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Teacher ideologies of English in 21st century Norway and new directions for locally tailored ELT

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Abstract

English language education is designed to prepare learners for the needs of the world today and in the future. This article explores Norwegian teachers’ ideologies of English in society and English in school to consider locally relevant 21st century English language teaching (ELT). Language ideologies construct certain social realities that shape teachers’ understanding of English and contextually meaningful ELT. Data was generated through extensive interviews with 12 teachers in basic education in Norway. Data were inductively analyzed using methods from grounded theory and resulted in a conceptual framework of teacher ideologies. Findings reveal English as a natural, supranational language in modern Norwegian society, but also as personal and threatening. English in school, on the other hand, is foreign, communicative, historic and cultural, humanistic, for learning interdisciplinary content, and in flux. The final category explores self-reflexive questions teachers raise about ownership and identity, diversity, digitalization, and global orientation. In considering new directions, findings suggest the need for a metalanguage for English in non-native contexts that better encompasses experiences in an increasingly diverse and interconnected world. A current initiative to support teachers in exploring new and locally appropriate directions in ELT is then recommended.

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1. Introduction

English language education is designed to prepare learners for life outside of school, both today and in the future (Hornberger, 2006). In much of the world, environmental changes and advances in technology are reshaping life and social interaction. These changes potentially disrupt living standards and human welfare, as recently witnessed during the COVID-19 pandemic. Addressing disruptions successfully requires the ability to establish shared understanding and coordinate multiple stakeholders (Schwab, 2016, 2017). Given the global position of English, teachers are uniquely positioned to equip future generations with 21st century readiness as reality-oriented, problem-solving global citizens able to interact in English with multiple stakeholders on complex issues (Fullan, Quinn, & McEachen, 2018). In Europe, readiness through key competencies for active citizenship, social inclusion, personal fulfilment and employability are intended to provide stability in transformative and potentially turbulent times (European Communities, 2007; OECD, 2018). Developing this readiness presents teachers with a wide and complex landscape for teaching English in school.
This article reports on teacher ideologies of English as part of a larger project investigating teachers’ vision for 21st century English language teaching (ELT). Teachers’ ideologies are investigated as an “epistemic matrix” (Seargeant, 2008, p. 123) for understanding the teaching of English in school and asks:

- What ideologies characterize teachers’ conceptions of English in society and English in school?

Findings derive from a Norwegian context but, like all ideologies, are connected to larger discourses relevant to other contexts (Bernstein, 2000; Fairclough, 2010, 2015). Alignments and gaps in findings for English ideologies in society and school are discussed and new directions and transformative spaces in teacher thinking for locally relevant ELT considered. Finally, a current initiative supporting teachers in adopting new directions is outlined.

2. Ideologies of the English and ELT

Language ideologies are situated conceptions and underlying thoughts about the use of a language in the social world and are constructed from sociocultural experience (Kroskrity, 2004, p. 498). These conceptions may be explicit or implicit in the communicative practices of a community of speakers. Language ideologies are dynamic, incomplete and often only partially account for the use of a language. They construct certain assumptions and social realities for locally relevant meanings of English (Fairclough, 2015; Snow, 2008). As such, they are fertile ground for exploring variation and problematizing beliefs. Discourses and the ideologies they embed can and often do incorporate political, cultural or economic perspectives beyond the language itself, i.e. English is globalization, English is human capital, etc. (Pennycook, 2007, 2010). In non-native English-speaking contexts, ideologies of English may, for example, be viewed as foreignness, global community, functional communication, employability, an instrument of learning, a form of identity expression, etc.

Block (1996) was the first to challenge a foreign language ideology in applied linguistics that influenced ELT and promoted the native speakers of the United Kingdom and North America. This ideology conceives English as the ethnically unified language of these nations and as a means of accessing the knowledge of the West. The relevance of foreign language ideology for non-native English-speaking contexts has been increasingly questioned (Holliday, 2006; Pennycook, 2010; Seidlhofer, 2011; Seidlhofer & Widdowson, 2019). Despite policy shifts away from foreign language ideology, however, teachers may still view English as a “living artefact” and a “heuristic tool” for accessing foreign culture(s) (Seargeant, 2008).

