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Welcome to the new look TESOL in Context journal issue 18/2. This is the first issue to be edited by the West Australian team, Katie Dunworth and Toni Dobinson. It is also the first issue to boast an editorial board comprised of renowned Australian and international scholars in the field. We thank those listed for their willingness to be involved in the journal.

In choosing the articles for this edition we have tried to strike a balance between the theoretical and the practical, the local and the international, research and pedagogy. To this end, one of the articles in this edition is a paper adapted from a keynote presentation at the ACTA TESOL conference in Alice Springs this year, one is an article set in an Australian high school and our final paper is on a more personal note – a tribute to the late Kate Mullins, a committee member and former President of WATESOL, who was tragically killed in a traffic accident earlier this year.

The first article by Pam Harders and Mary Macken-Horarik gives a practical account of a highly successful teaching program undertaken by Pam Harders with year nine boys in a high school in Canberra, ACT. The authors challenge the assumptions that easier texts, simplified and restricted language work, ‘phonics’ and supplementary grammar instruction need to be in place before a learner can engage meaningfully with a text. Their ‘scaffolding literacy pedagogy’ encourages learners to engage in fluent meaningful decoding of text through ‘supported reading’ before working on phonics, spelling and vocabulary. The article takes us through the stages of the program with ten low achieving first language and second language speakers of English and charts the boys’ experiences with Tim Winton’s *Lockie Leonard, Human Torpedo*.

The second article in this edition is a more theoretical sociolinguistic piece by Vaidehi Ramanathan and Alistair Pennycook. The authors argue a case against the one-to-one relationships between national and ethnic identities we are often guilty of ascribing to TESOL students in our learning environments. They point out that this perspective is problematic in that issues of identities are closely tied in with ‘complex relational issues of...
histories, movements and spaces’. The article outlines a critique of current preoccupations with the notion of ‘fluid identities’ and anti-essentialist positions and goes on to point out our need for an understanding of some key issues relating to identities. The five main arguments put forward by the authors for this position draw on a range of data and contexts but in particular focus upon the lives of Anglo-Indians.

The final piece by Rhonda Oliver is a moving tribute to Kate Mullin, who was well known across the school and tertiary sectors in Western Australia and further afield, and who touched everyone she met with her dedication and commitment to education. As editors, we approached Rhonda Oliver to write this piece because we knew of her and Kate’s long-standing friendship, both professional and personal. While she immediately and unhesitatingly agreed to write the piece, it must have been a hard task, and we are immensely appreciative of her efforts. She shares with us the journey of her friendship, and paints, for even those who may not have met Kate, a vibrant picture of a person whose love of learning infected all those she encountered and who did, indeed, ‘make a difference’.

We hope that you enjoy this issue of the journal. The next issue will be published in mid 2009 and will be edited by our Melbourne team, Jenny Miller and Russell Cross.

Toni Dobinson and Katie Dunworth
Scaffolding Literacy and the Year 9 Boys: Developing a Language-Centred Literacy Pedagogy

PAM HARDERS
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MARY MACKEN-HORARIK
University of New England

This paper provides an account of a highly successful teaching program undertaken by one of the authors, Pam Harders (‘Pam’), with Year Nine boys in a Canberra high school. The pedagogy is interesting not only because it has been adapted to meet the needs of both mother tongue (L1) and second language (L2) users of English but also because it aims to equip students with literacy difficulties to read and write age-appropriate texts. It is based on the scaffolding literacy program developed at the Schools and Community Centre in Canberra. It is centred on deep understandings of language but draws on these understandings in some counter-intuitive ways for TESOL teachers. Rather than adapting and simplifying the language of challenging texts, it aims to scaffold students into fluent and meaningful decoding of literate texts. In this paper, we explore the strategies Pam used to teach the boys to read Tim Winton’s Lockie Leonard, Human Torpedo and then to write creative pieces based on the novel. Drawing on transcripts of selected moments of classroom interactions and some examples of students’ writing, we explore the pedagogic and linguistic assumptions on which Pam’s successful literacy teaching is based. The paper emerged from an ongoing dialogue between a literacy teacher and an educational linguist with an interest in TESOL and reflects on the implications of a language-centred pedagogy for building students’ capacities to read and write literate discourse.
**Introduction: A counter-intuitive pedagogy**

One of the commonsense assumptions in literacy teaching is that if students are struggling to read texts at their age level, teachers should work with easier texts, adapting the language by restricting the vocabulary and simplifying the syntax. A further assumption is that novice readers need systematic work on ‘the basics’ such as phonics before they can engage meaningfully with whole texts. Even more common is the assumption that if students need additional support with language learning, teachers should prepare additional grammar exercises to supplement classroom work on other things. Scaffolding literacy pedagogy overturns all these assumptions; the teacher selects age-appropriate literate texts (or as close to this as feasible) and scaffolds students into fluent meaningful decoding of the text prior to any intensive work on phonics. Classroom work on phonics, spelling and vocabulary begins after the student is able to do a ‘supported reading’ of all the words in an extract. In addition, a rich and functional knowledge about language infuses the pedagogy, structuring classroom talk about language without involving extraneous exercises on grammar.

What can we learn from a pedagogy that overturns commonplace intuitions about how to support L1 and L2 learners? One response is to consider its results in texts produced by students. Another is to consider the nature of classroom talk and to assess it for pedagogic merits. This paper draws on both kinds of data to consider the qualities of scaffolding literacy, an integrated approach to literacy teaching which originated at the University of Canberra in the Schools and Community Centre. Developed first by Brian Gray and colleagues, this pedagogy assists students with literacy difficulties to read and write literate discourse (Gray, 1998). One notable feature is that, instead of beginning with texts pitched at current literacy abilities of students, teachers choose texts pitched at a higher level and scaffold students into reading, spelling and writing through a carefully sequenced pedagogy. The goal is that students not only learn to ‘read like writers’ but ‘write like readers’ (For an account of the Schools and Community Centre program, see Rose, Gray & Cowey, 1999; Axford, 2007). Scaffolding literacy has also been successfully implemented in ESL classrooms (Adoniou & Macken-Horarik, 2007).
Other names for this approach include *Accelerated Literacy* (Cowey, 2005) and *Learning to Read, Reading to Learn* (Rose & Martin, 2005). Related approaches (‘scaffolding’ with a small ‘s’) have adopted principles similar to those on which the Schools and Community Centre program is based. In research emerging from ESL classrooms, for example, Sharpe (2001, 2006), Hammond (2006) and Hammond and Gibbons (2005) maintain that successful scaffolding depends on attention to ‘macro’ and ‘micro’ dimensions of teaching. The ‘macro’ dimension deals with instructional design – the articulation of goals for learning, selection of texts and sequencing of learning activities. It is proleptic, i.e. it looks forward to learning, assuming that students will learn the target language successfully (Dufficy, 2005). The ‘micro’ dimension is dynamic. It relates to moment-by-moment interactions between teachers and learners. This ‘contingent scaffolding’ develops shared understandings through talk, something ESL teachers need to pay close attention to, as Dufficy points out:

> These unfolding processes, which include skill development, the appropriation of ideas, the taking up of dispositions and the realisation of self, are largely ‘constituted in and through talk’ and so it is extremely important that we look closely at how talk is carried out in classrooms to ‘reveal the very constituting processes themselves’ (Edwards and Westgate, 1994, p. 15).

(Dufficy, 2005, p. 60)

Other educators, such as Geoff Williams, have noted the importance of fine-grained attention to the quality of classroom talk about language:

> Through interaction, caregivers and teachers indicate to children what aspects of the vast range of possible phenomena in a particular type of situation they should attend to. In doing so, they show children *orders of relevance of meanings* for the use of language in some environment.

(Williams, 2004, p. 244, author’s italics)

We then need to consider how English teachers develop ‘discourse strategies for intervening in children’s learning’ (Mercer, 1994, p. 101) and what kinds of talk achieve what literate purposes in what contexts.
In this paper, we explore a teaching context in which one of the authors used scaffolding literacy with one Year Nine class in a Canberra high school. The distinguishing feature of our case study lies in Pam’s ability to build shared understandings about a challenging text with students for whom literate discourse was alien and to enable them to draw on its language patterns in their own writing. Such pedagogy deserves analysis if only because of its impact on achievement among students whose language difficulties had locked them out of mainstream education up to that time.

We begin by introducing the context of Pam’s class group and the particular challenges this posed for literacy teaching. We then explore three episodes in which Pam ‘talked students into’ a collective sense of relevance and a capacity to infer meanings, joke about them and then draw on language patterns in an extract in their own writing. We hope to show in our discussion that scaffolding is a ‘sharing of consciousness’ about language (Williams, 2005, p. 308). In order to bring the classroom to life, we draw on transcripts of classroom talk and a firsthand account by Pam of what happened. Our account is based on extensive study of the classroom transcripts (of which only three are presented here), analysis of the conditions of effective scaffolding and examination of the texts generated by students at the end of the unit. In the final section of the paper, we highlight the linguistic and pedagogic underpinnings of effective contingent scaffolding.

The challenge of literate discourse: Focus on the Year Nine boys

At this particular high school, classes are academically streamed. In semester 1, 2003 the ten boys in Pam’s class had been at the lower end of the Year Nine cohort for at least two years. They included both L1 and L2 speakers. Two of the students were indigenous Australians and one student spoke Samoan in the home. Over their high school years these students had been offered, but refused to participate in, intervention programs by ESL and indigenous support staff. These programs extended individual or small group support, but the boys had not liked being identified as different and ‘in need of help’. Their experience of special programs had led them to assume, one simple book, one interaction at a time, that they were ‘slow’, that their capacities were limited and that they would never learn to read and write in linguistically powerful ways. They had been increasingly consigned to a zone of
‘apathy and boredom’ (Mariani, 1997) as their literacy levels indicated.

Literate language is different from the oral language that Pam’s students experienced in daily life. It is not only syntactically more demanding but depends on a capacity to infer meaning, to make connections between words and across sentences. This is challenging for all students but especially for those whose decoding skills are fragile and comprehension skills underdeveloped, as the Department of Education, Science and Training’s 2005 National Literacy Inquiry indicated:

Reading involves more than the rapid and accurate identification of individual words. Many students in the middle and upper school with reading difficulties cannot identify and process the information contained in phrases, sentences and relationships between sentences and so cannot comprehend the text. They do not understand the purpose of reading a particular text and are unaware that they are failing to meet the requirements of the reading task.

(DEST, 2005, p. 27)

Predictably enough, given their difficulties with reading, the boys in this study had been continually disruptive and eventually deemed ‘unteachable’. In semester two they were removed from their class and a new class was created. The Executive Teacher for Languages invited Pam to implement a scaffolding literacy unit for this group.

*Scaffolding literacy* is an integrated program that teaches students about reading, spelling and writing using one text selected for its relevance to students and its literary qualities. The program has been implemented and adapted for a wide range of classroom contexts across Australia. In this paper, we focus on the version developed at the Schools and Community Centre, with a particular focus on its uses for students without a strong platform in literate language development (language assistance students). For explanations of the teaching sequence and its underpinning principles, see Cowey (2005) and Adoniou & Macken-Horarik (2007).

Pam selected a popular novel with adolescent boys for this unit of work; a novel that the students would only be able to read with support. She planned that the boys would learn to read an
extract from Tim Winton’s *Lockie Leonard, Human Torpedo*, spell selected words from the extract and then generate their own piece of writing based on the extract. In order to achieve these outcomes, her students would need to demonstrate task-focused behaviour and participate in high-level discussions about the author’s language choices.

We now consider three episodes from Pam’s teaching. Episode one occurred during a strategy used early in the teaching sequence known as *language orientation*, a process which prepares students to read a short extract from the text. Episode two comprised a classroom joke that occurred after one student read the extract aloud to the class. The third episode occurred when students were playing with sentence structure in the extract in preparation for spelling and writing, a process known as *transformations*. The student texts that resulted from these interactions provide an instructive data source for our final reflections on what a language-centred pedagogy is able to provide in the way of contingent scaffolding.

