involves "hegemonic assumptions" (Brookfield 2000: 126).

Studies of transformative learning have established the importance of the group's cohesion in prompting participants to fully engage in rational and reflective discourse (see e.g. Taylor 2000). The role of the educator as facilitator is also central, including in helping participants "break down the hegemony of dominant interests" and "strengthen the legitimacy of popular groups and their capacity to take on those power structures" (Arnold et al. 1991: 134). In this sense, transformative pedagogy draws on key concerns of social justice, cultural studies and power analyses found in the discourses of anthropology, education and sociology (Giroux et al. 1996; Rees 1991).

Transformative learning and ELF teacher education

What makes Mezirow's paradigm an interesting suggestion for ELF teacher education is that it identifies effective learning not merely with using reflective practice and action research in order to improve one's efficiency in teaching, but with engaging with it in a way that will change one's perspectives about its subject-matter (in our case, understanding and preparing for teaching ELF).

The demands and challenges of such a transformative programme would be great for everyone involved in it. It is likely that different teachers will have strong viewpoints about these issues and that these reactions will bring forth elements of their linguistic insecurity (Labov 1966), which will have to be further explored and analyzed. It has been reported that even proponents of ELF may find it quite difficult to fully embrace certain ELF tenets (this phenomenon has been termed 'linguistic schizophrenia' by Seidlhofer; for some examples, see Jenkins 2005).

As the success of this project would almost wholly depend on the implementation of the transformative process, it is imperative that participant selection in these programs is carefully organized. Prospective ELF teachers should be willing to find out more about ELF and World English and be open to change. Good participant selection will also ensure group cohesion. There are further practical concerns. For example, if the training sessions take place away from teachers' home bases, it should be ensured that teachers know how to keep their transformative experience alive and are able to continue with their action research when they return home.

With these concerns in mind, the transformative approach raises the following questions for ELF teacher education (also see Carr and Kemmis 1986; Christenson et al. 2002; Ponte, Beijarda and Ax 2004):

* The engagement of participants with real problems in real time: Do ELF participant teachers consider that the ELF concerns constitute a "real" issue that is worth considering?
* The combination of theoretical and practical knowledge with an aim towards applying and developing specialized educational knowledge: What theoretical and what practical knowledge has been gathered in the field of ELF? Who wants to teach ELF? Who wants to learn ELF?
* The combination of personal and collective knowledge (the need for each participant to learn through their own experience and through the experience of others): What do participants know about ELF teaching? Have they ever tried to teach it? If they want to teach it, what has stopped them?
* The development of a democratic and participatory environment in the ELF education class: Who is "eligible" to become an ELF teacher?
* The essential autonomy of participants and the transformation of their teaching and learning practice: To what extent are participants expected (or, indeed, allowed) to integrate their ELF teaching skills and knowledge in their own teaching situation?

A preliminary framework of ELF teacher education

Transformative learning does not necessarily require ESOL teachers to completely and immediately change their worldview about English and their professional role in their familiar teaching context. What it offers is a

framework that enables teachers to become actively aware of the complicated issues that ELF research raises and their implications for communication and pedagogy. Throughout all phases of this process, participants are prompted to critically analyse and reflect, and to become skilful participants in open and uncensored communication, dialogue, deep listening and networking with their colleagues. Let us consider each phase in more detail.

Phase 1: Preparation

Before the start of the actual session, participants are asked to respond to some questions concerning their own professional background, studies and interests. They are also asked to briefly sketch how they use English, which skills are usually involved (e.g. some may use it to send emails, others to chat with their friends on the phone), who they use it with (native or non-native users) and for what reasons (e.g. to attend conferences or just to teach English). The questions can be answered following Golombek's (1998) narrative orientation. Their purpose is to help the educator form a comprehensive idea not only of individual participants but of how coherent participant groups can be formed.

Although these questions are not supposed to go any further than gathering preliminary information about the participants' teaching experience and use of English, they can also touch upon issues that will be raised in the seminar. Participants can be asked to engage in content reflection by, for example, giving their definition of the notion of 'error' in the use of English, saying whether they are at all conscious of such errors when they use English and what kind of errors those are (e.g. communication-oriented errors target comprehensibility while language-oriented errors target grammar, use of lexis, pronunciation, etc.). The aim here is nothing more than to get a first response from the participants that will be expanded upon later. Once the group sessions begin, these responses will provide the raw material for further discussion and exploration of the issues raised in the training sessions.

Phase 2: Identifying the primary issues of ELF discourse

At this stage, educators get to know one another (by using typical ice-breaking techniques) and engage in content reflection, i.e. slowly become aware of both (a) what is involved in ELF communication and (b) their own interpretations of and reactions to it. This is an important, yet subtle, phase because it aims at involving participants in the discovery of ELF, sensitizing them about the primary issues involved and preparing them for the more extensive, secondary issues that it raises. For this reason, the methodology adopted here should carefully consider participants' backgrounds and needs, the local ESOL tradition, etc.