Research in English as a lingua franca (ELF) (Seidlhofer, 2011; Sifakis, 2017), English as an International Language (EIL) (Pan, 2011; Pan & Block, 2011) and World Englishes (WE) (Galloway, 2013; Galloway & Rose, 2014; Rosenhan & Galloway, 2019) reflects an increasingly globally oriented approach to English that acknowledges the plurality and diversity of Englishes in the world. Central to this approach is: a) understanding English as emerging in the interactions of different speakers and the cultural references they apply, b) expanding the range of interlocutors in ELT practices, and c) raising sensitivity, awareness and respect for diversity in the English(es) that are taught or used (Matsuda, 2018; Sifakis, 2017; Sifakis & Tsantila, 2019). Research reveals, however, that tensions may exist between teachers’ openness to diversity and restrictions in standardized assessments (Ranta, 2010) or, conversely, between policy intentions promoting diversity and restrictions in teachers’ ideological positions (Pan & Block, 2011).

In Europe, a Content Language and Integrated Learning (CLIL) approach presents English as both an instructional language for content learning and the object to be learned (Coyle, 2007; Mahan, Brevik, & Ødegaard, 2018). The balance of content and language may vary, from importing topics from other subjects into English to teaching other subjects through English. In the latter, characterizing English becomes difficult, as the traditions and practices of the subject influence beliefs and conceptions of English (van Kampen, Admiraal, & Berry, 2018). To address this tension, a language across the curriculum stance acknowledging the need for literacy and oracy in all subjects has often been adopted. English is seen as: a) of learning to acquire basic English concepts related to a topic, b) for learning focusing on English language needs in relation to learning demand, and c) through learning, targeting deeper learning through dialogic teaching in English (Coyle, 2007). This view is seen as aligned with European policy for lifelong learning and developing key competencies for cultural awareness, citizenship and global understanding (Coyle, 2007). Research reveals tensions here as well, where an ideology of English as a norm-free language of instruction and learning in teacher beliefs contrasts with the construction of English as a transcultural local language in educational policy (Hult, 2012, 2018).

While CLIL emphasizes diversity in content and subject traditions, multilingual perspectives view English as part of a diverse ecology of languages that exist and influence one another. English becomes recognizable through multiple interpretations, performances and “acts of identity ... in a constant process of semiotic reconstruction” (Pennycook, 2007, p. 112) and as the site of new communities of identity and association independent of native-speaking cores (Seidlhofer, 2011). English is thus not additive or separate from learners but part of learners’ evolving symbolic competence that channels the meaning-making potential of English for self-determined and contextually sensitive expression (Kramsch, 2009, 2011). English is conceived as one of many semiotic resources in the multilingual repertoire for enacting situated meaning, communication and identity.
3. 21st century ELT

Dynamic ideologies of English and potential tensions reflect some of the complexity of English language teaching in the 21st century. Even the naming of “English” as a subject in school is problematized as possibly adhering more to academic traditions and a need for transparency than the shift to a transdisciplinary subject of communication (Larsen-Freeman & Freeman, 2008; Leung & Valdés, 2019). The widening of the subject discipline, as well as the range of instructional contexts, has ushered in a post-methods era of ELT that requires teachers to continually conceptualize and construct experience, knowledge and beliefs to provide locally relevant ELT (Kumaravadivelu, 2001, 2006).

Heightened contextual awareness is highlighted in the transdisciplinary framework of Second Language Acquisition (SLA) presented by the Douglas Fir Group (2016). The framework incorporates and emphasizes the interconnection of micro levels of action and interaction, meso levels of sociocultural institutions and macro levels of ideological structures in the teaching and learning of English. Sensitivity to micro, meso, and macro levels necessitates a deconstruction of what “English” means to stakeholders and entails a reflective dialogue about deeply held beliefs of English, language and communication in local contexts (Pennycook, 2010; Sifakis, 2017). The aim of this article is to deconstruct teachers’ beliefs and conceptions of English as experienced in society and in school, as a means of revealing relevant ideologies in teachers’ communicative practices and providing locally meaningful ELT in a non-native English-speaking context.