**Language orientation (episode 1)**

*Language orientation* follows after a more general orientation to the novel and a selected extract. Its purpose is to enable students to read and talk about one extract from the text. It makes reading easier because it allows readers to identify, decode and understand wordings in a text. Because of the semantic support offered by this talk (where the teacher effectively ‘talks readers in’ based on the wordings of an extract) the reader’s memory is not overloaded. Subsequent decoding is thus easier, enabling students to use graphophonic cues in a more relaxed and constructive manner than would otherwise have been the case. The following extract has been taken from Chapter 1 of *Lockie Leonard, Human Torpedo*:

> The first day Lockie Leonard saw this town it was raining. The old family Falcon had been loaded down like a refugee boat as they rolled into this little place fresh from the city. The whole family tried to be cheerful about it, but the place looked awful. The town was small and crummy-looking and when they saw the house the police force had organised for them, everyone in the car went quiet. Lockie’s little brother looked at him, pegging off his nose with his fingers. His baby sister squirmed on the front seat. His dad left the motor running. His mum just started bawling.

(Winton, 1990, p. 5)
The talk that occurred during the first phase of language orientation was carefully choreographed to help students identify, decode aloud and understand the wordings of the selected extract. It proceeded by means of particular cues and closed questioning which ensured that students can identify the relevant wordings. These strategies are similar to those used by Rose and Martin (2005) in their Learning to Read, Reading to Learn program. The following transcript represents the kind of interaction that occurred early in language orientation.

_Pam_: What we’ve established over the last couple of sessions is that the author Tim Winton really went out of his way to choose language to have us know that this family was not at all happy to be arriving at this particular town. Ty, to start off with, what was the weather like when they arrived?

_Ty_: Raining

_Pam_: Yeah, exactly, so straight away we’re getting some information that makes things feel rather dismal. It wasn’t a bright sunny day, it was raining, straight away we’ve got a gloomy kind of mood.

_Pam_: The next thing he did was talk about the car that they arrived in, Jake, what kind of car was it?

_Jake_: A falcon, miss

_Pam_: Yeah, and what are the describing words that he used for the falcon?

_Jake_: The old family falcon

_Pam_: Excellent. And he lets us know there was a whole lot of luggage in it. What were the words he wrote to do with the luggage?

_Ben_: Loaded

_Pam_: Thanks Ben. So it was loaded down. And what was it like Nick?

_Nick_: Like a refugee boat

_Pam_: Like a refugee boat. So these guys are not a terribly well off family. Here they are arriving in presumably their one car because it’s a family car, it’s an old car and they’ve got all their stuff in there. What are the words the author uses to let us know that they’ve come straight from the city, that they’re not country bumpkins?
Everyone laughs
Jonah: Fresh from the city.
Pam: Excellent, well done, good reading.

Pam’s firsthand account of language orientation is as follows:

“Using the strategy of preformulation, I provided students with the information they required to understand certain units of meanings in the text. Next I asked probe questions to elicit student responses about these units of meaning. I required students to answer by reading the author’s exact words. When their responses were delivered using their own language I would accept their input but direct them to the precise wordings Tim Winton used. I continually shunted between their understandings and the author’s language (from meanings to wordings). As well as ensuring that everyone heard the correct response using the words from the text I would then use reconceptualisation to add even deeper levels of interpretation with regard to reading between and behind the lines” (personal communication, August 2006).

What takes this interaction beyond ordinary comprehension and recall activity is the ‘sharing of consciousness about language’ (Williams, 2005, p. 308) that occurred. Armed with Pam’s input, the students were then able to read, in context, words they were unlikely to recognise on subsequent pages of the book. This is not to say that they were simply memorising the extract. After the high levels of support afforded by orientation strategies, students were able to demonstrate accurate, fluent decoding of this extract. This talk also demonstrated for students that reading is not just about decoding the print (reading on the lines) but also about engaging with the meanings encoded in these word choices (reading between the lines). Inferring meanings can be very challenging for second language speakers and for students unfamiliar with literate discourse. It is the teacher who has to establish relevance for students by means of talk. Students’ own interpretations of what is going on in the extract were made part of the classroom discourse too, as will be seen in the next section.
**Shared understandings, a mistake and a joke**

Once a high level of reading proficiency is achieved, reading aloud of the extract by individual students becomes a valued ritual in each lesson. In her class group, Pam would ask for a volunteer to read aloud to the group while the other students listened and tracked the text on their copies of the extract. Pam explained the process:

“The boys never tired of working on the same extract repeatedly. Instead they enjoyed the control they had acquired over Tim Winton’s language and they felt confident with this one set piece. The text itself became like an old friend, still presenting challenges but also offering an acceptable zone of comfort for the boys, with the comfort arising from their command over the author’s words”.

One of the key features of a good scaffolding classroom is the development of shared understandings about the language of an extract. This can sometimes become visible when students make a mistake or innovate on a text. The consequences of a mistake in the classroom in this study – one where joking abuse or ‘sledging’ was typical – were very telling, as Pam commented:

“Following on from the Language Orientation presented in the above transcript, Jonah, the weakest reader in the group, was asked to read aloud the extract that he managed with a high level of accuracy and fluency. One of his miscues was to read “his dad left the mother running” instead of “his dad left the motor running”. Everyone, including Jonah, was aware of the humour in this simple reading error and laughter broke out. However the wonderful thing was that at this moment the laughter was not directed at Jonah for making the mistake, but rather at the amusing shift in meaning that the mistake brought about. I too was able to join in the fun and did not reprimand the group for being noisy, because in fact their reaction still demonstrated good task focus. If they hadn’t laughed then it would have been a sign that they weren’t actually listening to Jonah’s reading” (personal communication, August, 2006).

The following extract from the transcript shows how Pam reacted to the incident:

*Pam: (over the top of laughter)*

**Fantastic. Jonah that was really good accurate reading. Don’t worry about the slip up. She probably felt like running but she was just bawling instead. Guys that was fantastic reading from Jonah and really good listening from everyone else.**
Thus Pam and the boys were able to turn the laughter that resulted from a mis-reading of the extract to constructive purposes. From then on, the unintended miscue ‘mother’ became part of the meaning potential of the classroom (a joke extending the meanings of the text). The classroom discourse was expanded by students as they became familiar with Winton’s language and the ways he deploys language for particular purposes in this extract.

**Transformations**

After students are able to process the extract, it is time for close study of the syntactic and lexical choices made by the author. This stage is particularly useful for L2 students coming to terms with the functional and structural nature of language, especially at sentence level. In the ACT applications of transformations, one or two sentences from the excerpt are written on strips of cardboard and students are guided into segmenting these into units of meaning (see Adoniou & Macken-Horarik (2007) for more on transformations in ESL classrooms). The sentence in this case was:

The old family Falcon had been loaded down like a refugee boat as they rolled into this little place fresh from the city.

Once the sentence has been segmented meaningfully into constituent clauses and phrases, the students can physically manipulate the language. Transformations may look easy but the successful use of the strategy depends on a teacher’s knowledge of grammar. There are two kinds of grammatical knowledge drawn on in successful transformations work. The first is functional (focused on the job being done by a group of words). The teacher uses probe questions appropriate to each group or phrase to pick out relevant units of meaning. The second kind is formal (focused on the form or structure of the highlighted group or phrase). Thus a ‘who’ or ‘what’ question tends to isolate noun groups while a ‘what happened’ or ‘what did X do’ question picks out verbs or verb groups. Both functional and formal knowledge about language contribute to the framing of questions without being required of students themselves. Of course students benefit from the teacher’s knowledge of sentence structure and the chunking of the sentence into meaningful units. They are able to see far more into ‘how the author does it’ by means of meaningful segmentation of the wordings.
The following example of this talk highlights the relevant wh-element of the probe question to show how this selects for (predicts) particular elements of the sentence.

_Pam:_ What had been loaded down?

_Student:_ The old family falcon

_Pam:_ What had been done to the old family falcon?

_Student:_ (It) had been loaded down

_Pam:_ What was the old family falcon like?

_Student:_ Like a refugee boat

_Pam:_ When was it that the old family falcon looked like this?

_Student:_ As they rolled into this little place

_Pam:_ What are the words that the author used to let us know that the family has moved straight to the small country town from the city?

_Student:_ Fresh from the city.

Here the students are learning to analyse the wording of this extract and, over time, build up knowledge of the language system. For example, they are learning implicitly that the answer to a ‘like what?’ question is likely to be a comparison (a phrase using ‘like’ or ‘as’). However, Pam’s students did no additional exercises on noun groups or similes. Grammar was learned in the context of work on a text and teacher and students shared a meaning metalanguage in classroom talk. Transfer was possible because all good authors use comparisons of the kind Winton uses here. All students were able to include a simile or metaphor in their later writing. *Transformations* is a powerful strategy to use with ESL and language assistance students because it takes them into the mechanics of literacy. Pam’s account of this process is instructive:

Once the units of meaning had been separated I then discussed with the students the impact on the sentence of either moving or removing particular meaning units. For example: What don’t we know if we take away ‘like a refugee boat’ or ‘fresh from the city’? Would the sentence still make sense if it was structured differently such as ‘As they rolled into this little place fresh from the city, the old family falcon had been loaded down like a refugee boat’? These sorts of questions served to make the students even more familiar with the author’s word choices as well as challenging them to consider the function of each meaning unit in the sentence. They
were then able to articulate understandings such as ‘the simile “like a refugee boat” gives readers a good image of just what this car looked like’ (personal communication, August 2006).

Strategies like preformulation targeted students’ attention to the wordings they needed to identify (thus supporting decoding). Reconceptualisation made the meaning of these wordings clear at literal and implied levels (thus supporting comprehension). In the second episode, one student’s error (reading ‘mother’ instead of ‘motor’) extended the potential meaning of the text. The text really does become like ‘an old friend’ in this context, linguistically part of the class repertoire. Finally, transformations build both functional and formal knowledge of the author’s language choices. Hammond and Gibbons argue that contingent scaffolding works well because it is ‘anchored in the shared agenda of classroom talk’ (Hammond and Gibbons, 2005, p. 20). In Pam’s classroom this agenda led to collective ownership of the language of the text as well as the ability to read it.

The ‘proof of the pudding’: students’ writing

Students drew on this linguistic repertoire in writing activities. This is where the intensive work on language began to pay off. To teach explicitly how to use Winton’s text as a model for writing, Pam worked through a text patterning exercise. Text patterning is a powerful strategy for enabling ESL and language assistance students to write literate discourse, innovating on language patterns used in an author’s work. Students draw from a model text, learning not just what to write but also how to write it (Adoniou & Macken-Horarik, 2007). Using first hand experience as a springboard, the boys generated ideas for setting, characters, action and the mood of their piece. With the support of a writing plan, Pam showed them how to record their ideas using language patterns similar to Winton’s. The support provided by the writing plan enabled students to produce a piece of writing that used literate language, as distinct from their usual pieces which were typically ‘oral language written down’.

When the time came for independent writing, one student who normally struggled with generating even a short text decided to innovate on the mood of the original, making the encounter with the new city a happy one:
The first day Lockie saw this city it was sunny. The brand new Subaru WRX with its stack rack zoomed into the city streets fresh from Bumpkinville. The whole family was cheerful about the move, and they all thought the place looked heaps good. The city centre was crowded and hectic-looking, and when they saw the hotel the law firm had organised for them, everyone in the car shouted excitedly. Lockie’s little brother gazed at the sights, pressing his face against the window. His baby sister bounced happily in her car seat. His dad dropped a burnout in front of the hotel entrance. His mum screamed loudly.

Although his text bears close resemblance to Tim Winton’s original, there was never any sense that this boy was copying or cheating by tapping into the author’s language resources. Instead, he tackled the task with confidence and experienced a sense of pride with the finished work. This was a far cry from previous writing attempts, which were marked by avoidance, lack of interest and defeatism.

**Implications for teachers’ knowledge about language**

We turn now to reflect on the linguistic and pedagogic assumptions on which these episodes are based to discuss the kinds of knowledge effective contingent scaffolding draws upon. The insights that can be drawn from the three episodes discussed earlier are summarised in Figure 1.

