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The emancipation continuum: analysing the role of ESOL in the settlement of immigrants

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ABSTRACT

This article explores connections between language and the social inclusion of immigrants. It analyses three different models of immigration settlement: assimilation, integration through social capital, and inclusion. It then explores how education - and in particular the teaching of English to Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) - can promote values and develop capacities in immigrant learners that either restrict or promote their ability to flourish as active, included members of society. I present these concepts on a continuum, as a framework that can be applied to analyse the role of ESOL in the settlement of immigrants. This continuum is then applied to the ESOL context in Scotland and reveals that, despite the emancipatory language in Scottish government policy discourse, the impact of ESOL provision is largely limited to the empowerment of individual learners and has little impact on addressing structural inequalities or injustices.

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Introduction

A perceived need to reduce immigration has been instrumental in ensuring the popularity of the current UK government, and has also led to an increase in violence and open discrimination against minority communities whose first language is not English (Cooke and Peutrell 2019, 1). While anti-immigration agendas are generally associated with the politics of the right, it is important to acknowledge that increased transnational migration in the 21st century is itself driven either by the right-wing, neoliberal model of global governance that regards the movement of people as a means of providing ‘...a flexible workforce to be deployed at the discretion of global capital’ (Guo 2010a, 144), or by the need to seek asylum due to instability or a lack of safety in the country of origin. Therefore, while the widely used term ‘freedom of movement’ implies a sense of agency among migrants, transnational migration is usually borne out of necessity rather than choice, and is more likely to be driven by the employment needs of the host nation than by the preferences of the migrants themselves.

While Scotland has always experienced immigration from elsewhere in the UK, and also from other Commonwealth nations since the 1960s, an important change over the past

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20 years or so is that the majority of immigrants have come from countries where English is not widely spoken (National Records of Scotland 2021). This means of course that many immigrants to Scotland - in addition to encountering the challenges anyone must face when moving to a new country - have to deal with the difficulty of facing these challenges in an environment where everything is conducted in an unfamiliar language. For immigrants arriving in the UK with limited competence in English, access to programmes in English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) can play a significant role in facilitating their settlement. A NIACE report in 2006 stated that

confidence in English language opens doors and helps people engage in and contribute to civil society. Lack of fluency in the language condemns many people to poverty. (NIACE (National Institute for Adult and Continuing Education) 2006, 3).

In 2016, a UK parliament report on social integration recommended that the government should ‘...markedly increase ESOL funding as well as explore innovative policy ideas to increase the availability and take-up of English language classes’ (UK Government 2016, 18). However, while the potential clearly exists for ESOL to facilitate the integration of immigrants, different approaches to ESOL can lead to different outcomes. Furthermore, while successful integration is widely regarded as a positive outcome, it appears to mean different things to different people, creating ambiguities in the discourse.

Increased inward migration from non-English speaking countries, along with the social tensions this has caused, raises questions about where the responsibility for facilitating the settlement of migrants should lie: should migrants be expected to simply adapt and conform to the existing norms of their new environment, or can they retain their own, pre-existing values? Indeed, should the existing structures of the host society be altered in order to accommodate immigrants more successfully? What role does language play in facilitating or creating barriers to immigrant settlement, and how do language programmes impact the settlement process? This article analyses key concepts related to immigration settlement and language education, with a view to addressing the above questions.

Methodological approach

The article explores the role that ESOL programmes can play in the settlement of immigrants, identifying links between approaches to ESOL and models of immigration settlement. By exploring three different conceptualisations of what is broadly termed *integration*, I identify how each interpretation of this term can lead to the promotion of social structures that afford immigrants varying degrees of freedom and power. I then explore the role education can play in altering or reinforcing power locations before bringing these various concepts together and presenting them on a continuum, which I offer as an analytical framework for evaluating the emancipatory potential of ESOL. Finally, I use this framework to provide an analysis of ESOL in Scotland and its role in facilitating – or inhibiting – the settlement of migrants. My conceptual analysis draws heavily on critical theory (Bohman 2005), and is therefore concerned with power imbalances and the social injustices that they cause - specifically the risks of marginalisation and exclusion that immigrants can suffer,

the role that language can play in exacerbating this marginalisation, and the potential for ESOL to emancipate immigrants from positions of vulnerability.

