

# Tutors' Perceptions on the Pedagogical Validity of Teaching 'Taboo' Topics in the Second Language Learning Sector

Freya Katherine Macfarlane

# Profile

Freya Macfarlane is currently working as an English Language teacher for international students at the University of Salford. She recently completed her Master in Education at the University of Bolton, after graduating with a Merit in her PGDE ESOL/Literacy (L7) the year before. In the future she hopes to work in an educational capacity in the heritage sector, encouraging the utilisation of these institutions as part of the language learning process.

## Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Dr. David Kitchener for all his encouragement and advice, and without whom this article would not have been published. I am also grateful for the loving support of my family, and thankful to all those who participated in the study.

## Abstract

*The purpose of this study is to establish teachers' perceptions of the pedagogical value of introducing taboo or controversial topics into an L2 classroom. In order to achieve the aims of this study a semi-structured interview was designed and conducted with five experienced ESOL tutors. A focus group of trainee tutors were also interviewed for purposes of comparison and triangulation. Overall, participants agreed that the introduction of taboo/controversial topics did have some pedagogical relevance. Specifically from a language learning point of view taboo/controversial topics were seen to be technique that could prompt previously unknown vocabulary and linguistic structures. Others recognised the potential for such issues as a method to widen the learners understanding of the attitudes and values the target culture has. In conclusion, the personal perceptions of the tutors indicate that many understood that there was an efficacy to using taboo/controversial issues as a learning tool, ranging from basic language skills to promoting cultural enrichment, and potentially promoting a higher level of societal engagement. Yet, the primary concern of maintaining the welfare of the learners was the dominating factor as to whether tutors would introduce taboo/controversial issues into the class. Lastly, there are indications that the influence of L2 tutors on possible changes to the current method of avoidance of taboo/controversial topics is much greater than realised.*

Keywords: Second Language Learning, Teachers/Tutors, Taboo, Controversy, Pedagogy, Teaching/Learning Methods.

## Introduction

The effect of 'taboo' remains a constant censor in society, and whilst the actual nature of the offensive lexis can change, language does not necessarily define the cultural attitudes to which it belongs. The relationship between the culture and language is dialogical nature, and so a complexity of factors affect how attitudes and language evolve, and subsequently how 'taboo' morphs. Arguably, knowing and using taboo words does not automatically guarantee cultural comprehension, especially if they are utilised incorrectly (Bada, 2000). Yet, should this mean that any and all potentially 'taboo' or controversial topics be avoided in the L2 classroom? Unfortunately, sources discussing the potential pedagogical value of introducing taboo/controversial topics in the L2 classroom are limited.

From the early stages, the study decided to focus upon teacher's perceptions of the pedagogical value of introducing taboo or controversial topics into an L2 classroom. In order to assess this three research questions were formulated. The first question proposes an examination of the existing attitudes of by second language teachers to the introduction of a perceived 'taboo'/ controversial topic in the classroom. The second question aims to evaluate the types of resources/materials and support available to tutors. The last question explores a framework/strategy that could be implemented to encourage discussion that adhere to inclusive practices, and improve the students' ability to think critically about controversial topics.

## Literature Review

The issue as to whether taboo subjects should be taught has been discussed by various authors but no definitive answer has been concluded (Evans et al, 1999; Holster, 2005; King, 2009 & Hudson, 2011). The sensitive nature of doing so, and the potential class conflict that may arise from introducing controversial topics, is regarded as a serious limitation. However, it is arguable that there is a discrepancy between many tutors' teaching practice, which is generally not introducing controversial topics, and their belief that such topics should be addressed. This concern has been identified in academic spheres, such as Byford et al. (2009) and Oulton et al. (2004), and by non-academic, but reliable sources (Dellar, 2013; British Council, 2006). This indicates the subject area this study is researching is being discussed in public sphere, as well as the academic environment, implying that this issue is relevant to contemporary English language teaching and learning.