<table>
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<th>PEDAGOGIC STRATEGIES</th>
<th>LINGUISTIC UNDERPINNINGS</th>
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<td><strong>1. Language Orientation</strong>&lt;br&gt;Enabling meaningful decoding by shunting between student meanings and literate wordings.&lt;br&gt;Example&lt;br&gt;Student: Scrubbo town, they didn’t have their own crib.&lt;br&gt;Pam: It’s giving us that idea isn’t it Jake? So to start off with, a little bit higher in the text, he tells us that it was a little place, and then we’re told that it was small and crummy looking, and just before that he gave us the information that it looked awful. And then in the next sentence he expands on that.</td>
<td>• There is a motivated connection between meanings and wordings and this connection can be made through preformulation and reconceptualisation.&lt;br&gt;• Unpacking literate wordings pushes teachers to incorporate and build on student offerings.&lt;br&gt;• Literate textuality requires a capacity to infer abstract meanings from wordings – to read on, between and beyond the lines.</td>
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2. Expanding meaning potential
Example: Jake read the extract aloud and interprets ‘motor’ as ‘mother’. Everyone laughs at the mistake but there is no shame - only an expanded sense of the text.

- Jokes (and even mistakes) expand the meaning potential of a text if students already have control of the discourse from which the joke was generated.
- Shared understandings of text meaning enable inter-subjective rapport to develop.

3. Transformations
Pam uses a meaning metalanguage and probe questions to identify units of meaning. This enables students to understand, chunk and move around the constituents.

- The class discusses the effect of an author’s wordings, whether changing word order in a sentence changes meaning, what effect removal of chunks has on text meaning, etc.
- In order to attain literate discourse, students need to understand and work with notions of choice, order and constituency.
- Teachers need access to both formal and functional knowledge about language if they are to scaffold language study effectively.

Figure 1: Relationship between language knowledge and teaching strategies

Conclusion

We now return briefly to the questions posed earlier in the paper. On what basis should we investigate classroom talk in this pedagogy? What can we learn from classroom talk about teaching students, including L2 students within mainstream classrooms, to read and write literate discourse? Firstly, we have shown that the kind of talk that occurs varies according to the stage of the teaching sequence and the particular purpose of the task. Secondly, the kind of talk generated depends on a degree of preparation and close analysis that is unusual in many classrooms. Scaffolding shared understandings of literate discourse is linguistically and pedagogically demanding. It demands a high level of preparation, an ability to predict areas of difficulty for students, to enable them not only to decode ‘hard words’ but ‘hard wordings’, to draw on the language patterns in an author’s text in independent writing, and so on. If we are to choose texts that are more difficult than the ones our students can currently read and assist them to read these fluently,
accurately and with understanding and then to write like the real authors they are reading, then the scaffolding needs to generate strong incentives.

Perhaps we should reflect on the implications of this counter-intuitive pedagogy from the point of view of another moment in this long classroom conversation about literate discourse. As we have shown Pam’s ‘boys’ were not used to engaging in a sustained and serious way with difficult language, but all of them were doing this by the end of the lesson. For Pam, the golden moment came when one student confidently volunteered to the class group that others were repeatedly incorrectly reading “in the front seat” whereas Tim Winton’s words were actually “on the front seat”. To highlight such a small miscue reflected the student’s ownership and control of the extract being examined; in one small way this student was engaging in a linguistic discussion about the author’s word choices. The level of support provided by Pam had the affect of engendering student participation at previously unseen levels for all members of the class, including the ESL students. These students were provided with explicit teaching support along with the rest of the class cohort. Without being identified in front of peers by being singled out for extra support, they were able to benefit from the scaffolding literacy teaching sequence alongside fellow classmates. For us, this moment proves that with appropriate scaffolding, students with weak literacy skills can participate in classroom talk about language at previously unattainable levels of engagement.

Acknowledgements
The authors would like to thank the boys from this classroom for agreeing to make their talk and their texts available to us in the research and in this paper. Pam has also given permission to be identified as the teacher in this publication.

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perspectives on species and individuals (pp. 241-267). London: Continuum.
Mary Macken-Horarik is Associate Professor of English and Multiliteracies Education in the School of Education at the University of New England in Armidale, NSW. She has worked for many years in the field of English language education and has published widely in the field of literacy and ESOL education. Although she is best known for her work in educational linguistics, she has a special interest in Scaffolding Literacy pedagogy.

Pam Harders is currently teaching in an alternative education setting in an ACT Achievement Centre at Wanniassa School where she supports disengaged students from Years Seven and Eight with their literacy, numeracy and social skills. She has worked for many years as an English teacher in both independent and public schools and has a special expertise in Scaffolding Literacy. She was a tutor for some years at the Schools and Community Centre and lectured with Mary Macken-Horarik in the Scaffolding Literacy unit at the University of Canberra.
Articulating Identities: Communities, Histories, Migrations

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This paper offers a critical discussion of how identities get articulated in relation to migrations, spaces and histories. Specifically, it addresses historical and material conditions under which community and ethnic identities are named in certain ways. We argue that the one-to-one relationship between national and ethnic identities that we sometimes ascribe to our students in TESOL is problematic, since issues of identities are integrally tied to complex relational issues of histories, movements, and spaces. Amid a great deal of current discussion about fluid identities and the problems of essentialism, we need to come to an understanding of several key issues relating to identities: First, there may be very good reasons to present unified identity formations in order to gain a voice in a particular time and place. Second, a particular mode of assembling oneself occurs when experience is collectively enunciated in very specific ways. Third, so much of what we regard as identity emerges from identification with carefully constructed assemblages and their associated rhetoric. Fourth, particular interpretations of history are legitimised to produce very specific knowledges and enunciations with which we identify. Fifth, the identities that are handed down to us by history demand alienation and dissolution. Our points about identities while drawing on a range of data and contexts focus specifically on the lives of Anglo-Indians, and our present dual engagement to contest the national identities handed down to each of us, what we call translocal postcolonialism, permits us to speak of ethnicities and nationalities differently.
Articulating identities

When we raise questions about identity, place and movement, we need to consider several important issues. In this disparate world, with its inequitable economic and political relations, its immigration policies that render some people ‘illegal’, its definitions of citizens, indigenous peoples and new arrivals, who can afford to take on mixed identities? After all, some people are still struggling for the right to have an identity, or at least to have their identity recognised. So, amid both the fixity of identity with which our field of TESOL and applied linguistics often becomes entrenched (assigning static identities along lines of gender, race and ethnicity) and the easy talk of hybridity that has flowed, particularly from cultural studies (we all have fluid, multiple, hybrid identities), how do we locate a sense of identity in relation to material conditions, location, language, migrations and histories?

Much has been written recently about the possibility of fluid identities in conditions of globalisation and increased human movement (the ethnoscapes of rural/urban migration, refugees, economic and political migration, travel, tourism, conferences) as well as increased interconnectivity through new communication networks (mediascapes, linguascapes, mobile networks, blogs, MySpace). Yet people move or connect to different communities under very different conditions: economic, social, political. So before continuing, at the very least, we may need to distinguish between various ways of thinking about this. We can think in terms of translocality (e.g. Clifford, 1997), where different local relations are interconnected; so that, for example, immigrants from one place of origin, say, Sri Lanka or Lebanon, who are now settled in very different places, say Canada, France or Australia, stay interconnected and retain certain local practices within a global space. This is not new: Cornish miners, who moved to Moonta (South Australia), ‘little Cornwall’ as it became known, in the late 1800s maintained their Cornish connections, practices and language across time and space. They stayed in touch for generations through letters, newspapers, marriages and migrations to the Cornish homeland, while constantly reiterating the status of Moonta as the ‘spiritual home’ of ‘Australia’s Cornish identity’ (Payton, 2007, p.219).

From a different point of view, we can also think in terms of what Maher (2005) calls metroethnicity: “a reconstruction of
ethnicity: a hybridised ‘street’ ethnicity deployed by a cross-section of people with ethnic or mainstream backgrounds who are oriented towards cultural hybridity, cultural/ethnic tolerance and a multicultural lifestyle in friendships, music, the arts, eating and dress” (p.83). Looking particularly at Japan, Maher points to the ways in which both Japanese and people with minority backgrounds ‘play’ with ethnicity (not necessarily their own). The possibility of trying on new identities has become ‘cool’. Of course, metroethnicity is an emergent possibility only for those living within certain conditions of globalisation, in contexts where there is easy access to forms of multicultural life, where levels of affluence make travel and cultural style easily available, and where class, cultural, racial, religious or ethnic conflict are not a daily threat. Metroethnicity, which is akin in some ways to Rampton’s (1995) observations of how urban school children played with different language varieties, or Otsuji’s (2008) description of how people performed different identities in multilingual workplaces, has also, it might be argued, become one of those features of the affluent end of the TESOL world, where students travel and learn English as part of a new set of metroethnic performances.

However, amid all of this, we also need to acknowledge that in many other contexts identities, either ascribed by others or taken on in self-affirmation, become the very mobilisations around which conflict occurs. We only have to think of recent events in Kenya or Kosovo to see how the ascriptions of identities, or the taking up of particular identities, play a very different role. In this paper, we shall look at certain conditions under which identities are articulated in quite distinct ways. Drawing on research into ways in which people of English background understood and created different forms of Anglo-Indian identity, we will try in this paper to show how what we call translocal postcolonialism – with its particular focus on microhistories and movement – can help us see how identities are made. This has particular importance for the world of TESOL since it sheds light on the ways in which identities are not the pre-given entities we sometimes ascribe to our students, but rather are far more complex, historical, transitional, relational ways of being.

**Collective identities**

The point about assuming distinct identities takes on particular overtones in relation to collective identities, especially in cases of reductive (essentialised) presentations. Our first example
regarding this is quite brief, and has to do with the Dalits in India. The ‘lowest’ caste group, and historically marginalised in most every space, ‘Dalit’ literally means ‘trodden underfoot’—a phrase they chose to remind ‘upper-caste’ people of their oppressed status. A most diverse group of people with issues of class, gender, sub-castes, sexualities cutting through them, the Dalits, in order to gain recognition in the public space, such as seats in colleges or jobs, have over several decades worked very hard to assemble a unified front. They have had to cultivate a distinct mode of self-presentation; to counter certain historical truths so that their experiences and wounds of injustice and marginalisation can be heard. This is our first point about identities (and self-presentations). While this kind of unified assemblage erases differences, it does so to enable voices to be heard, to counter dominant tropes, to assume the authority to present people in particular ways instead of staying in corners (see Prasad, 2007; Thiagaraj, 2007 for detailed discussion about Dalit modes of self-presentation).

The second example is more immediate and has to do with some of Ramanathan’s (2006) ongoing work with various vernacular-and-English-medium teachers in Ahmedabad, the city she grew up in, where she has, for the last 10 years or so, been actively engaged with issues of teacher education, civic change, and curricular reform in both formal and non-formal contexts. Self-presentation in this case is not one that finds articulation in the kind of force of the Dalit movement, but one that operates quietly, determinedly. In 2002, the city of Ahmedabad broke out in the worst riots in recent years. Media reports stated that 58 Hindus were returning home from a religious pilgrimage chanting Hindu prayers, when the train made a scheduled stop at Godhra, about 20 miles outside Ahmedabad. There was a scuffle with a Muslim tea-vendor at the station outside the booth carrying these pilgrims and with insults being traded between the Hindu pilgrims and Muslim vendors the scene erupted to a point at which the booth was doused with gasoline and the pilgrims were burnt to death. The rampage that many Hindus went on in the days that followed that event in the city was horrific. Muslim homes, shops and business were looted and burned, women were raped and killed, children were maimed, people were tortured. As if this were not enough, the following year an earthquake measuring 7.2 on the Richter scale devastated Ahmedabad. As is generally the case, though, the people who needed the most help, poorer, “low-caste” or Muslim families, obtained help last, if at all.
So what does this have to do with distinctive self-presentations? There were several activist groups in the city which sprang into action after both events. In the workshops that followed in succeeding summers, the primary theme that was continually underscored was that civic education and communal healing in the city had to begin in non-formal educational contexts by harnessing the ‘vernacular’; namely, the local, immediate, native (Gujarati in this case) resources: figuring out the kinds of houses that people in villages wanted built, finding ways of mobilising vernacular-medium students to work in communal kitchens and shelters in poorer parts of the city, organising student groups to find vernacular-medium Muslim students whose houses and college materials had been burned and who were thinking of leaving both their education and the city.