Participants are exposed to extensive excerpts of authentic spoken ELF discourse. The idea here is to integrate elements of the international character of English usage, which involves examples of as many forms of NNS–NNS communication as possible. Depending on the case, samples of NNS–NS and even NS–NS communication can also be integrated as it can shed light on interesting communication-oriented differences (Chun et al. 1982). Spoken discourse is usually in audio form only, but it will significantly help if it is in audiovisual form, where participants can also see the interlocutors. If the educator has access to different types of discourse, it is useful to select as varied examples as possible (e.g. NNSs from all over the world and NS examples incorporating standard and non-standard dialects). Educators can also integrate material from published ELF corpora. Alternatively, if such material is unavailable or inaccessible, the educator can use the participants themselves as providers of ELF data.[2]

Once the material is collected, it is distributed to groups of participants, who must listen to or view different sections of it and transcribe them. While transcribing, participants are asked to write down their thoughts and reactions concerning the ELF discourse (this of course will work better if the participants are different nationalities). Their transcriptions and notes are gathered and discussed in groups. Transcription is important here, as it will give participants the time necessary to carefully consider fragments of ELF discourse and start reflecting on it.

Participants should take time to consider each discourse excerpt separately and discuss not only its linguistics-specific characteristics (e.g. use of grammar and lexis) but also its communication-specific parameters (e.g. who is involved, what the topic is, etc.). The following questions can be set at this stage:

- On first hearing the discourse, what was your initial reaction to such communication? What made you "happy" or "unhappy" about it? (Participants' sense of norm-boundness is expected to emerge here, but elements concerning comprehensibility might also come up.)
- What problems did you have in transcribing the discourse? (Participants are asked to concentrate on issues that relate to the language used, e.g. pronunciation, grammar, use of lexis, rather than technical problems.)
- Which strengths and weaknesses did you find in the communication? (e.g. language competence levels, accommodation capabilities of different interlocutors, etc.)
- Did you consider the communication successful? What elements in the interlocutors' discourse made it successful/not successful? (Participants are asked to shift their focus from language-centered to communication-centered issues.)
- To what extent do you think that such discourse deviates from a certain norm? To what extent do you consider these deviations to be important? Why are they important?

- How would you improve that discourse?
- In you opinion, how extensively is such discourse used today around the world?

Participants are expected to discuss and realize how ELF works by carrying out a form of discourse analysis of these excerpts. In this process, they go through three steps. It is expected that they will initially have a lot more to say about the linguistics-specific characteristics of a discourse excerpt; they should be left to exhaust their views on those issues. Next they should be prompted to look deeper into the pragmatics of each excerpt. They can be asked to describe the communication situation as fully and comprehensively as possible by referring to who is involved, what the topic of the conversation is, and participants' communication strategies.[3] Finally, participants will focus on noting down their own reactions, attitudes or judgments regarding all the above characteristics of each discourse excerpt. For example, they may have strong preferences for certain NS accents and be judgmental about possible grammar, vocabulary and pragmatic errors made by NNSs and NSs with other accents/dialects.

In Mezirow's terms, these steps aim at making participants aware of their own meaning schemes, i.e. their implicit views regarding the primary issues involved in ELF teaching. This process involves content reflection, in that it invokes participants' thoughts, feelings and actions that are related to experiencing these discourse excerpts.

Phase 3: Raising awareness of secondary issues in ELF discourse

In this stage, participants are asked to read selected articles or chapters on ELF that (a) problematize the primary elements involved and (b) debate the ELF case for the secondary elements. In this way, participants gain a more comprehensive understanding of the ELF issues that are immediately and easily discernible and refer to linguistic and communication concerns, while being slowly and progressively introduced to those that require deeper and more localized reflection. Depending on the situation, it should be possible to progressively integrate, for example, readings from the history of English as a global language, Jenkins' lingua franca core, the World Standard English orientation (e.g. Crystal 2003) and research on native speakers (Brutt-Griffler and Samimi 2001) with material from post-colonial studies and critical discussions regarding policy issues (e.g. Canagarajah 1999, 2005).

Group work here is extremely important. For example, participants from Europe can reflect on the policies supporting societal multilingualism and individual plurilingualism put forward by the European Union and the Council of Europe in the light of the elevated role of lingua franca English (Seidlhofer 2004: 221; Phillipson 2003). Another strategy would be to allocate the key readings to different participant groups and ask them to present

them to the entire class. Even though not every possible issue involved in the ELF debate will be covered, it is important that participants become immersed in the complexity and inter-relatedness of those secondary issues that interest them – it is the only way they will make sense of them and perhaps reach some tangible realizations. If these discussions are to be truly critical and reflective, they should relate the ELF readings to the issues that arose from the previous phase, i.e. participants' perceptions about ELF discourse.