Integration: a problematic concept

A government review led by Dame Louise Casey (Casey 2016) expressed concerns about *segregation* and the social problems that this can cause, citing, for example, ‘...the likelihood of children growing up without meeting or better understanding people from different backgrounds’ (Casey 2016, 11), and the fact that the concentration of different ethnic groups can

limit labour market opportunities...[and] reduce opportunities for social ties between minority and white British communities...lead[ing] to lower identification with Britain and lower levels of trust between ethnic groups. (Casey 2016, 11).

The risks posed by a segregated society in the Casey Review echo concerns raised in previous reports. A review on community cohesion in 2001 concluded that multiculturalism had led to a fragmentation of society, with different communities living ‘...a series of parallel lives.’ (Cantle 2001, 9). A later report (Home Office 2003) expressed similar concerns, suggesting that solutions lay in developing ways to bring communities together more. The Casey Review, like these previous government reports, highlights the importance of finding ways ‘...to promote opportunity and integration.’ (Casey 2016, 16). However, none of these reports provides a clear definition of what integration actually *is*, making it difficult to establish what any pro-integration policies, projects or agendas should aim to achieve.

Three models of integration

Assimilation

The lack of a clear definition of integration stems largely from differing views on where the responsibility should lie for ensuring or facilitating immigration settlement. For some, the preferred model for successful settlement is one of *assimilation*. Sommerlad and Berry (1970) summarise two key processes in assimilation, as follows:

Behavioural assimilation...refers to the extent to which the minority group has absorbed the cultural patterns of the host society...*Structural* assimilation, on the other hand, means the process by which the individuals in the minority group have become distributed in the social and occupational structure (Sommerlad and Berry 1970, 23).

It is clear that this model of assimilation places the onus on immigrants to adapt and conform to the existing norms of the host society. There is no requirement for the host society to alter its structures in order to make it easier for minorities to ‘fit in’. This being the case, immigrants whose existing cultural values and ways of living are similar to those of the host nation are likely to be able to assimilate relatively easily, while those with multiple, markedly different values and norms will find it more difficult.

This raises the point that differences exist *within* the immigrant population, so they cannot therefore be considered as a single, homogenous group. The fact that different factors combine to create varying degrees of risk of social exclusion among immigrants can be explored through the lens of *intersectionality* - defined as follows by Hill Collins and Bilge:

When it comes to social inequality, people's lives and the organization of power in a given society are better understood as being shaped not by a single axis of social division, be it race or gender or class, but by many axes that work together and influence each other. (Hill Collins and Bilge 2016, 2).

The complex and nuanced relationship between these intersecting axes and social inequality makes an assimilation model of immigration settlement highly problematic. Bourdieu's concept of *habitus* (Bourdieu 1977) is also useful here in conceptualising the extent of disadvantage that some immigrants face within this model. *Habitus* refers to the norms and values that people hold and the impact of these values on their ability to engage meaningfully with their surroundings. The further removed a person's *habitus* is from their immediate environment, the more difficult it is for that person to function effectively. This concept not only exposes the extent to which immigrants are disempowered when compared to 'indigenous' residents, but also highlights the uneven distribution of disadvantage between different immigrant groups.

In a predominantly white, European, English-speaking country such as Scotland, an assimilation model favours immigrants from countries with similar social norms to those of the host nation, and is likely to disadvantage immigrants from countries whose socio-cultural norms are markedly different; this tends to include people who are already in vulnerable positions, namely refugees and asylum seekers. The sense of 'otherness' that asylum seekers and refugees are likely to experience is already evident in the form of institutionalised discrimination which, as has been widely documented, can affect the ability of immigrants from non-white and/or non-Christian backgrounds to find work or access social services, leading to their segregation from 'mainstream' society (see for example Casey 2016). An assimilation model of settlement, then, is likely to disadvantage further those immigrants who are already the most vulnerable. We can therefore conclude that an assimilation model does *not* adequately address the needs of those immigrants who are at most risk. On the contrary, it increases the possibility of them becoming marginalised, excluded or disenfranchised.

Integration through social capital

While some regard the terms assimilation and integration as synonymous, Sommerlad and Berry distinguish the two by stating that 'an integrated group is accorded the right to retain its differences as long as they do not cause disruption or disunity in the general society' (Sommerlad and Berry 1970, 24). More recently, Ager and Strang (2008) are critical of assimilation and assimilationist policy, prioritising instead capacities for immigrants to:

achieve their full rights as members of British society, to contribute to the community, and become fully able to exercise the rights and responsibilities that they share with other residents (Home Office 2005, quoted in Ager and Strang 2008, 175).