The notion of the ‘vernacular’ here refers to the complex intersections that make up the local, including cosmopolitanism, and does not have associations of parochialism with which it is often linked. Indeed, the ‘vernacular’, like English, has never been distinct. Like English, ‘the vernacular’ shifts forms, assuming particular articulations in specific moments and places, articulations that get ‘storied’ by researchers and the media that run the risk of giving it distinct ‘auras’. Gujarati ways of living, being, thinking, operating - indeed, the very sentiments that the English-medium press and people in the city have for a long time decried as rabid - became a powerful way to bring about civic awareness in non-formal educational domains, as well as speaking to local citizenship. This relates to the second point about distinctive identities and self-presentations. A particular mode of assembling oneself sometimes occurs when experience is collectively enunciated in very specific ways and when that enunciation gets strategically called on as a resource by which to counter regimes that suffocate expression. We live in a world where unspeakable crimes are perpetrated systematically on peoples, and there has to be a way for people to speak of their pain and for us to listen and attend, regardless of how defensive those articulations make us, or of how divergent our ideological positions might be.

So identities do indeed assume very different articulations, and the terms by which we speak of them, such as essentialism, need judicious wording. Meanings of experiences: what comes through them, how they get ‘storied’ and presented, how they get spoken about in different spaces (in English, as opposed to a vernacular
language in India) call for careful dis-assembling. So, perhaps we should think not just in terms of all essentialisms being about the particular politics of self and other presentations that have emerged from specific enunciations of collective experiences, but of us, teachers, researchers, scholars, becoming critical readers, alert to uncovering the politics around them all: who is the essentialised, distinctive self being presented to and why? What justifications are being drawn on to do so? What dominant historical tropes are being countered?

**Identity and locality**

Considering place and identity, of the different relations we the authors have as academics, through families, in history, to India, England, Australia and the USA, foregrounds three important themes. First, it matters not only what place we talk about but where we talk about place. When we talk about different ways of thinking about place and identity at conferences in India, as we have done in the last few years, it is a very different issue from when we talk about these issues in Alice Springs. This is always to keep place in mind. Second, these connections to India, England and Australia can never be distanced too far from the histories of colonialism that made these movements possible. This is to keep history, and power, in mind. Third, we need to ask for whom identities are flexible. This is to keep locality in an uneven world in mind.

It is also clear that, at least for some people, there are various identity choices available, and we can opt for a diversity of identities, which can also include, amongst the options, what we might have assumed to have been our ‘home’ practices. At the same time, many academic and popular discourses tend to celebrate the notion of diversity, that identities are multiple, fragmented, performed, and to critique notions of essentialism, the idea that nation, location, culture and birth are indelibly linked and even determine how we behave. This critique of essentialism has taken place for very good reason. Thirty years of postcolonial and cultural studies have helped us move away from a vision, and particularly an imposed vision, of cultural behaviour and belonging, whereby the Japanese have certain characteristics, the French others, and so on. This has been a particular problem in applied linguistics and TESOL, where a long-standing tendency to ascribe particular identities to particular people has led to limitations in both research and teaching practice (Kubota, 2004).
We not only need to see how identity may be used strategically, but we also need to learn how to read identity enunciations in more critical ways. A parallel point to the one about the Dalit in India can be made about indigenous Australians, though we make such comparisons with great caution. A continent of diversity, of languages, peoples and cultures has been collapsed into one ‘Aboriginal’ identity by European invaders, and has also by necessity been taken up by indigenous Australians as a means for political solidarity. Yet, as indigenous hip hop artist MC Wire puts it, performing and speaking in Sydney, for example, is for him an international event:

“Right now, I'm international, I'm in another man's land, the nation of Gadagul, I come from the nation of Gombangi. I also try to bring that awareness through hip hop, there are so many different shades of Aboriginal. One of the biggest personal achievements for me has been going to communities and performing. From somewhere like the Block to somewhere like Noombbuwa¹, where it's very different but still the same.” (personal communication, 31 March, 2006)

Another way of thinking about identities can also be in terms of the duality of origins. Indigenous Australian Wire MC explains his phrase *abo-digital*, by pointing to the ambiguous meaning created by the word digital.

“I'm abo-digital because I'm a Twenty-first century Aboriginal, I'm down with laptops and mobile phones and home entertainment. But digital also means your hands and your fingers, so I'm still putting my fingers in the dirt; I'm still using my hands to create things. So that's the ambiguity” (Wire MC, personal communication, 31 March, 2006).

This image is important for several reasons: It pulls a sense of the indigenous away from an indelible link to traditional ways of doing things. This is a twenty-first century Aboriginal performer at home in a digital, global era. Yet at the same time, he has dirty hands, fingers that create from the land to which Aboriginal

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¹ The comparison here is between the poor and predominantly indigenous inner-city area of Redfern in Sydney known as the Block, and small rural indigenous communities such as Noombbuwa. The interview data are drawn from a project on globalisation and hip hop (see Pennycook, 2007).
Australians have been so deeply connected for thousands of years. Wire MC links the traditional and modern in another way, through his notion of hip hop as ‘the modern day corroboree’. Hip hop brings people together in new ways, to tell stories, to sing and dance but “it's still the same corroboree, still singing and dancing and telling the same stories about the immediate environment” (Wire MC, personal communication, 31 March, 2006).

When Wire MC suggests that hip hop is part of Aboriginal culture and always has been, this is not of course to suggest that hip hop as a global cultural formation was invented by indigenous Australians. Rather, it is to argue that what now counts as Aboriginal hip hop is the product of a dynamic set of identifications, with African American music, style and struggle, and a dynamic set of re-identifications, with indigenous music, style and struggle. This suggests that in the process of appropriation of language and culture, it is not just that we can make things our own, but that the origins become intertwined (Pennycook and Mitchell, 2009).

**Constructing identities**

Moving now into addressing how identities get constructed by history, indeed, by very particular accounts of history, while also speaking about how ‘origins’ are always mixed and complex, we turn towards addressing Alastair Pennycook’s familial connections to a space faraway from England, where he was born and raised. His mother was born in India and his grandparents spent 35 years in Kerala. His own visit back to the family house opens up the possibility of thinking about ‘origins’ in alternate ways. A question we would like to consider is: if so much of his familial background was in India, then how ‘English’ could he be, and how much of India is in him?

In order to understand, we need to go back in time to understand how the term ‘origins’ came to be understood in light of the British presence in India. There were the discourses of Empire, the Raj, as it was called, that over centuries cultivated a very distinct kind of self-presentation, a particular Englishness by, among other things, keeping the Indian ‘natives’ at a distance to preserve a sense of their ‘purity’, and ‘whiteness’ (McClintock, 1995, ). This rhetoric in confluence with the discourses of working for ‘God, King and Country’ worked to create a strong and specific orientation to ‘heritage’ and ‘origins’. Schools and colleges were set up to prepare
the English for coming out to India, with handbooks on everything from finding appropriate ingredients for English cooking to raising children with Indian maids (ayahs as they are called), to dealing with the Indian heat, to how to give orders to servants. Englishness, in all its facets, was to be maintained at all costs; being tainted by acquiring an Indian accent, by having mixed-race children, or by picking up Indian habits was seriously disallowed. A sense of preserving one’s Englishness and English origins, foods, habits, lifestyles, language, then, in the South Asian context at least, was bound up with the Raj (Beuttner, 2004; Flemming, 2004; Brenden, 2005; Foss, 2006). As Young (2008) points out, much of this reductive identity was established in terms of preserving linguistic and racial difference and distance.

Such serious cultivation of English ‘origins’ though, as much recent writing has pointed out, came at the cost of tremendous pain to individual families. Children of upper class English homes (Buettner, 2006; Flemming, 2004; Brendon, 2005) were sent away to England for schooling to acquire English ways of being and living, and sometimes families did not meet each other for years. Coping with physical and emotional hardships would help give them the character, it was believed. “If they survived the rigours of their childhood, lonely, young exiles of Empire would stand to gain from Britain’s increase of power and wealth during the years when she became mistress of the seas and the workshop of the world” (Brendon, 2005, p.40). Such enforced separations, though, and the general justifications given for them, meant that many families reared their children through letters. In the case of Alastair’s family history, his mother was sent away to England and she and her sister were raised by their grandparents through letters, which in those days took weeks to arrive. The relational identities of the writers emerged gradually, through letters, time and the evolving relationship between them.

Alastair’s grandparents, particularly his grandmother, somehow needed to achieve several things through their letters to their daughters in England. They needed to communicate, to stay in touch, to keep informed, to obtain and relay news. They also needed to parent, to scold, to praise, to sympathise, to encourage, to admonish; to work on particular identities, on producing English girls. While this was in some ways a greater concern for parents whose children were educated in India, because there was the
always the worry that too much of the local might rub off, these concerns were mitigated by the children’s proximity.

Leaving her two daughters in England in 1938, Dorothy wrote to them on her way back to India: “I didn’t like leaving you two darling little sprats at all – But I know you are both very sensible, and will be perfectly happy and well cared for till I see you again”\textsuperscript{2}. That would not be until 1946. From 1938, with both daughters back in England, and travel back to Europe impossible because of the war, she wrote constantly.

“Sorry to hear you fell over on your skates, and cut your knee so badly. I expect the dressing hurt you, and made you feel a little faint – That’s why you feel so queer, but I’m glad you are O.K. again, - and please be more careful on those skates, or I shall have to take them away again”. At this point, there was still every expectation that they would see each other again before long, so Dorothy’s threat to take away the skates again remains a possibility.

Later she would have to write to her sister, Nell, who looked after the two girls in the holidays, to manage such parental actions.

Writing letters was the only means of contact, and letter-writing itself became a subject of communication, admonition and concern. Back in Kumbazha on Oct 31, 1938 Dorothy wrote: “It seems awfully queer to have no children in the bungalow, and I find myself just counting the days till your letters come. Please write both sides of your sheets, to save weight.”

The complex set of experiences around long distance child rearing that this entailed: the waiting for letters, the ways in which the letters were read and interpreted, the images each formed of the other through these texts, are poignant. The layers here, of being raised through letters and of Alistair Pennycook’s writing of them years later, laminates other relations between identities and historical wounds. This is the third point about identities, this time in relation to histories. So much of what we regard as identity, whether communal or personal, emerges from identification with carefully

\textsuperscript{2} This and subsequent quotations are taken from a private collection of letters written between the early 1930s to the 1940s. Precise dates for each letter are provided where they were available.
constructed ‘assemblages’ sometimes larger than life, such as the Empire, and the rhetoric associated with the maintenance of those ‘assemblages’. The British Empire was one such construct and its discourses rendered invisible the anguish and messiness behind prolonged familial separations. Our present temporal positionings, several generations later, make us now look at them askance to interrogate not just how they came into being, but whose voices were silenced, the micro-histories that escaped historical representation and are now being told (Beuttner, 2004; Flemming, 2004; Brenden, 2005; Foss, 2006).

To assume, however, that the English in India identified easily and automatically with some notion of the Raj is to overlook many further layers of identification. Joan Densham and Jane Bigg, two women who went to school with Vaidehi Ramanathan’s mother in India, and who were interviewed in Oxford in 2007, were born and raised in India, having never seen England until they migrated as young adults. Indeed, Joan Densham is fifth generation Indian on her father’s side. Here is what she has to say:

We had absolutely no English background as I am the 5th generation on my father’s side to be born in India (second on my mother’s side). Our view of England was gleaned from stories told of friends from India who visited England, from the Women’s magazines and books we read. These views were obviously biased and we regarded England as a distant country (never ‘home’). I did feel that the English were better educated, spoke with a better accent (our Anglo-Indian accent was noticeable), wore more fashionable clothes and lived in better houses. When I came to England (aged 21) I found that all these ideas were wrong! ... I never felt English - in fact I felt somewhat ill at ease with them. My family never called England home and commented (unkindly) on people who we knew grew up in India and said they were “Going home for the holidays”. We always regarded Bombay as our home - and I still do (Personal communication, June 26, 2007)

These views about India being home are also picked up by Jane Bigg in her narrative:

Growing up in India was what we did! We knew nothing else, and Bombay was home – all the talk of home by many expatriates, meaning the United Kingdom, meant nothing to us, and we never
called it that, although my mother may have done; after all, it was legitimate for her (personal communication, June 26, 2007).