4. Method

The aim of this article is to explore Norwegian teachers’ deeper conceptions about English in society and English in school. To do so, a qualitative, grounded theory approach was taken to generate and inductively analyze data (Bryant & Charmaz, 2007; Creswell & Poth, 2018). Through this approach, a conceptual framework of key patterns in teacher thinking emerged. Participants were teachers of English in basic education (grades 8 through 10) in a large urban school district in Norway. This section provides information about the local context, as well as the specifics of the research design.

4.1. Norwegian context

English language education in Norway balances an understanding of English as a tool for communication and English for forming the individual in interaction with the external world (Fenner & Skulstad, 2018). The latter is grounded in a central and northern European pedagogical tradition, Didaktik, that emphasizes learning in interaction with the world (Hudson, 2002). Despite a long foreign language tradition for English education (Simensen, 1999), in the early 2000s, learning English increasingly came to be viewed as resembling first language (L1) learning and as L2 learning in school (Simensen, 2003, 2005). Research suggests that, despite a predominantly functional view of English, tensions exist among: a) English for developing literacy (Hellekjær, 2008) and learning content (Mahan, 2020; Mahan et al., 2018), b) English for more situated use (Chvala, 2012, Chvala, 2018; Rødnes, Hellekjær, & Vold, 2014), and c) English as a lingua franca (ELF) as a less legitimate and “hybrid” form (Hild, 2018). An exploration of learners’ sociolinguistic practices in school have revealed underlying ideological tensions and exposed the need for more research on the meaning of “English” in a Norwegian school context (Rindal, 2014).

In 2020, a new English curriculum will be introduced that emphasizes language development and the fostering of Life Skills and Democracy and Citizenship. While Life Skills entails learners’ ability to express emotions, thoughts, experiences and opinions in English, Democracy and Citizenship refers to learners’ awareness of culturally influenced worldviews (Fremtids skole: Fornylse av fag og kompetanser, 2015; Kunnskapsløftet, 2020; Overordnet del – verdier og prinsipper for grunnpopplæringen 2017). The development of English, Life Skills and Democracy and Citizenship are intended to equip learners to interact with a wide range of multilingual speakers in global communication and to encourage curiosity and tolerance of different worldviews. While Life Skills indexes learners’ semiotic expression, Democracy and Citizenship introduces a more political ideology (Fenner & Skulstad, 2018). Societal attitudes towards English in Norway fluctuate, and in a study of Norwegian media, Graedler (2014) revealed a construction of invasive and threatening English at war with the national language. Against this backdrop, the shift to a more political ideology for English in school may challenge attitudes many teachers may hold for English outside of school.

4.2. Participants

To investigate teachers’ ideologies of English, twelve teachers from six lower secondary schools (grades 8 through 10) were interviewed. Schools were first purposively sampled, and then teachers selected from these schools (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Patton, 2002). Schools were selected using criteria of low, average to high multilingualism and socioeconomic profile within the district (Deloitte AS, 2014; Ljungren, Toft, & Flemmen, 2017). Teachers were selected from schools based on willingness and English teaching experience. In the final cohort, English-teaching experience ranged from a few months to over 30 years. Schools and teacher identities were anonymized using codes and pseudonyms.

Teachers at lower secondary in Norway are classified as semi-specialist subject teachers and teach more than just English in school (Levels of Autonomy and Responsibilities of Teachers in Europe, 2008). They hold at least a bachelor’s degree with specialization in two or three subjects or in general pedagogy. For an overview of schools, participants and subjects taught, see Appendix A.
4.3. Interviews

Semi-structured interviews were used to generate interview data. A challenge in using semi-structured interviews to elicit tacit thinking is the difficulty participants may experience in articulating abstract ideas without immediate reference (Borg, 2015). To reduce this challenge, the interview guide used familiar wording and expressions from the curriculum and categorized open-ended questions under familiar themes (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2018; Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). Classroom practice was also used as a point of reference. The interview guide is presented in Appendix B.

