EXPLORING IDEOLOGY IN ELT: A FRAME ANALYSIS APPROACH

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Defining ideology
• Both critical and neutral definitions.
• Critical definitions refer to hegemonic belief systems which uphold the interests of a ruling class (Machin & Mayr, 2012).
• Neutral definitions refer to any organized system of beliefs (Thompson, 1984).
• Often hidden ‘in the margins’ – difficult to recognise.

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 discourses to mobilise their ideological resources in meaning making.
• Dominant frames are perceptual filters, established on 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 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, forthcoming).

Defining ‘frames’
• Introduced by Goffman (1974).
• Can be thought of as “filters” which we (individual or 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.

Collect data
• Interviews, field notes, etc.

Identify the frame
• How are people interpreting a given situation?

Break the frame down into discourses
• What discourses are informing this interpretation?

Trace the discourses back
• What are the ideological bases of these discourses?
• Are these discourses salient?

Identify the ideological basis
• What ideology is in operation here?

References

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.