For both Joan Densham and Jane Bigg, India was home. Indeed, Joan Densham’s parents never left India. This takes us back to the question raised earlier: How English could they have been?

In the letters from Alastair Pennycook’s grandmother to his mother, the war became over time a quiet rumble in the background. “I hope you are all making a very special effort towards general orderliness, and implicit obedience, just now. That will be one of your best contributions to the war” (personal communication, 11 June, 1940). “It’s beginning to get very hot here, now, and I have to carry a tin of talcum in my knitting bag, to prevent myself sticking to the knitting. I’m making sea-boot stockings, and what queer things they look! But they should help to keep some poor sailors warm” (personal communication, 5 February, 1941). There is also occasional commentary on events in the war: “I expect you are all disappointed that poor little Greece has fallen after her very gallant fight. It does seem sad, but it is only temporary, for we shall conquer that rotten, nasty bully, Hitler, somehow - and let’s hope we shall not take too long to do it” (personal communication, 8 May, 1941). By March 1942, however, the threat of a Japanese invasion of India meant that they too were making preparations for war.

This background of the war offers still more insights into the experiences of cultivating very particular kinds of English identities. The need to contribute to the war effort by modifying one’s behaviour, through, among other things, ‘implicit obedience’, a phrase frequently heard in the south Asian context at that time to remind both Indians and English about their abiding commitment to God, King and Country, becomes tied in interesting ways to Britain’s role in the war and being English. The war does far more than merely enforce family separation and common activities such as knitting. It also puts into circulation a range of discourses on identity, on Englishness, on countries under threat of invasion, on a divided Europe, on the Japanese threat to the Empire in Asia.

Signifying identities

But beyond this, what is becoming evident is that experiences and the self-and-other presentations that emerge from
them are a result of very particular modes of articulation that lead to the cultivation of historical truths, which in turn create other ‘experiential effects’, and it is crucial that we bring this into our discussion about identities. What were the experiential effects of such long distance parenting? A distinct kind of Englishness emerged through the Empire’s discourses of distance and difference. This is where our fourth point about identities, histories and experiences comes in. Our respective histories have been recounted in specific ways to produce a very specific kind of knowledge, one which we embrace, carry and identify with. Both authors are implicated in our pasts because of particular renditions of historical truths. Speaking openly about how discourses of Empire and identifications with them positioned Alastair Pennycook’s mother allows the wounds of her story to emerge.

If Empire discourses set in motion particular truths, then those of Nation, when India became independent over 60 years ago in 1947, did the same. Discourses of difference and distance lay at the collective unconscious of the Nation, sowing fertile grounds for a heterogeneous duplication. If the Empire created a very distinct kind of Englishness, then the Nation created a very particular Indian-ness. Nation building narratives and the historical truths emanating from the south Asian postcolonial space engaged in similar kinds of reductive self-presentations. An Indian self and sense of nationality had to be deliberately constructed; assembled through, among other things, ritualised acts of anthems and pledges and nationalistic songs. Historians writing at the time (e.g. Chakrabarty, 2007) scripted the nation’s history in very particular ways. Key interpretations of tragic and momentous experiences such as the Indian Sepoy Mutiny, the Jallianwalla Bagh Massacre, the Simon Commission, the divide and rule policies, the appropriations of land, the demeaning images of Indians and the internalisation of those images, accompanied by the nationalistic rhetoric of Gandhi, Tagore, Andrews and other freedom fighters, created a particular Indian-ness, and it is to this we now turn.

While Alastair Pennycook’s mother and aunt were in England, his grandparents were building a life for themselves in Kerala. They lived there for 35 years, were engaged with local issues in the community, and his grandfather, Frank Hawkings, could speak Malayalam. Later, in England, asked to give a talk to a Women’s Institute meeting, he chose to talk about elephants, showing how his life had been deeply involved with these animals.
“Logging is the work on which elephants are mostly employed in Travancore. In the old days they did many jobs which are now done by tractors or bulldozers, but they still do logging in the forests, and I myself often employed a half a dozen of them for this purpose; and was in fact doing so just before I left India 3 years ago. This is how it is done. It is usually the teak trees and maybe the rosewood trees that you want to get out of the forest or from an area that you have felled out for planting”.

There are elephant anecdotes too:

“I was riding slowly on my motorbike just before sundown along a narrow winding path through a dense patch of elephant grass growing 6 to 8 feet high. Suddenly I turned a corner and crashed into the front leg of an elephant standing on the path. Bike and self fell in a heap and the elephant trumpeted into my ear”.

After the war, the estate managers were faced by several dilemmas. On one hand, of course, they could finally travel to England again; reunite with family they had not seen for many years. On the other, India was moving towards independence, raising many questions about their futures in the country. Clearly the possibility of becoming Indian citizens was a major point of debate at the time. Frank spoke of his frustration at how their community was perceived, particularly at that time of postcolonial upheaval:

“A great deal has been written and said in recent years in various parts of the world, notably in the U.K. and the U.S., to the detriment of the British connection with India. Most of it has been unfair and much of it downright falsehood. We are a community of administrators and business men, and we do not have within our ranks that leisured class of lecturers or writers who could speak for us. As a result our case has gone largely by default, and lying propaganda has dubbed us exploiters and enslavers. Ladies and Gentlemen, you will know what our forefathers did for India, and what even we have been able to contribute. We shall give to India a legacy of two centuries of peace, with a high standard of administration, law and order, irrigation, health and sanitation; and above all of education which has taught our Indian brothers the meaning of the liberty for which they now cry”.

Perhaps this idealistic young man who had survived the horrors of the WWI trenches, who had been wounded at the Somme, who had left for a better life in India and made himself a
comfortable and happy life in the spacious bungalow at Kumbazha, had become too steeped in the colonial discourses that made up so much of European communication in India. Perhaps it was time to leave.

Increasingly, the local population thought so. By the 1950s, things had become difficult on the estates. India had gained its independence. Kerala had elected a communist government. There was a strike on Kumbazha Estate in 1951 arising, it seems, from an assault on a Union worker not employed by the estate. As tensions rose and Nair, the President of the Union, went on hunger strike, groups of students came to the estate, and when the full strike started “a gang of 400 students arrived at the factory compound demonstrating”. The disputes lingered on from November into January and February of 1952. On Feb 29th, Frank stated that he had received warning that he was to be molested on his way to the office. And soon after, they left for England, never to return.

We need to make clear here that to bring out ‘different sides of the story’ we are not trying to lessen the significance of the struggle around land ownership in a postcolonial era (Alastair Pennycook’s grandfather, though not a landowner himself, represented forms of inequitable land distribution). Rather, we are interested in micro-histories that have yet to be voiced. Our aim with our joined endeavour of translocal postcolonialism is to bring strands of thought into current historical interpretations that otherwise, for a number of political and strategic reasons, have not had an adequate hearing. Our point with this is simple: our current temporal positionings, 61 years since the Raj, permit more nuanced readings and renders less binary the meta-narratives that position us both in different camps, with different histories. Our emphasis on identities and spaces in this paper allows us to speak of connections and overlaps in our backgrounds.

There are several issues in Frank Hawkings’ story that need careful consideration, given our earlier comments about English-ness and Indian-ness, and some of these can be read from a normative postcolonial orientation. Like a lot of English administrators at the time, Frank had taught himself the local language. As scholars such as Cohn (1996) have pointed out, English administrators needed to do this in order to run businesses. We know from Frank Hawkings’ account that there had been an assault on one of the workers who was a member of a Union, and that the Union was agitating on his
behalf, and was holding strikes and demonstrations. Clearly, there was class-related resentment here, and it was being articulated at a time when co-relations between the Raj and property were being seriously undermined. As much postcolonial scholarship has pointed out, Empires across the world were partially sustained by ‘taking over’ land, businesses, properties and assuming collective rights to run them in organised, systematic ways (see Moses, 2008; Cooper, 2005 for detailed discussion). These were, after all, tumultuous, nationalistic times. Gandhi’s Non-Violence and Non-Cooperation movements for Swaraj had been dominant ideologies for at least three decades. English ethnicity with its accompanying associations of power was generally viewed as being in opposition to Indian-ness (see Dalrymple (2004) for detailed discussion). Is it possible that Frank Hawkings’ leaving, while prompted by a workers’ strike, may have also been a result of growing nationalist sentiments? His lines about things that had been written to the detriment of the British connection with India speak of a disillusionment that stemmed from this growing agitation against the English. His lamentation that as “a community of administrators and businessmen” they did not have within their ranks “that leisured class of lecturers or writers who could speak for us” points to a different level of antagonism: He clearly saw himself as part of a hard-working group of middle managers whose voices had no space in these momentous struggles. While his claim to have given “to India a legacy of two centuries of peace...[an] education which has taught our Indian brothers the meaning of the liberty for which they now cry...we have a record of which any man can be proud” can be seen as condescending, it also emerges from a palpable sense of rejection.

The situation is more complicated than an English estate manager being forced to leave India as part of a postcolonial class struggle. There are nuances in the ‘surround’ of this account that have not had much airing (indeed, like this one, they have remained in dusty attic boxes gathering mold), yet they have direct bearing on the present discussion about identities. Frank’s life was taken up with very local concerns around mahouts and elephants and tree logging. Given what we have said about citizenship in the Gujarat context being about local vernacular engagement, his participation in the Kerala communities was similar in a number of ways. While particular Empire-and Nation discourses frame him in certain ways, if we pull back and critically recognise the multifarious strands that go into their truth-building—the deliberately constructed discourses
of difference and distance on both sides echoing each other—we are able to see both their manufactured nature as well as the experiential effects of these truths. If we shed colonial and nation building discourses for just one second, Frank emerges as similar to many of us who have gone overseas to build a life elsewhere, been civically engaged, and contributed to the community.

Nevertheless, when pushed to leave against his will, his particular class and colonial location point to the ways in which the possibilities of relocation are unequally distributed. After all, they could just go back to England, an option denied to many who are obliged to move. While being forced out may always be hard, it matters very much where and under what conditions you can go. Today, one factor deeply bound up with the movement and migration of people is the English language, one of those things that Alastair’s grandfather, in a sense, left behind in India. For those of us involved in TESOL, we are all involved with these legacies, of colonialism, of movement, of identity.

Translocal Postcolonialism

So where does all this leave us? Let us return to our earlier points about identities, experiences and spaces, and their contexts of emergence and articulation. Much of the uncovering of micro histories happens through the voicing of experiences (although alternate textual forms such as photos and letters are crucial evidence as well). Permanent, completely dual-edged, experiences, especially those voiced collectively, threaten to draw and harden borders, becoming truths in some instances, excluding and silencing in others. At other times, it is in the hearing of experiences, of wounds, whether in the Gujarat context or of Alastair’s grandmother and mother, that truths and borders get challenged. Also, experiences emerge through very distinct articulations, in particular ways, at certain times, for specific audiences and it remains up to us as teachers, researchers, scholars to read the politics of their enunciations. While the moment of voicing painful experiences/wounds that contest historical truths is in itself critical, it is, as Derrida (1992) points out, simultaneously pre-critical, since its very articulation threatens to render the wound a truth. Our wounds become truths and our truths cloak wounds. It is only when we, in joint fashion, start to un-fix these historical truths, as we are both trying to do, that sedimented narratives, that have run deep into the ground, start to detach.
Such a dual, joint engagement, what we are calling *translocal postcolonialism*, is different from *vernacular postcolonialism*, where the focus is on localised voices and interpretations countering colonial/Empire tropes. While crucial and still extremely relevant, we do always need to hear and text the collective painful experiences that move people to counter dominance. Translocal postcolonialism dares to go a step further. It draws on vernacular postcolonialism to counter the Empire while also countering its own neocolonial truths, and it dares to do this by extending a hand to the ‘other side’ not so much to forget the pain of its own past, but to engage the other in speaking back with vernacular postcolonialism. We are aware that such a shift may be open to criticism. It entails a sharp move away from the dominant looms of Empire and Nation (Spivak, 2004) and provides for the possibility of a more encompassing vision of history. This is where our fifth and final point about experiences, identities and histories comes in: The identities that are handed down to us by history demand alienation and dissolution, but in order for reformulations to occur, we need first to identify the discourses at play. It is when we do this that the air seems less stale, interpretations less worn, and our truth-making less trite.

