# EXPLORING IDEOLOGY IN ELT: A FRAME ANALYSIS APPROACH ROBERT J. LOWE

## Defining ideology

- Both critical and neutral definitions.
- **Critical** definitions refer to hegemonic belief systems  $\bullet$ which uphold the interests of a ruling class (Machin & Mayr, 2012).
- **Neutral** definitions refer to any organized system of 0 beliefs (Thompson, 1984).
- Often hidden 'in the margins' difficult to recognise.

#### **Defining 'frames'**

- Introduced by Goffman (1974).
- Can be thought of as "filters" which we (individual or

## Examining the relationship

- Ideologies are widespread systems of knowledge and belief.
- **Discourses** are ways of speaking which contain those systems of belief or knowledge.
- Framing is a process whereby people draw on  $\bullet$ discourses to mobilise their ideological resources in meaning making.
- **Dominant frames** are perceptual filters, established on  $\bullet$ the basis of **ideological discourses**, which a group of people in a particular local context use to organize and understand everyday experience.
- By analyzing these frames, through a process of

collective) use, on the basis of background knowledge and established belief, to make sense of the world we inhabit and the social events we experience.

- ethnographic frame analysis, we can work backwards to excavate the underlying **ideologies** that inform them.
- Can be used as a tool for critical ethnography (Lowe,  $\bullet$ forthcoming).

• Interviews, field notes, etc.		• How are people interpreting a given situation?		• What discourses are informing this interpretation?		<ul> <li>What are the ideological bases of these discourses?</li> <li>Are these discourses salient?</li> </ul>		• What ideology is in operation here?	
Collect data		Identify the frame		Break the frame down into discourses		Trace the discourses back		Identify the ideological basis	

**Data:** [Japanese students struggle in communicative classes because] "they're being thrust into a situation where they need to give their opinion, and they're raised in a culture which has traditionally taught them to sit there and shut up and don't get in the way (...) [in this course we are] asking them to behave in a manner which is contrary to their entire cultural experience (...) our job is to get them to talk."

#### References

- Goffman, E. (1974). Frame analysis: An essay on the organization of experience. Boston: Northeastern University Press.
- Holliday, A. (2005). The struggle to teach English as an international language. Oxford: OUP
- Lowe, RJ (forthcoming). Uncovering

A hidden ideology of native-speakerism (Holliday, 2005), expressed through a 'native speaker' frame (Lowe, forthcoming).

> **Discourses of non-Western** students as passive. Non-Western education as problematic. Western education as normative and needed to solve the problem.

**Discourses:** Japanese students are passive. Japanese education is a problematic 'Other'. Western education the solution.

Frame: Problem with

student passivity, based on

previous schooling. Must be

overcome.

ideology in English language teaching: Identifying the 'native speaker' frame. New York: Springer.

- Machin, D., & Mayr, A. (2012). How to do critical discourse analysis: A multimodal introduction. Los Angeles: SAGE.
- Thompson, J. B. (1984). Studies in the theory of ideology. Cambridge: Polity Press.

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