Various scholars point to the seamless connection of both language and culture, and argue that the dialectical nature of the two should not be underestimated (Chomsky, 2006; Kramsch, 1995 & 2001; Bryam & Grundy, 2002; Nault, 2006; Ishihara & Cohen, 2014). McDevitt (2004) holds that since no human is independent of its culture then studying a second language is studying the nature of people other than oneself. It has also been stated that if an individual is not aware of the cultural elements of a society then they will 'encounter significant hardship communicating meaning to native speakers' (Bada, 2000: 101). It is stated that without the incorporation of culture the study of language is inaccurate and incomplete, and the tendency for individuals to 'espouse ethnocentric views' when faced with a different culture will not be discouraged (Genc & Bada, 2005: 74). Consequently, this will lead to difficulty understanding opposing perspectives, potentially causing a rejection of the 'other' culture.

The issue of teaching controversial issues, and the anxieties of doing so, by tutors has been discussed by various disciplines, at different education levels, but remain fairly absent in the language learning sector (Hitchings, 2011; Oulton et al., 2004; Cotton, 2006; Dewhurst, 1992; Hess, 2008). The majority of the discussion does stem from civic educators and provides frameworks for social studies education. Underpinning these discussions is the argument that students need to develop their critical thinking skills through higher-order thinking tasks (McLeod et al., 2010). This will begin the process of becoming learners becoming engaged and responsible citizens. Hess (2008) sums up this frequently proposed reasoning succinctly stating that if individuals learn how to 'deliberate controversial issues, especially those that focus on public problems..' then the individual will be able to participate effectively in a democratic society (p.124).

The foundation of these ideas appear to stem from the philosophy of critical pedagogy, first described by Paul

However, it is notable that a significant factor in maintaining neutrality is fear of reprisal, and it remains questionable whether neutrality offers the best route for learners to critically engage. Cotton (2006) suggests that teacher neutrality could allow some students to dominate the discussion, and prevent a deeper exploration of the topic in hand. Additionally, if the teacher remains constantly neutral then this will result in an environment where all views, not matter how extreme, are equally valid, and that an individual's behaviour is above criticism. The resulting problem is succinctly argued by Nieto (1995), who states if all views are treated as equally valid regardless of the extremity of the view, such as Holocaust denials, then 'people and events can lose their moral center' (p.197).

Clearly there is no absolute answer to how one should introduce, discuss and debate controversial issues. The diversity of the classroom is undeniable and the teacher will exercise caution when dealing with these subjects. Though alternative approaches based on different theories have been formulated they are all framed in conceptual terms. Studies or well-defined strategies on how to actually implement different teaching methods, such as critical affirmation, are rare. The theory of engaging higher-order thinking and fostering critical thinking skills may be sound, but it makes a rather large assumption that all learners, and tutors, are prepared to undertake a process that sees them 'detach' from their preconceived notions, or are even able to truly understand a perspective that may so alien to their own.

## Methodology

The aim of this study to investigate the personal opinions of experienced and novice tutors who teach English as a second language. In broad terms it seeks to establish whether tutors regard the discussion of controversial/taboo topics in the classroom as an effective method of language and cultural learning. A specialist, or purposive, sample group has been used as participants have been selected based on a predetermined criteria of the target population (Newby, 2010; Cohen et al., 2011). The study required data from tutors that are specialised in L2 teaching, specifically in ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) and are knowledgeable in their professional field. Thus a sample within these parameters was selected. Three of the participants are employed at a university, and work with L2 students aged eighteen and above. The remaining two interviewees teach at local college, and thus work with L2 students aged fourteen to nineteen years of age.

This study followed Kvale (2007) 'seven stages of an interview inquiry'. Firstly, the purpose of the study was formulated, and from this, it was decided that the design of the study should be an interview with qualitative questions posed. It is an effective method in obtaining data about participants' attitudes and values, which is precisely what the study aims to ascertain (Cohen et al., 2007; Byrne, 2006). A semi-structured interview was decided upon, and a schedule of ten questions was originally drafted. This was conducted in a one-to-one pilot study with an experienced tutor. A semi-structured interview was then decided upon to allow follow-up questions.