History, preoccupied as it is with political events and momentous upheavals, and intent as it is on scripting truths, takes little account of ordinary experiences and points of connections. Connections and inter-relations are all we have. Dominant looms get taken down and lines blur, disclosing lives ordinarily lived, shops burnt down and rebuilt after the riots, college students and teachers finding their way back to alternate educational spaces after rape and torture, pain undergone as the ship moved on and the familiar shoreline receded, Alastair finding his way back to his grandparents’ house in Kerala and seeing his ancestry in a space, distant from England where he grew up.

We hear and tell these stories to counter tropes, but even as we do, we strive to un-fix them as well, since stories and truths like our lives and histories need forever to be unglued and set free, lest binds set in.
References


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Venturing Beyond YouTube: Learning the Language of Appraisal

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A major function of language is to enable the expression of interpersonal meanings – feelings, opinions, judgements, humour, and so on. Generally, however, this important aspect of language competency is not taught explicitly, possibly because such meanings are so deeply embedded in the culture that even native speakers are not consciously aware of how they employ these subtle resources. Drawing on the tools provided by appraisal theory, the paper considers the interpersonal demands made on English as an additional language or dialect (EAL/D) students as they learn to write responses to popular media texts, in this case, Summer Heights High. While recognising the value of the informal give-and-take of adolescent online banter in such environments as YouTube and MySpace, ultimately students need to deal with the demands of more formal review writing in school. It proposes that students can make that transition with explicit guidance by teachers in using the kinds of evaluative language that is valued in the academic community.

Introduction

One aspect of language that often troubles EAL/D learners is the interpersonal dimension: how to provide an opinion, how to share feelings, how to take a stance, and so on. The interpersonal is deeply rooted in culture and values and as such, is generally felt not to be amenable to explicit teaching. Recently, however, there has been considerable interest among researchers regarding the nature of such interpersonal choices (Coffin, 1997; Hunston & Thompson, 2000; Macken-Horarik & Martin, 2003; White, 2005, 2008). Appraisal
theory (Martin & White, 2005), for example, provides insights into how we use language to express an attitude, to engage with the listener/reader, and to moderate meanings. This paper will explore how the tools of appraisal can be drawn on to enhance students’ understanding and use of interpersonal resources, particularly in school settings.

Certain genres (such as argument, casual conversation, and personal recounts) provide greater opportunities than others to develop interpersonal skills. Here we will be focusing on the response genres, and in particular, the writing of reviews. In this case, we will be considering reviews of a television ‘mockumentary’ series, *Summer Heights High*, which parodies the everyday lives of students and teachers at a suburban high school.

When we teach students to write reviews, we often focus on typical stages such as background, synopsis and comment. They are often at a loss, however, as to what to comment on and how. Providing model texts from expert reviewers does not help as they are generally too sophisticated and linguistically demanding. An alternative is to start with the world which our students inhabit – the internet. Accompanying the video clips of *Summer Heights High* on YouTube are hundreds of responses from viewers. They are generally brief and often very blunt but they are useful in that they show young people engaging animatedly with the series and with each other in ways that we do not observe in more formal contexts. An analysis of these responses revealed that while the writers commented on a variety of aspects relating to the series (the ‘what’) their linguistic resources were very limited (the ‘how’). Further internet explorations led to the writers of blogs. These blogs provided more extended responses, often written by enthusiasts or by students. The bloggers’ views often stimulated lengthy exchanges about the merits of the series. The bloggers touched on a greater variety of aspects in their evaluation of the show and their command of more subtle linguistic resources was much stronger. In addition to the YouTubers and bloggers, a number of online expert reviews were also analysed. These ranged in quality from blurbs announcing the screening of the series through to scholarly opinion pieces. These reviews provided an indication of aspects that could be talked about when reviewing, many of which required some technical knowledge (e.g. casting, editing, lighting). They also used language which sometimes bordered on the pompous, though sometimes provided
useful models of evaluative language to which more advanced students might aspire.

This paper is suggesting that, in selecting examples of reviews for model texts, it might be useful:

- to acknowledge the vibrancy of spontaneous responses (such as on YouTube and MySpace), to recognise the range of aspects covered in such responses, but to extend this range and the language used to express opinions;
- to refer to selected expert reviews in order to help students identify a wider variety of aspects open to evaluation and to investigate the language used to critique them (though some might be inaccessible);
- to use model texts from the blogs to mediate between the limited YouTube responses and the relatively remote expert reviews.

These relationships can be illustrated as in Figure 1.

![Figure 1: The online discourse communities](image)

In all, some 250 YouTube postings, 56 blogs entries and associated responses, and eighteen professional reviews of *Summer Heights High* were analysed using appraisal theory in order to identify the language used by each of these groups to respond to the series. Here we will focus on only one aspect of appraisal theory:
attitude. Figure 2 illustrates the kinds of choices available in the expression of attitudes.

![The Attitude Network (adapted from Martin & White, 2005)](image)

In investigating attitudes, we can look at such things as the expression of feelings and emotion, judgements of human behaviour, and the evaluation of the qualities of things. We can ask such questions as:

a) Who is expressing the attitude? (e.g. the author? someone else?)

b) Who or what is the target of the attitude?

c) How is the attitude expressed?

d) Is the attitude positive or negative?

e) Is it directly stated or indirectly implied?

In analysing, for example, sentences such as:

a) *I abhor his posturing.*

b) *His character observations are so freakingly funny.*

c) *Keiren never gets into trouble.*

d) *Times reviewer Andrew Billen writes that the mockumentary style is 20 years old.*

we can develop the following table:
WHO IS EXPRESSING THE ATTITUDE? | TARGET OF ATTITUDE (WHO OR WHAT?) | EXPRESSION OF ATTITUDE (HOW?) | POSITIVE OR NEGATIVE? | DIRECTLY STATED OR INDIRECTLY IMPLIED?
---|---|---|---|---
a) Reviewer | ‘his posturing’ | ‘I abhor’ (Affect) | negative | directly stated
b) YouTube viewer | ‘his character observations’ (quality of thing) | ‘freakingly funny’ (Appreciation: reaction) | positive | directly stated
c) Blogger | teachers’ behaviour (moral standards) | ‘Keiren never gets into trouble’ (Judgement) | negative | indirectly implied
d) Times reviewer (cited) | ‘the mockumentary style’ (quality of thing) | ‘20 years old’ (Appreciation) | negative | indirectly implied

Table 1: Analysis of Attitudes

When such analyses are undertaken, we are eventually able to identify the kinds of things that are evaluated (‘what’) and the ways in which they are evaluated (‘how’). We can also see whether the evaluation is positive or negative and whether the evaluation is directly stated or indirectly implied. Illustrative samples have been provided below from the YouTube postings, blogs and professional reviews to exemplify the kinds of interpersonal meanings being constructed in each.

Expressing feelings (‘affect’)

When we look at the YouTube postings, we notice a great number of emotional responses, both positive and negative, are often heightened by the use of intensifiers (definitely), highly graded lexis (hate), or emphatic punctuation.

*I LUV SUMMER HEIGHTS HIGH!!!!!!*

I ♥ Jonah

Ola is cool lol. I envy her cuz she hangs out with Jonah and LEON

i l*ken hate keiren

I defentitly felt bad for Jonah, because the teacher took it waaaay too far
The bloggers also expressed feelings, but rather than spontaneous bursts of emotion, these were often more considered and elaborated. Feelings are often nominalised (tenderness, sadness, happiness) – a strategy for ‘distancing’ the emotion and allowing for expansion (some real tenderness, pure and innocent happiness). Notice also the restrained twinge of sadness (a nominalisation of degree).

Towards the end I was starting to really feel for Jonah. I especially loved the storyline with him and his English teacher. Some real tenderness and understanding bubbling under there and even though it’s all fictional I felt a twinge of sadness for him.

Every episode will put every single viewer into a state of pure and innocent happiness.

In addition, the reviewers allowed themselves an emotional response, but rather than positioning themselves as the source of the emotion, they often identified the feeling as a reaction to something else, in this case Summer Heights High. This is another distancing strategy, on the borderline between expressing feelings (affect) and evaluating something (appreciation). Again the feeling has been nominalised (poignant moments).

Summer Heights High is highly entertaining and also has some very poignant moments, particularly relating to Jonah.

Judging human behaviour (‘judgement’)

We can judge behaviour in terms of such criteria as social esteem (e.g. skill, courage, tenacity) or moral/ethical standards (e.g. truthfulness, propriety). These judgements can be positive (admiration) or negative (criticism). In the case of writing reviews, judgement is generally drawn on when evaluating the capacity of the creator of the work in question or in appraising the behaviour of the characters. (The latter is particularly the case in the literary characters studies of secondary school).

In terms of the author’s capacity, the YouTubers acknowledge the skills of Chris Lilley, who created the series:

roll chris lilley is one talented man
Chris Lilley is a genius!
he’s amazingly talented
The Blog response below again nominalises Lilley’s skill. Rather than saying ‘Lilley understands teenagers’, the nominal/noun form (Chris Lilley’s understanding of teenagers) has been used, allowing for his understanding to now be described as funny and disturbingly accurate. (Note also the way that disturbingly introduces further comment).

**Chris Lilley’s understanding of teenagers is both funny and disturbingly accurate**

The reviewers are generally more circumspect in their admiration of Lilley’s talents. Below, the praise is relative (Lilley is only perceived as a genius because there is no competition) and is tempered by the use of a modal (may be):

> In a local television industry characterised by meretriciousness, intellectual timidity and corporate contempt for viewers, Chris Lilley may be the closest thing to a comedy genius.

In relation to judgement of the characters, the YouTube contributions are generally to the point, often seeing the characters as ‘real people’:

- Keiran is a **fag** he does just make sh*t up.
- keran is a little homo hes retarded

The bloggers are more expansive in their comments, providing evidence for their opinion, and again, the judgements are nominalised. Instead of using the expected adjective (‘she is rude’), we find the noun rudeness, which is then modified as sugar-tinged:

> There’s 16-year-old exchange student Ja’mie King, who hails from posh private school Hillwood and has a knack for preening arrogance – she tells everyone she’s “the smartest non-Asian in Year 11” – and sugar-tinged rudeness – “The buildings are so, kind of, grey?” she says, walking around her new habitat. “Like, no offence.”

The reviewers tend to treat the characters as constructed (rather than real) and critique them using criteria reflecting the values of the discourse community and a familiarity with its norms, often using intertextual references to similar characters in other shows.
The **strongest** character is the sublimely named drama teacher Greg Gregson, or Mr G as he claims his “adoring” pupils refer to him. Yes, on the surface he is a cut-out-and-keep camp drama teacher, indistinguishable from a phalanx of throwaway Little Britain grotesques, but he is far closer to David Brent both in unintentional humour and acerbic self-delusion.

Such evaluations display a great deal of complexity as they are simultaneously judging the moral and social qualities of the character (judgement), appreciating the character as a fictional creation (appreciation), as well as indirectly appraising the skill of the creator (judgement: capacity).

**Evaluating the qualities of something (‘appreciation’)**

The analysis revealed that there were several aspects of the creative work that could be commented on:

- the series in general
- its social message
- technical aspects
- characterization
- dialogue
- performance
- composition (e.g. complexity, balance)
- production values

Some of these will be briefly illustrated.