To allow for in-depth exploration, clarification and member-checking, each participant was interviewed three times over a period of ca. three weeks. The researcher generated notes and memos immediately after and between interviews to ensure in-depth exploration of participants’ thinking. Interviews were conducted in Norwegian and/or English based on participant preferences. Each interview lasted ca. 50 min and was conducted at the local school. Data were transcribed and analyzed in the original language and translated by the author for the reporting of findings. The interview cycle is illustrated in Fig. 1.

4.4. Analysis

To deconstruct the data into ideological patterns, systematic and iterative coding together with constant comparison moved the analysis from descriptive to conceptual categories using NVivo software (Holton, 2007) (see Fig. 2). Open coding reduced data to utterances about English for non-native speakers. Key words included “English”, “competence”, “global”, “international”, “world”, “citizenship”, and “democracy”. Axial coding analyzed the data around two primary phenomena English in society and English in school and provided the primary categories for selective coding determining the finely-grained categories emerging in the conceptual framework (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2018; Holton, 2007).

Selective coding yielded two core categories for English in society and six for English in school with a final category, English in flux, encompassing shifting orientations for English in school. The sampling and interviewing of participants was discontinued at 12 teachers, when new data no longer added to emerging patterns. To enhance the internal validity of categories, researchers in general pedagogy were involved in the axial phase of coding and researchers in ELT in the selective phase. Finally, finely-grained categories were checked against the entire data set (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2018, p. 481).

5. Teachers’ ideologies of English

The aim of this article was to explore teachers’ ideologies of English in considering locally relevant 21st century ELT. The ideological categories that emerged from the analysis are represented in Fig. 2 and cut across the thinking of individual teachers. They are presented in neither ascending nor descending order. Each category is described and illustrated with interview data where appropriate below.

![Fig. 1. Interview process for each participant.](image-url)
5.1. English in society

For teachers, English is a natural and beneficial language in modern society, but it is also personal and threatening. While positive conceptions relate to technological and economic contact with an external world, the spread of English locally and its presence in the individual psyche is problematic.

5.1.1. English as a natural language of world contact

Teachers describe English as integral to globalization, where the far North is no longer isolated and requires English for world contact. Increasingly, this shifts orientation “away from the local and the national to the global society” (Una). English is viewed by teachers as a natural channel of economic and technological contact, but less frequently of political contact. English as a language of migration to Norway is rarely mentioned, with only one reference to English as an initial “door opener” for recent immigrants (Mina).

Teachers refer to an explicit and implicit status for English as an “official [and] non-official language” (Una). It is also referred to as a “metalanguage” (Hanne) transcending the scope of the national language. This is considered unproblematic, as it resonates with a maritime history requiring an economic lingua franca (Mattias). Teachers depict a view of English that considers advanced English ability “completely normal” (Sandra) and a unifying trait for “citizen[s] in a modern society” (Mina).

5.1.2. English as channel for appropriation of values

In contrast, they describe English as a language that alters daily life and “bombards” (Mina) and “permeates” (Knut) people’s lives. American English, in particular, is the agent of this infiltration, as it “wash[es] over us” (Hans) and “we are sucked up into something [larger]” (Hanne), occasionally adopting attitudes and values “we never thought would come here”
(Hanne). They also describe English concepts as infiltrating Norwegian and making knowledge of these concepts necessary to understand developments in local society.

5.2. English in school

Conversely, teachers emphasize the “eclectic” (Karen) nature of English in school. Balancing different ideas of English – compounded by disparities in student proficiency - creates a “schizophrenic” situation for English in the classroom (Mattias), where English is foreign, communicative, historic and cultural, humanistic and a language for learning interdisciplinary content. They describe navigating this complex ideological landscape, while grappling with learner diversity, digitalization, enhanced global orientation, and questions of ownership and identity.

5.2.1. English is foreign

English as foreign is described as the rules-based knowledge of native speakers in the United Kingdom (UK) and the United States (US). This knowledge is no longer viewed as common, and its prioritization varies among teachers. While teaching rules is considered “tedious” and “boring” (Marcus), knowledge of rules is considered necessary for top marks on final examinations. Learners are expected to choose a British or American accent and to achieve pronunciation acceptable to the native-speaking “ear” (Mina) and uncharacterized by the L1, unless they can show a special relationship to another English-speaking country. Unlike foreign languages, English is less likely to focus explicitly on listening or strategic interaction with imagined interlocutors.