All six interviews were conducted in private rooms over a three week period. Before the interview a pre-activity was presented to the participants. Six topic areas identified as controversial in the Evans et al. (1990 cited by Evans et al., 1999) study were given to the participants on cue cards, with an additional three blank cards (Appendix 7). These areas were abortion, pornography, sexual orientation, religious beliefs, open discussion of personal/family relationships and obscene language. First the participants were asked to write up to three topics they considered controversial on the blank cards. After this, they were shown the six topic areas and asked whether they agreed with that the items presented were controversial. Participants were then asked to rank the cards in order of which topics they would find most difficult to discuss in the L2 classroom.

Following this activity, the participants were asked eight questions and their answers recorded on a digital dicta-phone. At the end of the interview, participants were debriefed and an opportunity for them to add any information or ask any questions was offered. Once all the interviews were completed the recordings were then transcribed by the researcher. From the transcription an inductive approach to coding was used, whereby the coding structure emerged from the data through a process of tagging. From here, links between the codes was interpreted to begin building 'themes of associated concepts' (Newby, 2010: 469).

Freire (1972), and developed by subsequent proponents (McLaren, 2002; Kincheloe, 2008). Its basic premise is that education cannot be divorced from politics, and that agendas determined by authorities, as well as notions brought to class by both tutors and students, should be examined. Repeated analysis of one's preconceived notions allows for a continuing process of 'unlearning' and 'learning', and so question your assumptions.

Further to this, if taking the constructionist view, students are not passive receptacles of information, but bring their own diverse range of understandings and experiences into the classroom. It then can be concluded that individuals learn from one another and constructing new meanings that relate to existing schemata (Bruner, 1961; Good & Brophy, 1994). The classroom, by its very nature of being a public space, is a place where different concerns, ideas and beliefs will be voiced and it is the purpose of this school environment to develop understanding to become socially responsible citizens (King, 2009; Kelly, 1986). Therefore, the questions remains centred on how to approach the discussion of controversial issues since there appears little guidance in resolving the challenges that arise when discussing taboo or controversial issues.

However, there remains a strong culture of omission in English Language learning in regards to topics deemed too sensitive for students, especially for learners who originate from conservative societies, such as areas in the Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf (GCC) (Hudson, 2011 & Aydarova, 2012). Numerous arguments can be levelled against this approach of 'avoidance' to language teaching. Hudson (2011) argues that controversy is the 'spice' of a language and by removing it a 'dry, technical and boring language' is left leading to demotivation and behavioural problems (p.128). Furthermore, in deciding what to omit tutors are appointing themselves as 'guardians of a language' by censoring information. A pointless endeavour in an age of globalisation and international communications where an awareness of culturally sensitive topics is increasing (Hudson, 2011; Hyde 1994: 297). Kumaravadivelu (2008) argues that by not teaching culturally specific customs will discourage the promotion of a global cultural conscious. Learners should confront their inherent beliefs as well as others as a part of this development.

A particular point worth noting relates to the morality of censoring the language. The literature related teaching controversial issues in language learning it becomes apparent that little has been written in regards the ethical nature of censoring topics. Gray (2013) strongly states that tutors are facilitators of cultural norms, and in omitting controversial issues are in fact reinforcing a taboo that further marginalises sections of society that may 'offend' a culturally conservative learner; such discussion of sexual identities. This idea is supported by Evans et al. (1999) who hold that the power of taboo is transmissible, and that if one controversial topic is 'tabooed' this could lead to a 'prohibition of discussing issues' in general (p.296). Yet trying to avoid all topics that could be deemed offensive is impractical since anything can be offensive to someone. Evans et al. (1999) recommend that using common sense when selecting materials to avoid a 'watered-down curriculum' (p.300).