**Appreciation of the creative work**

The reactions, both positive and negative, of the YouTube posters to the series as a whole were predictably brief and clichéd, using high levels of emphasis (including superlatives). The comments reflect values shared by the adolescent sub-culture:

*Its cool and so random lol*

*One word: CRAP!*

*it is the funniest thing i have ever seen!!!*

*it is pucking brilliant*
The bloggers provide more considered comments on the show. In the example below, the evaluation funny is then countered by but with a dark edge, indicating an appreciation of the complexity of the series:

\textit{very funny but with a dark edge that makes it much more interesting than most things on television at the moment.}

The reviewers use describers such as honest, confronting, controversial, hilarious, absurd, awfully addictive, over-the-top hilarious and frequently shocking, but then proceed to expound on their reactions:

\textit{Hilarious, absurd and frequently shocking} Summer Heights High reveals a world where small issues become huge, social groups are important, careers are built, young minds are moulded, hopes are shattered and dreams are realised.

**Appreciation of the social message**

The YouTube kids were very alert to the racist issues raised by the show. Many of them obviously were of Pasifika backgrounds and empathised with Jonah and his gang.

\textit{Is it wrong he takes the piss out of the Maori kids? It is funny, but it seems wrong, stereotyping them all as being dysfunctional, disruptive and illiterate}

\textit{Cum on ppl dis show is not racist. im half islander and heaps of islanders teas dem self man. its calld a joke. eg. laughn samoans der soooo funny man. der not being racist der jst haven fun. im been readn all des comments about all dis racist shet man. dis show is a classic lmao}

\textit{i reckon there was some kind of message in there though, i'd have to think about that though.}

The bloggers were less emotionally involved, commenting on the devices used to generate the social comment (e.g. humour) and generalizing about the theme using abstractions such as many important issues, social justice messages, and subtle inequalities.
Lilley is bringing many important issues to light with humour - rather than the current trend of making important issues too serious, too boring and too detached from reality.

The show is also being studied in high schools across the country, being cited for its underlying social justice messages. Lilley is quite brilliant at showing the subtle inequalities that go on in school like that.

The Reviewers identified such topics as drugs in school, the developmentally disabled, public versus private schooling, condescension towards the unattractive, and the failure of the student/teacher relationship. In one case the three characters were seen as symbolising the issues of class (Ja’mie), race (Jonah) and gender (Mr G), thereby raising the appraisals to sociocultural abstractions. Their comments generally involved a consideration of ideological matters and the role of parody:

He captures some of the wonder and most of the horror of life in the public-school system, a foreign continent of coruscating slang, brutal bullying, profanity, delusional teachers, recalcitrant students, racism, homophobia and crushed innocence. ... While Australian society keeps rationing its limited opportunities on the basis of anything other than merit, the show points out, nothing’s ever going to change.

Appraisal of the construction of the creative work

Perhaps unexpectedly, there were a few observations from the YouTubers on the show as a literary creation:

Oh, okay, I’ll say one positive thing, the writing is OK (like 5 out of 10 ok)

Among the bloggers there was some discussion of the nature of the plot, with one being critical of the lack of plot while another comments that it is a ‘slice of life’ show that doesn’t rely on plot:

This episode is high on laughs but very thin on plot

This isn’t about plot, it’s about life.

The reviewers had many more resources to draw on here, given their familiarity with the criteria commonly employed in the
field. They were able to discuss such matters as editing, flow, complexity and balance:

"a great deal of funny material was left on the cutting-room floor because it interfered with the show's rigorous naturalism. But it's a kind of realism built around timing and rhythm that's musical as well as lifelike."

The editing process is all about savage carving.

The show can be read on so many levels, from a belly-laugh at the antics of Jonah to searing insights into the human condition.

Like Gervais, Lilley possesses an acute awareness of the precise calculus of comedy and social humiliation.

The attention to detail in this show makes it a real joy to watch.

The way the scenes are broken up with innocuous shots of school lockers or busy playgrounds resemble The Office's use of photocopiers and the humdrum grumbling silence of a busy office.

**Appreciation of character development**

Another aspect that is commonly appraised in reviews is how well the writer has designed the characters. This is not ignored by the YouTubers:

*His character observations are so freakingly funny*

The bloggers also noted the degree of authenticity with which the characters were drawn, often commenting on how well the depictions accorded with their own experience:

*Summer Heights High is a very accurate depiction of a typical high school. Jonah is so funny and his delinquent behaviour is so accurate. The reactions of teachers to him and his comments toward them couldn't be more real! I also love mr g! he is amazing. so funny and i know a teacher just like him!*

*I went to school with girls like Jamie. That fight on last week's episode? I HAD that fight in Year 11. I know kids like Jonah. The drama teacher? We all had that teacher (though probably not as extreme) Its just so true to life and Australian schools. God, its brilliant.*
While some reviewers dismissed Lilley’s characters as derivative, pale imitations of those created by Ricky Gervais and other British comedy writers, others also applauded the way in which Lilley’s characters were believable and provoked empathy:

*All three characters are compelling. Jonah is as tragic as he is comic, displaying a real desire to learn to read but at the same time despising the system that makes him feel stupid.*

*such a fantastically flawless and accurate depiction of personalities*

**Appreciation of dialogue**

The art of the script writer is commonly a target of appraisal on the part of professional reviewers. Surprisingly, the YouTubers also regularly singled out bits of dialogue that particularly appealed to them and shared them with their fellow viewers. Sometimes they simply indicated the point in the video where the dialogue occurs. While such implicitness serves to provoke solidarity, it does not provide opportunities to develop an explicit way of talking about the qualities of the dialogue that they are enjoying.

‘f**k you miss’
‘i beg your pardon jonah ?’
‘i sed puck you miss with a P !!’
Classic3’26 rofl

The bloggers and reviewers had less to say about the dialogue, apart from a somewhat lukewarm assessment:

*Times reviewer Andrew Billen writes that “the script had its moments but Lilley needed to cast someone other than himself in the plum parts”.*

**Appreciation of the performance**

The YouTube viewers had quite a lot to say, both positive and negative, about the quality of the performances:

*lol love the chrecters its just soo funny and brilliantly performed*

r dae ment to be islanders lolz
haha da guy dat plays jonas is white yeah

yes he's white he just plays as an tonga character OK

to me he doesn't really seem much like an islander?....more like a WOG or something? hes not FOB enough I reckon...maybe too oz?

The bloggers had fewer reservations about the authenticity of the performances:

the performances from everyone, even the 'extras', are incredibly convincing

It's a bit like when you watch Sasha Barron Cohen as Ali G and Borat you forget this is the same person playing all 3 characters. He competely emerses himself in these characters

he is so accomplished that you look at each of his characters on screen wondering how he could play them so convincingly.

The reviewers similarly praised the high standards set by the ‘many young actors and actresses’, including ‘several disabled children’.

Setting, support cast and production were also excellent

Lilley flits among them effortlessly; at times it's difficult to believe all three characters are played by the one person.

Conclusion

The tools provided by appraisal theory have allowed us to investigate what kinds of things students can comment on when writing reviews (the ‘what’), such as the feelings they experienced, aspects of human behaviour (e.g. capacity of the creator, moral behaviour of the characters) and the qualities of the work being reviewed (e.g. the impact, social value, characterisation, dialogue, performance, and composition). We have also seen how learners might talk about such things (the ‘how’), using the language of appraisal (affect, judgement and appreciation) to critique in both positive and negative terms.
It was notable that young people in the YouTube environment, many of whom were of non-English speaking backgrounds, engaged in dynamic discussion around the series and that they commented on most of the aspects identified by more experienced reviewers as targets of evaluation. Less developed, however, were their resources for evaluating those features. In this respect, the reviews written by the bloggers provided models that were closer to the experience of the YouTube participants. The reviews written by those with expertise in the field were generally inaccessible, though they did point to a wider range of features that could be evaluated and they provided glimpses of kinds of linguistic resources that are valued in the academic community.

The YouTube emphasis on affective involvement is something to be nurtured. However, it is important to be able to move beyond the emotions and critically appraise the work in a more objective way. One area open to critique is the skill of the author or the behaviour of the characters. These aspects of judgement, however, are relatively limited. It is the realm of appreciation that comes into greater play in reviews, where the work in question is appraised from a variety of perspectives, the reaction it provokes, its aesthetic qualities, its social value, its technical achievements, and so on.

Obviously, the approach described above would not be appropriate nor possible to implement with all students, let alone all EAL/D learners. It would depend on the type of creative work being reviewed, the availability of a range of model reviews, the age and proficiency level of the students and the time available. However the following principles would generally apply:

- it is possible and productive to explicitly teach interpersonal uses of language;
- the appraisal framework provides useful tools to identify different types of interpersonal linguistic resources;
- students need to be encouraged to have an emotional involvement but need also to be able to distance themselves, moving towards greater generalization and abstraction;
- in responding to creative works, students need help in identifying the various features that can be appraised;
the language used by more experienced reviewers to appraise such features needs to be modelled, drawing on criteria that reflect the norms of the community;

- students need to be taught how to make both positive and negative evaluations as well as to moderate their opinions by boosting (utterly brilliant) and down-toning them (somewhat appealing), introducing subtleties and nuances and shades of grey;
- in the first instance the whole class needs to focus on a shared creative work before moving on to working independently on reviews of self-selected works.

As teachers, we need to ensure that students have control over such interpersonal resources so that they can more fully participate in the discourses valued in schooling. In some cases, the teacher might undertake an analysis of relevant reviews and share the findings with the students, providing information on what to talk about and useful models of evaluative language. In other cases, the students themselves might participate in a collaborative analysis of the interpersonal meanings in a text, perhaps using an adaptation of Table 1. Students can be guided to compare and contrast how different reviewers value the work in question and to observe how reviewers provide evidence to support their opinions. Through such analysis, students are made aware of what is valued in the discourse community and the ways in which language is used to express such values.

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References


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A Dedication to Kate Mullin

RHONDA OLIVER
Edith Cowan University

Although I have felt great sadness in doing this, it has been a pleasure and an honour to write this tribute to Kate Mullin – my friend, colleague, fellow committee member (for numerous associations) and ex-student. She is someone I greatly admired. Kate will be remembered by many for her contributions to education particularly to ESL, Indigenous and literacy education. She was clever and kind, and though quiet by nature, not unassuming. She had a keen sense of humour, was forthright, but in the most diplomatic of ways, and a strong campaigner for social justice. As well as being a wonderful teacher, both inside and outside the classroom, she was a great friend to so many, wonderful wife to Kenny and devoted mother of Matthew and Ben.

Kate and I met in one of the first Masters class I taught when I commenced at Edith Cowan University in 1996. At the time she was working as an ESL teacher at a nearby secondary college. Those early classes were filled with so many talented and capable people and funnily enough, many hailed from Ireland, but only Kate came from Northern Island. The exchanges that occurred in that and subsequent classes were dynamic and engaging, and Kate was an intelligent contributor. I am sure I learnt more from her and her fellow students, than they did from me.

Kate was a talented student. Perhaps because of her voracious appetite for reading or simply because she was so clever, she wrote beautifully. I nagged her for years to commence her PhD. I know she would have done a brilliant job – as she did with most things she tackled – but it was also a little selfish of me: I wanted the experience of sharing another learning journey with her.

My keen desire to have her as my doctoral student was not just based on my judgement of her writing and research abilities,
rather it was because I knew her to be a true scholar. She delighted in the joy of knowledge and learning. She could consume academic literature with as much relish as she did her other books. And I know she took pride in her academic achievements - I remember her excitement and pride when Judith Rochecouste (a mutual friend) and I returned from a conference in Northern Ireland and talked to her about her Alma Matae – Queens University in Belfast.

Most recently she and I had been working together on writing a paper in which we were mapping stages of the Accelerated Literacy (AL) program (a literacy program used in many of the Aboriginal Independent Community Schools) onto the theoretical accounts of second language acquisition. She had covered much of the core understandings in her Masters degree, however, she was keen to update her knowledge. Each week or so I’d hand over another tome – books such as those by Long and Doughty, Gass, and Ellis as well as numerous journal articles – and despite their length and complexity, she worked her way through them diligently. When we met, we would discuss the main issues, talk about the link to AL and off she’d go with another book or article to ‘think about and digest’. Eventually we produced a draft that was accepted for publication in a national literacy journal (subject to amendments). Like most things she did, her dedication to the task was unfailing and she continued with it to completion – in spite of its difficulty and some setbacks along the way.