Following this definition, we can see that integration need not necessarily require immigrants to adopt the norms and values of the host society, as long as they are able to engage in the civic duties that go along with residency in the UK.

Ager and Strang's framework draws heavily on Social Capital Theory (Putnam 1993) to identify *bonding social capital* as a means of developing relationships among immigrants from similar backgrounds, *bridging social capital* to build relationships with members of the host community, and *linking social capital* to make connections between immigrants and the 'structures of the state' (Ager and Strang 2008, 181). By valuing all three forms of social capital, Ager and Strang refute the assimilationist argument that immigrants must reject their own culture in order to become part of a new one:

Processes supporting the maintenance of ethnic identity (especially 'social bonds') in no way logically limit wider integration into society (through the establishment of 'social bridges' and other means). (Ager and Strang 2008, 186).

The use of social capital theory to conceptualise integration, then, is likely to be far more empowering than an assimilation model. Immigrants are still expected to learn about existing structures, systems and institutions in the host country, but with the purpose of becoming able to navigate them successfully. There is also an expectation that the host society will support this process.

However, using social capital theory to conceptualise immigration is itself potentially problematic. In their critical review of social capital and immigration, Cheong et al. (2007) observe that '...the concept of social capital is dynamic and itself value-based' (Cheong et al. 2007, 25), making it open to subjective interpretation. If different types of social capital can be regarded as either positive or negative, they can then be exploited by those in power to ensure that existing hegemonies remain; immigrants are allowed to retain certain values as long as they are the *right kind* of values – values that support, rather than challenge, the status quo. While Ager and Strang's conceptual framework eschews assimilation, the value-laden nature of social capital implies that their framework is still '...based on the belief that community cohesion can be built by imposing a "majority" agenda on the "minority" communities (Cheong et al. 2007, 42).

Ager and Strang's integration model, then, does not require existing power structures to change. This leads to support mechanisms, including ESOL, often failing to do anything other than reinforce existing structures. This issue was highlighted by Guo, who claimed that the use of lifelong learning to facilitate integration promotes instead '...the assimilation of migrants into British norms and cultures' (Guo 2010b, 445), and concluded that

This approach treats cultural diversity as deficit and deficiency, blames the victims for their marginalisation and exclusion and leaves systemic issues intact. Furthermore, [it] negates cultural differences and perpetuates oppression and inequality (Guo 2010b, 445).

In order for migrants to have their rights and identities protected and respected, then, it may be useful to look to an alternative settlement model.

Inclusion

The risks of social exclusion, and the relational increase in these risks for migrants who are already vulnerable, imply a need for an immigration model that addresses the structural inequalities that place such people in vulnerable positions in the first place: a model that promotes immigrants' capacities to contribute not only to society as it is currently structured, but to the shaping and development of a more equitable and just society that respects and

incorporates their values. With this in mind, it may be useful to consider a model that is concerned less with integration and more with *inclusion*. While this term has become problematic in recent years due to its increased use to describe a kind of performative tokenism that fails to actively value the contributions of minorities (see for example Ahmed 2012), there are other contexts in which inclusion retains a far less cynical connotation, and it is this conceptualisation that I wish to explore here.

Inclusion is broadly defined by Miller and Katz as ‘... a sense of belonging: feeling respected, valued for who you are; feeling a level of supportive energy and commitment from others so that you can do your best’ (Miller and Katz 2002, 147). This definition places considerable emphasis on the majority group taking action to allow minorities to feel that they are involved and able to participate as equals. In his definition of inclusive education, Shyman envisions an environment where ‘...all individuals regardless of exceptionality, are entitled to the opportunity to be included in a regular classroom environment while receiving the supports necessary to facilitate accessibility to both environment and information’ (Shyman 2015, 351). Collins et al. (2019) describe a ‘social model’ of inclusive education, which ‘emphasises both the need to restructure educational environments...to enable all students to flourish (rather than focusing upon individual impairments) and teaching practices to facilitate all students’ learning’ (Collins et al. 2019, 1477). Inclusive education, then, requires education providers to adapt their environments and practices to accommodate the needs of minority groups more effectively and to ensure they can flourish within their learning environment. If a similar approach was applied to the context of immigration, an inclusive model would require the altering of social structures to accommodate the needs of immigrants more equitably.