In order to create an environment where topics can be freely discussed Oulton et al. (2004) advocates the use of a balanced approach. This is where multiple perspective are outlined for learners to draw their own conclusions, after acknowledging all sides. Strategies employed by the teachers within the study involved organised debates, role-play and resource-based learning. Yet whilst a range of views are offered it remains evident that students can selectively choose information that supports their preconceived notions, and so a failure to directly challenge assumptions is present (Barton & McCully, 2005). However, it is arguable that the individual could successfully express, or act, an opinion contrary to their own without truly employing critical thinking, and reflecting upon their own assumptions. Thus, undermining the purpose of such activities.

In addition to the drawbacks previously outlined, Kubota (2014) points out that the balanced approach is inadequate when tutors are faced with a spontaneous introduction of a controversial topic. With no prior preparation it would be unreasonable to assume that a balanced approach, accounting for all perspectives, could be implemented with such short notice. Kubota (2014) discusses this in relation to a student who denied a historical genocide, a view that the tutor had never contemplated, and 'caught [him] off guard'. From this episode Kubota reflected that a preferred answer is generally desired from teachers who introduce a contentious issues, calling it a 'privilege' approach, and is potentially a way to avoid causing unnecessary offence or class conflict.

## Findings & Discussion

Overall, participants agreed that the introduction of taboo/controversial topics did have some pedagogical relevance. Specifically from a language learning point of view taboo/controversial topics were seen to be technique that could prompt previously unknown vocabulary and linguistic structures. The fact that the subjects were controversial meant that some participants reasoned that this would facilitate a higher level of engagement from the learners, which would be of particular importance if the class was generally apathetic. Others recognised the potential for such issues as a method to widen the learners understanding of the attitudes and values the target culture has. In learning what was acceptable, or not acceptable, the participants reasoned that this would assist in the learner adapting to another way of life that was potentially very different from their native country, and provide them with a basic civic education so they could effectively function within it. The conviction to which participants believed taboo/controversial topics had in promoting cultural enrichment, and thus enhancing language learning, was dependent on how the tutor perceived their role as educator to be. For some, the primary purpose was to teach English, and these questioned whether taboo/controversial topics were necessary to achieve language learning, arguing that other methods could serve the same end. Others, who saw themselves as social facilitators, were more open to idea that controversial issues had a place within the L2 learning environment in terms of cultural enrichment and participation. Thus, they were more willing to assign pedagogical value to the introduction of taboo/controversial issues.

From the interviews it was possible to discern that previous experience of purposely introducing taboo/controversial topics was limited to a few of the participants. This meant that an examination of existing resources or support was limited. Rather, discussion centred on hypothetical reasoning based upon the participants' current teaching position. All the participants held the assumption that should they want to introduce a taboo/controversial topics then their colleagues, and institution, would support them. Though this was markedly less certain with the trainee tutors, possibly due to having less confidence in their own efficacy, which means their belief in their own capabilities to achieve the student outcomes, or in the security of their job position (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk-Hoy, 2001; Byford et al., 2009).

In regards to existing L2 resources, none of the participants could identify any specific materials that are aimed at approaching taboo/controversial issues in the L2 classroom. From this, adaptation of existing L2 teaching methods were recommended, such as the use of realia, guest speakers and role-play, which were framed to introduce new vocabulary, or linguistic structures. These techniques also offer a way to introduce taboo/controversial subjects whilst maintaining an emotional distance, so that learners did not have volunteer their own viewpoints. Focus remained on stressing the importance of effectively managing the introduction, but with little guidance offered in how this would be achieved. Advice given centred on action to take should a significant conflict arise, which was to abandon the session altogether and possibly reprimand any unacceptable behaviour.