In 1998, after completing the required coursework for her Masters, Kate wrote her dissertation entitled “Michael Jordan – Language Teacher: An evaluative study of a Content Based Language Teaching Programme”. This was a pivotal step in her career - by this time she had commenced her work at AISWA and recognising the huge literacy needs of many Indigenous students, she had begun her close association with many of the Independent Aboriginal community schools in the state of Western Australia. Her dissertation detailed the learning of a group of disaffected Aboriginal boys who had embarked, with their teacher and in collaboration with Kate, on an innovative program that involved developing their literacy though their love of basketball. Her data collection was thorough and meticulous, as was her analysis. The presentation of her thesis was outstanding and required little input from me as her supervisor.
As happens in many supervisor/student relationships, the time we spent together on her dissertation led to a close friendship. We would spend time together not only discussing her research, but also talking about our children – by the time I actually met Matthew and Ben I felt I already knew them very well. Kate also shared her passion for reading with me and would pass on books she’d know I’d enjoy. She introduced me to the delights of Marian Keyes and continued to share books with me long after she graduated.

At the memorial for Kate, Audrey Jackson, who was the then head of AISWA, also described Kate’s love of reading. “For me, my memory is sharing books. Kate and I both enjoyed mystery stories but we shared other books as well. Kate had the idea of starting an AISWA library. Once you had read a book you put it in a cupboard in the tearoom for others to share. Many flights inter and intrastate have been made more pleasant by borrowing a book from those that we all contributed.”

Once Kate finished her Masters, she joined me on the committee of WATESOL and shortly after she became president of this association. It was a turbulent time – the introduction of new courses of studies threatened the demise of a specialised ESL option for upper secondary students. Led by Kate, we lobbied, argued, and generally made our presence felt. The committee sent letters to the Curriculum Council and politicians, including the then premier, Alan Carpenter (whom we had fortuitously invited to earlier WATESOL events), and generally put forth our position to all those with any power to make change. Finally and somewhat unexpectedly at our AGM in 2004, success was ours as the then head of the Curriculum Council announced that there would be an ESL course of study.

This was not Kate’s only achievement as leader of WATESOL. In the years she was on the committee and as president, the association was extremely active. For instance, Kate was driving force in the hosting of the national conference in Perth. With a team of dedicated helpers, she worked tirelessly to ensure that it was a success. She also organised many professional development opportunities as well as social gatherings for the membership.

Because of her links with WATESOL, and also through AISWA, she was a strong advocate for ESL learners, in fact for all
students, but especially those from diverse backgrounds in relation to literacy and the work of the Curriculum Council. She also worked in other ways to support these students. For example, she assisted schools and students to celebrate their diversity by championing the Multi-Cultural Book Competition. Again as Audrey outlined in her memorial speech, without Kate’s drive the competition to which students from Year 1 to Year 12 submit books in either their first language or in the language they were learning at school would not have flourished to be such a celebration of diversity.

In her role at AISWA, Kate worked alongside teachers to help them develop the literacy skills of their students. She has worked with teachers in schools through the length and breadth of Western Australia—from Esperance to Purnululu, 150 kms from Hall’s Creek, and from Perth to Kalgoorlie. Kate worked with some of the most remote schools in the state. Schools such as Rawa in a community on the edge of the Western Desert, and Yiyili 170 kms South East of Fitzroy Crossing. Clearly she had an impact on many—not just teachers and their students - but also community members. In fact, Kate had spent her 50th birthday celebrating with a community feast at Yiyili. Kate also assisted teachers working in schools with migrant and refugee students, and at ‘last chance’ schools. In addition, she contributed as a member of many educational committees including Curriculum Council committees, the judging panel of the National Literacy and Numeracy awards, various conference committees and as already noted, with WATESOL.

When Audrey Jackson gave her memorial speech she used the voices of representative people to express the feelings of so many of us. I repeat these here because the sentiments they express go some way in capturing all that Kate did.

From Rawa:

The impact Kate had on each of us, professionally and personally, be it our teaching staff, our Martu Education workers or most importantly our students and their literacy learning was profound. She had an amazing capacity to achieve. This trait led to massive gains for our staff professionalism and again, our student outcomes.
From the AICS Broome Office:
We will miss Kate on a personal level, and we will always remember the great contribution she made in the remote Aboriginal Independent Community Schools. She has made a big difference to the quality of teaching in our schools, and consequently to the lives of many children in the remote communities that we work in.

From The Australian Islamic College:
Kate was familiar face for us all and she worked intensively with many of our staff in the areas of New Arrival. Her assistance to our college has been monumental and she will be missed by many who have benefited from her advice, experience and expertise over the years.

From Alta-I, a school of last chance for young people:
Kate had visited the school often and all the kids owned a book that she had given them... She certainly touched a lot of people.

Clearly Kate worked to make a difference. Her contribution to helping Western Australian teachers and students was considerable and we all hope, enduring. As her dear friend and colleague at AISWA, Ron Gorman, said “Kate never took the easy way but strove for the right way”. However, for me it is the beautiful but simple sentiments of one of the Indigenous community members that best captures why many of us feel such a loss:

When Yangkana Laurel was told the sad news about Kate’s death, she had a cry and said "she was my friend".

My thanks go to Judith Rochecouste, Ron Gorman and Audrey Jackson for their assistance in writing this tribute.
Professor Rhonda Oliver holds the chair in Education at Edith Cowan University Bunbury campus. She lectures and researches in the areas of Language Education, TESOL and Applied Linguistics and has published widely in national and international journals. She was the Vice-President of WATESOL between 1998 and 2004.
REAL READING 2 WITHOUT ANSWERS
Liz Driscoll
Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2007, 256 pages
ISBN 0-521-60462-8

Reviewed by Tahereh Pourshafie
Student Learning Centre, Flinders University

Real reading 2 without answers is a useful resource not only for non-native students of English who would like to improve their reading and comprehension skills, but also for ESL teachers who can use the material to teach in class. The units in the book are set out methodically and increase in difficulty towards the end of the book. However, students or teachers are not limited to using the book from the beginning to the end. There are different suggested ways of using the units, such as choosing the most interesting unit to start with, looking at Appendix 1 which contains the useful language for the unit, carrying out the exercises from different sections of the book and working on the extra practice activities. Real reading 2 is one of twelve books in the Cambridge English Skills series which are available in with-answers and without-answers editions.

Real reading 2 is aimed at students at pre-intermediate level who want to improve their English reading. The book assists the student to develop the skills that are needed to read confidently and with understanding. The activities in Real reading 2 cover a range of everyday situations which connect theory and practice through real world practice tasks.

The 16 units of the book engage the reader with texts for everyday practice, which helps students with reading in English at home or when visiting another country. The 16 units are divided into two groups:

Units 1-11 – social and travel situations
Units 12-16 – work and study situations
Every unit has several sections which introduce the topic, help improve the student’s learning, suggest a group exercise, focus on grammar or vocabulary, give extra information on different cultures, and provide extra exercises for more practice and a checklist for reflection. The exercises in each unit help to develop the skill of working out the meaning of unknown words from context, using colourful pictorials.

There are two review units, one at the end of units 1-11 and one at the end of units 12-16. The reviews help the individual to practise the skills learnt in each section.

Two of the strong features of Real reading 2 are the ‘introduction to the students’ and ‘the introduction to the teacher’ sections. The guidelines in these two sections are clear and equip both the teacher and the student to understand the layout of the book, thus making the book user friendly. Moreover, the whole series is accompanied by a website which contains detailed teaching and extension notes for every unit of every book.

Real reading 2 is particularly good for students from non-English speaking backgrounds and in particular international students. The activities acquaint students with social life situations such as joining and using a library or sports centre, and finding a job.

The clear guidelines, flexibility of use for teacher-led or self-guided study, and the international feel of the book make Real reading 2 a comprehensive study resource to be used in class or alone by the student.
REAL WRITING 2 WITH ANSWERS
Graham Palmer
Cambridge University Press, 2008
ISBN 978 0 521 70186 0

Reviewed by David Bright
Monash University

Real Writing 2, part of the new Cambridge English Skills series, is aimed at pre-intermediate students who want to improve their writing skills. The book is designed around the Association of Language Testers in Europe (ALTE) can-do statements (http://www.alte.org/) which describe what language users can typically do at different levels and in different contexts. Real Writing 2 can be used individually or in the classroom to improve writing skills and encourage autonomous approaches to learning.

The book is divided into two sections which provide the contextual focus for the activities: social life and travel, and work and study. Both sections contain eight four-page units, each focusing on a different writing activity. In addition there are two review units, one following each section, and several appendices dealing with vocabulary, spelling, punctuation, style notes and a particularly useful section which provides students with advice on reviewing their writing for clarity, organisation and mistakes.

Each unit features a different writing context and is structured around a real world, communicative writing activity. Writing tasks include completing forms for online shopping, filling out a rail card application, composing a text message to a friend, note taking, descriptive writing and sending a formal business email. The units include pre-writing activities, extra practice activities, a skills checklist, learning tips, grammar and vocabulary focus points, factual information on the unit topics and cultural and linguistic differences between English speaking countries.

Real Writing 2 also includes an audio-CD and features a dedicated website with teaching notes and approaches to using the book in the classroom. For classroom teachers the pre-writing activities, which provide an introduction to the topics, lend themselves to pair or group work and many units also include ‘class
bonus’ activities which provide an opportunity for less directed practice.

Despite being structured around the ALTE Can-do statements, *Real Writing 2* is well suited to many Australian teaching situations. The contextual, real-world writing activities provide students with effective practice in writing for different purposes. The units are ordered logically and progress in difficulty throughout the book. *Real Writing 2* is attractively presented in full colour, including many photographs, images and reproductions of websites, forms and emails. However some of the pages may be confusing for less advanced students due to the large amount of information presented on each page.

Overall, *Real Writing 2* would be a valuable resource for students who wish to improve their writing skills and for their teachers.
Notes for Contributors

- It is understood that articles submitted to *TESOL in Context* have not been previously published and are not under consideration for publication elsewhere.
- Articles up to 5,000 words are preferred, and an abstract of up to 200 words should be included with each article submitted.
- Electronic submission as attached files is preferred (Microsoft Word or rich text format), but submission in hard copy with an accompanying floppy disk or CD is also possible.
- One file should contain a separate cover page with the article’s title, the names of the author/s, their preferred titles, and the contact details for the author to whom correspondence should be sent (address, telephone and fax numbers, and email address). About 70 words of biographical data should also be included.
- A second file should contain the title followed by the abstract, the body of the paper and the list of references. Number the pages but do not use identifying headers or footers.
- Headings and sub-headings should be left aligned, with the first letter capitalised.
- Indicate new paragraphs by using one extra line space.
- Text should be Times New Roman, 11 points, with 1.5 spacing.
- Short quotations should be incorporated into the text and enclosed with double quotation marks.
- Quotations of more than about 40 words should be set off from the main text by indentation, without any quotation marks.
- Referencing should follow the APA referencing style; for examples, see a recent issue of the journal or the sample articles on the ACTA website (http://www.tesol.org.au/pub.htm).
- References in the text should be ordered alphabetically and contain the name of the author and the year of publication, e.g. (Adams, 2001; Jones, 1998). For direct quotations include the relevant page number(s), e.g. (Jones, 1998, p.34).
- Tables, figures or diagrams should be numbered consecutively and included in the relevant part of the text. Each should have an explanatory title.
• Numbers up to and including ten should be spelt out and numbers over ten should be expressed as figures.

• The spellings used should be those given in *The Macquarie Dictionary*.

• All articles submitted are subject to blind, impartial refereeing; referees are asked to report against the following criteria:
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  o The article is grounded appropriately in relevant published literature.
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  o Language use and style are appropriate to the audience and purpose.
  o *Notes for contributors* have been followed in all respects, including consistent use of APA style.
  o The article has potential to make a worthwhile contribution to the TESOL field.

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