The comparison of daily life, culture, and history primarily between the UK or the US and Norway is emphasized. There is little room for experiences outside English-speaking countries, though these experiences are acknowledged as pedagogically beneficial. Learner awareness of the UK and the US is considered central, as these are the countries “you are supposed to deal with” (Mattias). Language is considered key to understanding these cultures, and non-native teachers are not considered the “bearer(s) of the culture” (Anja) but responsible for familiarizing learners with these cultures through factual and fictional texts.

5.2.2. English is communication

English as communication is framed as a functional, working language and tool to communicate globally. For experienced teachers, this is the unchanged foundation of English in school. English as communication means transmitting messages to native, as well as non-native, speakers in physical and digital interactions in the world and not just with foreigners in Norway. “Norwegian English” is more acceptable but leaves teachers feeling ill-equipped to recognize “good English” (Knut) and suspecting that levels of formality are perhaps more important in standardized assessments than successful communication.

Priority is given first to being understood and then to adapting English to context, but teachers describe lacking a metalanguage for situated use. Instead, they report “we don’t speak about Norwegian [language] that way” and thus “lack examples from our mother tongue to talk about it” (Sandra).

5.2.3. English is cultural heritage

English as cultural heritage refers to the historical and cultural legacy of the British Empire for understanding the global position of English today. Connections are drawn between the past and present to understand “what you read and hear in society” (Mina) about the United Kingdom and United States today. From this perspective, teaching is along “the same lines” (Silje) as teaching a history lesson, where learners may identify an English lesson as “[a] social studies [lesson]” (Silje). Cultural heritage is considered “knowledge you ought to have” (Mattias) and knowledge that some teachers may prioritize over the details of learning the language.

5.2.4. English is humanistic identity

Teachers also describe English as developing humanistic identity through the consideration of right and wrong. Topics are used to highlight connections between actions, consequences and ethics (Mina) and to strengthen learners’ sense of democracy and morality (Knut). Working with content from other contexts fosters learners’ feelings of being “related … [and able to] relate to other cultures and peoples” (Caroline) and learners’ awareness of “our [human] history” (Anja).

Topics may include injustice and human rights violations; physical and mental health; lifestyle choices and consumerism; pollution; migration; and poverty. While other school subjects include these topics, teachers describe English as introducing humanistic ideologies “in practice” (Knut) where learners should support the attitudes of the hero, apply these to their own lives and use English to illustrate these attitudes in their thinking. These attitudes prepare learners as future members of society with “certain responsibilities and obligations” (Hans) in an increasingly more diverse society. There is tension between the assumption of a vast multicultural world as “a given in English” (Anja) and English as “a comparison with American and British democracies” (Knut). For teachers, humanism and democracy represent a central educational ideology, as well as an aspect of their own identity that “permeate[s] most of what I do” and “[has] more to do with me as a person than with English” (Tina).

5.2.5. English is a second language

Teachers describe English as a second language (L2) existing in parallel with the first language (L1). Learners are exposed to English from the first year of schooling and gradually learn to express knowledge across many school subjects in English.
English is the “natural” (Sandra) instructional language of the classroom, and L1 instruction “paves the way” (Hanne) for literacy development in English. Developing conceptual language to illustrate cultural knowledge, explain complex phenomena and differing perspectives, and present nuanced opinions is central. Proficiency ranges from high with the ability to discuss cause-and-effect relationships to low with the ability to answer questions about immediate surroundings.

The focus on content literacy distinguishes English from foreign languages (Una). L2 literacy nears L1 literacy for subjects like social studies, religion and ethics, and Norwegian, where interlocutors are implicit, learners write “for themselves” (Karen), and produce English into “a great nothingness” (Hanne). Highly proficient learners write for an academic audience and “have read enough to know ... how they’re supposed to appear [and how] to communicate in an almost philosophical manner with people from all over the world” (Mattias).