In terms of developing a possible framework to help manage the above problem, as well as promoting inclusivity and critical thinking, some limited suggestions were provided, especially since the potential link between language learning and critical thinking had not previously been considered. Adamant amongst the participants was that the tutor should know their learners, in terms of religion, background experience, culture and ethnicity, before introducing a taboo/controversial issue. Clearly, the process of acquiring this knowledge would be a long-term affair and thus substantial amount of preparation is required, perhaps weeks in advance. Trust would have to be developed between the learners and tutor so they were a cohesive group, which would enable an open discussion. The development of critical thinking was mainly perceived to be achieved through ensuring that learners' present their viewpoint with a justified reason as to why they thought this. Probing questions aimed at encouraging the learners to 'trace back their opinions' was suggested as a way for them to challenge their assumptions. Similarly, the method suggested to promote inclusivity was a top-down approach of reinforcing ground rules that emphasise the fact that everybody's opinion is valid, and offensive language or behaviour would not be tolerated.

Overall, it was apparent that the majority of the participants had not considered the possible effects that taboo/controversial topics could have on language learning in detail until this study. The result of this was that though

many identified a linguistic-based learning or cultural enrichment, the connection to the possibility of enhancing critical thinking skills was not naturally developed or expanded on until they were prompted in the last question. Regardless of personal perceptions on the pedagogical value of taboo/controversial issues, the concern for the learners' comfort and emotional safety was found to be the dominating factor in determining if such issues would be introduced into the L2 class. A decision that is personal and unique to each tutor and their class.

## Theoretical Implications

The findings support the assertion that controversial/taboo topics are systematically omitted from the language learning sector, through both teaching styles and resource material (Evans et al. 1999; Gray, 2013). The absence of perceived offensive subjects remains the status quo, mostly done to prevent conflict within the L2 class, even when this practice contradicts the tutors' personal opinion that such issues should be introduced (Oulton et al., 2004; Byford et al. 2009). The evident idealism expressed by the majority of the participants that taboo/controversial topics should be introduced in the L2 class appear to stem from a conviction that tolerance could be developed through these learning experiences. Whether high order thinking is achieved by L2 learners, the process facilitates the development of skills to refute others and justify themselves. If these skills are argued to be important as so delivered as part of the standard education of native speakers, then these skills can be seen as essential civic competencies that allow the L2 learner to participate in the society more effectively as well (Hess, 2008; McLeod et al., 2010). However, whether open discussion will be encouraged in this manner in the future is doubtful without more research.

Tutors play a critical role in the 'stifling or promoting' of discussion of taboo subject It has been argued that by avoiding contentious issues L2 teachers are instrumental in reinforcing a taboo that is not reflective of the target culture (Bickmore cited by Evans et al., 1999; Thornbury, 2006). This requires an informed decision made by the tutor, yet for those who do desire to introduce such issues support and guidance is limited. Responsibility for the omission of taboo issues can be, and have been, placed on L2 publishers' reticence to include them (Gray, 2002; Helgesen, 2007 & Viney, 2008 cited by Masuhara et al., 2008; Rajabi & Ketabi, 2012). There was not a high awareness of supportive resource material aimed at helping tutors broach taboo/controversial subjects, though it has been indicated that the tutors were capable of adapting existing L2 teaching practices to accommodate such issues. Evidently, the influence of the institution and its explicit policies may restrict this, but there was an understanding amongst participants that in working in a supportive climate then a substantial level of autonomy could be granted (Meyer & Bowan, 2008). It indicates that there is a possibility that this autonomy could be utilised in introducing taboo/controversial issues, perhaps on an experimental basis. Therefore, indicating that the tutors themselves hold much more influence over the nature of teaching practice than previously asserted, especially if not overly reliant on existing resources.

## Conclusion

In conclusion, this investigation into teacher's perceptions of the pedagogical value of taboo subjects in the second language learning classroom has uncovered a complexity of factors that can affect the perspective of the individual. The primary concern of maintaining the welfare of the learners was the dominating factor as to whether tutors would introduce taboo/controversial issues into the class. Yet this was a matter of application. The personal perceptions of the tutors indicate that many understood that there was an efficacy to using such issues as a tool, ranging from basic language skills to promoting cultural enrichment, and potentially promoting a higher level of societal engagement. Owing to the fact that this is a preliminary study into an under-developed area of pedagogy these results cannot be generalised to a wider population, though they do present some interesting areas for development.