If properly administered, this phase is very likely to result in making participants realize, probably for the first time in their professional lives, the true dimensions of the matter at hand (this would correspond to Mezirow's 'disorienting dilemma' stage). They might, for example, feel that they themselves have overemphasized the importance of native speakers of English. On the other hand, they might choose not to "take sides" on the matter at that particular moment. What is important is that they will have seriously reflected on the key issues of the ELF debate by relating them to their own very personal and familiar way of looking at English. The educator's role is to facilitate participants' reflection and not try to influence or force their decisions.

Phase 4: ELF and pedagogy

As the sessions progress, the issues discussed will start to become more and more centered around participants' individual teaching situations, and influences and choices that have formed their professional identity. Following a narrative orientation, participants should be prompted to extensively reflect on the elements that have helped them form their professional identity. Questions to pose include: What made me choose this profession? What are its rewards and difficulties? How autonomous have I been/am I in what I do? To what extent am I happy with my progress? What are my aspirations for the future? What kind of learners have I taught? What were their motivational levels? How effective at communicating were/are they? Which teaching methods have I been using/do I use?

Participants are expected to become fully aware of their own meaning perspectives about English and ESOL pedagogy and engage in process and premise reflection. This can be achieved by asking them to reflect on video/audio recordings of their classes (if available), teaching processes, the curricular situation, textbooks used, learner assessment and testing, and learners' needs. It is important for them to understand why they teach what they teach and why they teach it the way they do. Also, their roles and expected professional behaviors inside and outside the classroom should be discussed. This may involve, for example, what/how their learners, employers and learners' sponsors expect them to teach and assess, or how important their role as guardians of Standard English is for them, their learners and local

society. These issues are likely to raise further discussion on the ethics of an ELF pedagogy for participants' specific teaching contexts, i.e. whether it is ethical, and to what extent it is safe, for them to change their meaning perspectives about English and ESOL teaching. In each case, it is important that such reflection slowly builds on material gathered from previous phases.

Phase 5: Formulating an ELF action plan

Once participants are aware of all the major issues involved in ELF discourse and pedagogy and have grasped the implications for their own teaching context, they should be ready to put that knowledge into practice by designing, implementing and evaluating an ELF action plan. Such a plan would integrate instruments from current ESOL research with the difference that the basis for action would be the ELF principles as participants understand them. In this way, participant teachers are reintegrated into their own practice and are prompted to implement the new ELF perspective where necessary. It is important that teachers have a full understanding of what is involved in ELF, as they may have to use many of the transformative techniques that they themselves have experienced with their own learners.

Conclusion

In this article, I have put forward a five-phase framework for ELF teacher education based on Mezirow's transformative adult learning paradigm. The framework aims at enabling ESOL practitioners to become fully aware of the characteristics and challenges that ELF discourse and teaching engender and, essentially, open up to change by realizing and transforming their worldviews and perspectives about ESOL teaching. This is achieved in many ways: exploring authentic ELF discourse, reading the ELF bibliography, reflecting on their own feelings, reactions, attitudes to ELF (and its principles), confronting preconceived notions in their own teaching/testing environment (geographical, cultural, societal), ultimately exploring and projecting their role as ELF teachers and educators. A basic assumption of such an approach is that mere description of the established theories and analyses of the ELF case is not enough, as it may oversimplify the issues and lead to reinforcing existing stereotypes. It is important for teachers in different parts of the world to become immersed in ELF, become fully aware of its primary and secondary features, and actively reflect on the issues that emerge by relating them to their own experiences, beliefs and teaching contexts.

The transformative framework for ELF teacher education raises some further concerns that were beyond the scope of this article. For example, what right does teacher education have to plan for teachers' perspective

transformation? How responsible is teacher education for those changed by the perspective transformation (see e.g. Courtenay et al. 2000)? It is important that trained ELF teachers become the "owners" of the new communicative and pedagogical paradigm for their learners and wider society, but where will that lead them professionally? Since perspective transformation refers to deeply rooted assumptions and beliefs, it is necessary to adopt training techniques that are relevant to each individual teaching culture (see Nisbett 2003, in Mezirow 2004). What is more, it is likely that the expectations of different ELF teacher education seminars will vary from place to place, as there are cultures that tend to cast more emphasis on knowledge of native-speaker English (e.g. Kay 2006).

Notes

1. For a recent review of the issues involved in lingua franca and World English, see Jenkins (2006a).
2. This can be done in various ways, but it is important for the educator to record or videotape as relaxed and communication-bound a discourse as possible. To that end, special ELF discourse sessions can be organized, e.g. small parties where participants can mingle and chat in English (they could actually be part of the ice-breaking procedures that take place at the beginning of training – as participants do not know each other, they have to get used to each other's discourse habits). The recording/video quality will not be high but it should not obstruct participants from following the discourses.
3. Significant information on these issues can be found in the work of Dornyei and Thurrell (1991) and Dornyei and Kormos (1998). Also, extensive hands-on information on analyzing spoken discourse can be found in Riggenbach (1998: 62–145).

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