5.2.6. English is in flux

Teachers pose certain self-reflexive questions about emerging ideas of ownership, community and identity; diversity; digitalization and global orientation. Teachers speculate who – if anyone – “owns English” (Anja) and how teachers and learners might be part of a global community of English speakers. Instructional materials are presented as lacking support for connecting with multilingual others but including cultural practices from non-English-speaking contexts (i.e., Diwali or Ramadan). Learners question the legitimacy of this inclusion though. Teachers report “know[ing] way too little about this” (Hans) but speculate that “it is probably connected to identity” (Hans) and report a lack of knowledge of “these 1970s [political] things” (Hans). While they express openness to diversity, they report a lack of critical perspectives of the “white” (Karen) or “classic Norwegian element” (Mattias) of local ELT centering on “the Western World” (Karen). Resistance to this may appear in learners’ anti-American attitudes, despite these same learners’ acknowledgement of the usefulness of English (Tina). Teachers describe this as difficult, as little challenges existing attitudes.

Additionally, the pervasiveness of learners’ personal and social engagement in the digital world reduces distances and heightens global contact. Digital interaction is only occasionally described as integrated into teaching. Teachers may include different accents in teaching (Mina) but suggest that English may actually be more about “adapting to the context and who you are talking to” (Anja). This presents new challenges, as “it’s not certain the same codes apply everywhere” or “whose culture counts” (Anja). In order “to be fair” (Anja), they suggest that ELT may need to extend beyond the “crescent moon” (Karen) of Great Britain and North America. Experience with mobility may require teachers to reconsider “English”. As one teacher suggests, in her interaction with immigrants, English acts as “our mother tongue defined ... by [our] relation[ship]” (Silje). New varieties also present teachers with challenges requiring “you to switch your ear” (Caroline) in teaching and assessment. They experience a lack of support in both regards.

6. New directions for locally relevant ELT

This article explores teachers’ ideologies of - and deeper beliefs about – English. Findings above reveal a complex matrix for contextually relevant ELT. This section explores the interface of teachers’ ideologies of English in society and English in school and highlights alignment and gaps, as well as new directions, for locally meaningful ELT. The discussion resonates both with post-methods and transdisciplinary ELT (Douglas Fir Group, 2016; Kumaravadivelu, 2001, 2006; Leung & Valdés, 2019) and with local Didaktik for education in interaction with the world (Hudson, 2002). Table 1 presents findings and alignments between English in society and school, identifies gaps in the discourse and presents possible new directions.

6.1. Need for metalanguage

Though teachers conceive English as a natural channel of communication in modern society and as a functional language of communication in school, they are less likely to acknowledge themselves or learners as members of newer, expanding communities of English users (Matsuda, 2018; Pennycook, 2007; Seidhofer, 2011; Seidhofer & Widdowson, 2019; Sifakis, 2017). Teachers do identify the need for a metalanguage that better conceptualizes situated interaction and the role English plays in identity formation (Pennycook, 2010), suggesting a move towards a more global-oriented, multilingual approach to English and to ELT. The absence of a metalanguage to conceptualize these experiences may cause teachers to fumble, creating space for familiar foreign language ideologies and native speaker orientations (Block, 1996; Holliday, 2006).

Assessments emphasizing native speaker accuracy and textbooks promoting native speaking contexts may leave teachers feeling “that we had moved further away from that focus [but] I feel ... I’m being pulled back” (Silje). This supports Ranta (2010) that found teachers may be limited by the ideologies of other stakeholders despite an openness to diversity. Openness may also be restricted by views of English as a lingua franca as less legitimate in school (Hild, 2018).