In particular, the latent influence of the tutor presents some interesting potential in establishing steps to erode the culture of omission within the L2 sector. The encouragement for tutors to engage with taboo/controversial issues in a more proactive way could engender a deterioration of a tradition that promotes the avoidance of taboo/controversial subjects. The dialogical nature between teaching theory and practice ensures that that

# References

- Bada, E. (2000) Culture in ELT. *Cukurova University Journal of Social Sciences*. 6 (1), 100-110
- Barton, K.C. & McCully, A.W. (2005) History, Identity and the School Curriculum in Northern Ireland: An Empirical Study of Secondary Students' Ideas and Perspectives. *Journal of Curriculum Studies*. 37(1), 85-116.
- British Council. (2006) Taboo in the Classroom [Online]. Available from: <<http://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/article/taboo-classroom>> [Accessed 19 October 2014].
- Bruner, J.S. (1961) The Act of Discovery. *Harvard Educational Review*, 31 (1), 21-32
- Byford, J., Lennon, S. & Russell, W.B. (2009) Teaching Controversial Issues in the Social Studies: A Research Study of High School Teachers. *The Clearing House: A Journal of Educational Strategies, Issues and Ideas*. 82 (4), 165-170.
- Bryne, B. (2006) 'Qualitative Interviewing'. In: Seale, H. (ed.) *Researching Society and Culture*. 3rd ed. London: SAGE.
- Chomsky, N. (2006) *Language and Mind*. 3rd ed. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Cohen, L., Manion, L. & Morrison, K. (2011) *Research Methods in Education*. 7th ed. London: Routledge.
- Cotton, D.R.E. (2006) Teaching Controversial Environmental Issues: Neutrality and Balance in the Reality of the Classroom. *Educational Research* 48(2), 223-41.
- Dellar, H. (2013) Taboo or not Taboo: it's all in the questions [Online]. Available from: <<https://hughdellar.wordpress.com/2013/03/21/taboo-or-not-taboo-its-all-in-the-questions/>> [Accessed 12 October 2014].
- Dewhurst, D.W. (1992) The Teaching of Controversial Issues. *Journal of the Philosophy of Education*. 26(1), 153-63.
- Evans, R., Avery, P.G. & Pederson, P.V. (1999) Taboo Topics: Cultural Restraint on Teaching Social Issues. *The Social Studies*. 90(5), 218-224.
- Freire, P. (1972) *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. Harmondsworth: Penguin.
- Genc, B. & Bada, E. (2005) Culture in Language Learning and Teaching. *The Reading Matrix* 5 (1), 73-84.
- Good, T.L. and Brophy, J.E. (1978) *Looking into Classrooms*. London: Harper and Row.
- Gray, J. (2002) The Global Course Book in English Language Teaching. In: Block, D. & Cameron, D. (eds.) *Globalization and Language Teaching*. London: Routledge.
- Gray, J. (2013) LGBT Invisibility and Heteronormativity in ELT Materials. In: Gray, J. (ed.) *Critical Perspectives on Language Teaching Materials*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan
- Meyer, J.W. & Bowan, B. (2008) The Structure of Educational Organisations. In: Ballantine, J.H. & Spade, J.Z. (eds.) *Schools and Society: A Sociological Approach to Education*. 3rd ed. London: Routledge
- Hess, D. (2008) Controversial Issues and Democratic Discourse. In: Levstik, L.S. & Tyson, C.A. (eds.) *Handbook of Research in Social Studies Education*. New York: Routledge.
- Hitchings, R. (2011) Do You Ever Disagree With Your Students? Avoiding Personal Politics in Human Geography. *Journal of Geography in Higher Education* 35 (1), 85-101



implementation of taboo/controversial topics as a learning tool in classrooms would inform academic discourse, and vice versa. Thus, beginning the removal of the 'taboo' in discussing the practical applications of taboo/controversial subjects in regards to L2 learning, and generating discourse which can assess the pedagogical value of such issues more clearly.

Holster, D. (2005) An Investigation of ESOL Teacher's Attitudes Towards Teaching About Taboo English in The Second Language Classroom. Thesis. Auckland University of Technology.

Hudson, P. (2011) Beef and Lamb, Chicken and H\*\* Censorship and Vocabulary Teaching Arabia [Online]. Available from: <<http://marifa.hct.ac.ae/files/2011/07/Beef-and-Lamb-Chicken-and-H88-Censorship-and-Vocabulary-Teaching-in-Arabia.pdf>> [Accessed 22 October 2014].

Hyde, M. (1994) The Teaching of English in Morocco: The Place of Culture. *ELT Journal*, 48 (4) 295-308.

Ishihara, N. & Cohen, A.D. (2014) *Teaching and Learning Pragmatics: Where Language and Culture Meet* Abingdon: Routledge.

Kelly, T.E. (1986) Discussing Controversial Issues: Four Perspectives on the Teacher's Role. *Theory and Research in Social Education* 14 (2), 113-38

Kincheloe, J.L. (2008) *Critical Pedagogy* (2nd ed) [Online] New York: Peter Lang Publishing Inc.

King, J. (2009) Teaching and Learning about Controversial Issues: Lessons from Northern Ireland. *Theory and Research in Social Education*. 37 (2), 215-46.

Kramsch, C. (1995) The Cultural Component of Language Teaching. *Language, Culture and Curriculum* [Online]. 8 (2), 83-92.

Kramsch, C. (2001) Intercultural Communication. In: Carter, R. & Nunan, D. (eds.) *The Cambridge Guide to Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Kubota, R. (2014) "We Must Look at Both Sides"- But a Denial of Genocide Too?: Difficult Moments on Controversial Issues in the Classroom. *Critical Enquiry in Language Studies*. 11(4), 225-251.

Masuhara, H., Hann, N., Yong, Y. & Tomlinson, B. (2008) Adult EFL Courses. *ELT Journal*. 62(3), 294-312

McLaren, P. (2002) *Critical Pedagogy and Predatory Culture: Oppositional Politics in Postmodern Era*. London: Routledge.

McLeod, J., Shah, D., Hess, D. & L, N.J. (2010) Communication and Education: Creating Competency for Socialization into Public Life. In: Sherrod, L.R., Torney-Purta, J. & Flanagan, C.A. (eds.) *Handbook of Research on Civic Engagement in Youth*. New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons.

Nault, D. (2006) Going Global: Re-thinking Culture Teaching in ELT Contexts. *Language, Culture and Curriculum*. 19 (3), 314-28.

Newby, P. (2010) *Research Methods for Education*. Harlow: Longman.

Nieto, S. (1995) From Brown Heroes and Holidays to Assimilation Agendas: Reconsidering Critiques of Multicultural Education. In: Sleeter, C.E. & McLaren, P. (eds.) *Multicultural Education, Critical Pedagogy, and the Politics of Difference*. New York: State University of New York.

Oulton, C., Day, V., Dillon, J. & Grace, M. (2004) Controversial Issues- Teachers' Attitudes and Practices in the Context of Citizenship Education. *Oxford Review of Education*. 30 (4), 489-507.

Rajabi, S. & Ketabi, S. (2012) Aspects of Cultural Elements in Prominent English Textbooks for EFL Settings. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*. 2(4), 705-712.

Thornbury, S. (2006) Don't Mention the War! Taboo Topics and the Alternative Textbook. [Online] pp.1-4. Available from: <<http://www.colegio-humboldt.edu.pe/refo/ReFo-2006/Materialien-2006/03-2006-Materialien/Dogma%20Alt%20coursebook.pdf>> [Accessed 30 April 2015]

Tschannen-Moran, M. & Woolfolk-Hoy, A. (2001) Teacher Efficacy: Capturing an Elusive Construct. *Teacher and Teacher Education*. 17(7),783-805.