Findings suggest the need for raised awareness of sociolinguistic realities (Rindal, 2014; Sifakis, 2017) and the inclusion of critical perspectives to address issues of power and identity in moving Norwegian ELT into a more political ideology (Fenner & Skulstad, 2018). This may be challenging, as findings suggest English is shaped as aggressive in identity formation outside of school. This becomes even more delicate in the sphere of increasing diversity of Englishes and learners in school and a raised critical awareness of a white, Western conception of legitimate speakers in ELT.
6.2. Towards more inclusive ELT

While cultural heritage positions learners historically and humanist ideology considers ethics in human history, there is a gap in relating to modern diversity and multiple world views. This concerns including diverse student populations, as well as understanding how English impacts local culture and is impacted by local speakers for their own ends (Kramsch, 2009, 2011). Teachers acknowledge this gap, citing that they are “on thin ice” (Hans) when discussing these issues. Lacking critical perspectives to address these realities allows space for foreign language ideologies of ELT to undermine and marginalize certain learners, intentionally or not (Fairclough, 2015).

The promotion of humanistic morality and democratic inclusion that teachers clearly tied to their professional identity could be a useful starting point for widening perceptions. As professional identity is closely tied to personal identity, this requires extreme sensitivity. Though critical perspectives may resonate positively with teachers’ experiences of and openness to diversity and better equip them to address multicultural and multilingual practices, they may and most likely will also challenge teachers’ identity.

6.3. Towards more situated interaction on complex global issues

Developing English oracy and literacy around complex global issues and diverse views is positive in shaping 21st century citizens (Fullan, Quinn, & McEachen, 2018). While a CLIL approach promotes conceptual language (Coyle, 2007; Mahan et al., 2018), it is less likely to consider interaction or mediation with a wide range of world views or interlocutors. Instead, disciplinary practices and decontextualized English seem to be underscored in teacher thinking (van Kampen et al., 2018). A challenge moving forward is reconciling conceptual and decontextualized use of English with contextualized use of English with a diversity of interlocutors. This tension is suggested across scales of policy interaction in different contexts (Hult, 2012, 2018; Pan & Block, 2011; Sargeant, 2008).

Adjusting directions and filling gaps for locally relevant 21st century ELT is a complex endeavor and not easily addressed or resolved. Metalanguage for contextualized use, expanding notions of human histories, and critical perspectives can provide new directions for transformation rooted in teachers’ ideologies, identities and self-reported needs. This is perhaps the most central and significant finding and implicates not just teacher ideologies, but those of other stakeholders and larger ideologies. It provides useful feedback for teacher educators, testing professionals, materials developers, policy makers, researchers and other stakeholders. While the teachers in this study were positively engaged and willing to explore English and ELT, they struggled at times to formulate conceptions of English that reconciled English in society and English in school. Many showed a willingness to continue this exploration and to find ways to express this in a meaningful way as an integral part of their profession. Understanding teachers’ experiences and professional knowledge and beliefs about English should be, not only part of facilitating 21st century English education, but also an integral part of 21st century English teacher education.

7. Conclusion

This article has explored alignment, gaps and new directions in ELT in Norwegian teachers’ conceptions of English in society and English in school. The study explores the thinking of a limited number of teachers but explores these beliefs in-

| Table 1 | Alignment and gaps and new directions for locally relevant ELT. |
|-----------------|-----------------------|-------------------|------------------------|
| **English in society** | **English in school** | **Alignment** | **New directions** |
| Natural channel of economic and technological (but not political or migratory) contact | Functional tool for world communication | Functional language of communication | Awareness of: - new communities of interlocutors and Englishes - power and ownership - digital environments, - situated use and metalanguage for this use |
| English that alters lives and facilitates the appropriation of non-local attitudes | Cultural heritage | Historical positioning of English and learners | Critical perspectives and metalanguage for understanding the spread of culture and expression of local identity |
| Humanistic identity | Expanded human history but still constrained by FL traditions | More inclusion of multicultural and multilingual identity, experiences and perspectives |
| L2 literacy and conceptual language | Recognizes need for conceptual language for complex challenges in school but not in society | Conceptual language promotes shared understanding | Lack of a political ideology for English in society may constrain mediation of a variety of world views |
depth, revealing a complex microcosm of ideologies and epistemologies guiding the practices of local ELT. Findings reveal the need for metalanguage and critical perspectives of English and English language education that can account for the past and for modern experiences, as well as imagine future needs (Hornberger, 2006). The analytical framework used to deconstruct language ideologies is a significant contribution for researchers interested in similar questions. Transforming deeper understandings of English requires long-term support and long-term initiatives. A current initiative providing that support is the continuing professional development (CPD) project English as a lingua franca practices for inclusive multilingual classrooms\(^1\) (ENRICH: http://enrichproject.eu/). ENRICH strives to develop free online professional development offering teachers opportunities to explore “English” in the local context in interaction with teachers from a wide range of other contexts. The goal is to support teachers in moving ELT forward in locally meaningful and inclusive ways and in alignment with local realities for ELT in the 21st century.

CRediT authorship contribution statement

Lynell Chvala: Conceptualization, Methodology, Data curation, Writing - review & editing, Visualization, Investigation.

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Appendix C. Supplementary data

Supplementary data to this article can be found online at https://doi.org/10.1016/j.system.2020.102327.

Appendix A

Overview of schools, teachers, teaching experience and other subjects

| School          | Teacher | Years teaching English | Subjects in addition to English                                      |
|-----------------|---------|------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------|
| School 6        | Una     | 1                      | Social studies and FL                                                |
| Low multilingual| Karen   | 2.5                    | Social studies and Norwegian                                        |
| School 3        | Anja    | 10                     | Foreign language, Religion-Philosophies of Life-Ethics (RLE), and social studies |
| Low multilingual| Sandra  | 16                     | Foreign language                                                    |
| School 1        | Silje   | 7                      | Music                                                               |
| Average multilingualism | Caroline | 5              | Social studies, and RLE                                             |
| School 5        | Hanne   | 27                     | RLE and support teacher in Norwegian                                |
| Average multilingualism | Knut    | 31                     | Social studies and support teacher in Norwegian.                    |
| School 4        | Tina    | 28                     | Social studies                                                      |
| High multilingualism | Mattias | 11                    | RLE and social studies                                               |
| School 2        | Mina    | 7                      | RLE                                                                 |
| High multilingualism | Hans    | 5                      | Social studies and Norwegian                                        |

Appendix B

Interview guide

Negotiating the global and the local: language policy as understood by lower-secondary teachers

Purpose.

- For you, what is English in Norwegian society for? What purpose does it serve?
- Is it the same or different from other languages in Norway (i.e., Norwegian, Sami, other foreign languages, etc.)?
- Based on your own experience, how would you describe English as a subject in school?
- How would you say English as a school subject meets some of the aims you describe for English in Norwegian society?

\(^1\) English as a Lingua Franca Practices for Inclusive Multilingual Classrooms (ENRICH) (2018–2021) Erasmus+, Cooperation for innovation and the exchange of good practices, Strategic Partnerships for school education, KA2, European Lifelong Learning Programmes, 2018-1-EL01-KA201-047894 http://enrichproject.eu/.
Can you say a little bit about what type of spoken English competence you think that your pupils will need — both now and in the future?

Can you say a little bit about what type of written English competence you think that your pupils will need — both now and in the future?

English as a school subject is often referred to as both a subject to develop instrumental language skills and a subject for the personal development or growth of the pupil. How do you understand the subject in light of both of these two? How do you balance or integrate these in your teaching?

Global/international/local

Can you describe some of the situations in which English is actively used in your classroom?

Can you describe some of the themes you take up in your teaching?

“International” and “global” are words that are often used in connection with English in school. Can you say how “international” or “global” is used in your teaching?

Who would you say are the recipients/audiences for your pupils’ spoken and written English? Would you say this is unique for your pupils or similar/the same for all English lessons at your school? In your experience with other teachers in this school district, would you say this is similar/the same?

Identity

Can you describe your role as a teacher?

In your experience, can teaching in English as a school subject contribute to strengthening democratic engagement? Strengthening citizenship? Lead to developing co-citizenship?

Assessment

Can you say something about what, for you, is important in assessing your pupils’ competence in English?

Can you say a bit about what type of challenges you experience in your work with assessment in English?

Local situation

Can you say a bit about whether other teachers at your school have a similar understanding of the subject as you do? What about in the school district in general?

Can you describe what helps you or works against you in reaching your aims as an English teacher?

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