In social policy, social inclusion is often regarded as a counteraction to social *exclusion*. For Levitas et al, social exclusion

involves the lack or denial of resources, rights, goods and services, and the inability to participate in the normal relationships and activities, available to the majority of people in society, whether in economic, social, cultural, or political arenas. It affects both the quality of life of individuals and the equity and cohesion of society as a whole (Levitas, et al. 2007, 9).

Social *inclusion*, therefore, relates to ways in which systems and structures can be changed to accommodate the needs of diverse groups, to ensure that minorities do not experience the types of exclusion described above. It is interesting, then, that the word *inclusion* is rarely used in the context of immigration. Instead, policy documents, government reports and academic literature tend to speak of the *integration* of immigrants within society. This implies a tacit understanding that immigrants do not have the right to challenge or disrupt existing structures, which means they are excluded from any socially transformative projects. This exclusion – in and of itself – means that immigrants are unlikely to feel fully included within their new society. Furthermore, as mentioned in the introduction, the lack of agency or control that immigrants often have over their migration, and the fact that their presence in the country tends to be in response to a national economic need, merely adds to the injustice of their exclusion.

I wish to propose, then, an immigration model that promotes inclusion. In the same way that inclusive education requires schools to make adjustments to include learners whose needs are different from those of the majority, perhaps societies should alter their structures in order to accommodate the needs of immigrants - rather than expecting them to flourish

within existing structures that patently disadvantage them. An inclusion model would require the host society and its members to take steps that facilitate the active involvement of immigrants in all aspects of society, so that they are able to make a contribution to their new environment. Such contributions could positively influence the host society in many ways: through cultural enrichment, the promotion of tolerance, and the minimising of inequalities. This goal recognises the disadvantaged positions that existing structures tend to place minority groups in, and seeks to redress this injustice through the promotion – rather than the dilution – of diversity. The goal of an inclusive model of immigration would be the reduction of social inequalities and injustices on a structural level, which not only allows but *requires* the participation of migrants in the development of a more equitable society.

ESOL and its social purpose

ESOL and indoctrination

I now move the discussion to the role of education – and ESOL in particular – in society, with a specific focus on its potential either to promote or to challenge hegemony. A common critique of traditional models of education is that their prescriptive content and unidirectional approach to instruction lead to passive acceptance of the status quo. Freire described this as the ‘banking concept’ of education (Freire 1996, 52–67), in which knowledge is ‘deposited’ by teachers into the minds of students, whose role is to receive that knowledge uncritically and store it until they are required to ‘withdraw’ it again, for example in an assessment. Such a model is limited in that ‘the scope of action allowed to students extends only as far as receiving, filing and storing’ (Freire 1996, 53), and ‘the educator’s role is to regulate the way the world “enters into” the students’ (Freire 1996, 57). There is therefore no scope for students to question or engage critically with the content, or indeed to bring their own, pre-existing understanding of the content into the learning process. The entire learning experience is predicated on the assumption that the information presented by the teacher is correct and must not be questioned, and any alternative perspectives that the students may hold are of no value. The banking concept can therefore be seen as a form of indoctrination, as the expectation is for learners to accept uncritically the information provided, and to conform to the ideologies inherent within the curriculum. This model is common in societies that base their education systems on human capital theory, which ‘stresses the value of people’s learning capacities as a factor of economic productivity’ (Livingstone 2012, 85). Such models tend towards a narrow, highly prescriptive and instrumental curriculum concerned with developing skills required by employers, and have been criticised for ‘heedlessly discarding skills that are needed to keep democracies alive’ (Nussbaum 2010, 2) – such as capacities for critical thinking, self-expression and community action.

Within the global English language teaching (ELT) profession, which includes ESOL but also the teaching of English in countries where it is primarily a foreign language, concerns about indoctrination have also been raised; these concerns include claims that ELT is used to promote neoliberal ideology at the expense of community values, class-consciousness or social justice (Gray and Block 2014). It is easy to see how language education, which is concerned with the communication of ideas, can be used as a vehicle for indoctrination by

allowing dominant ideologies to be taught under the guise of ‘useful language’ - while language that could be used to challenge existing structures is omitted from the curriculum (Gray 2015). A study by Littlejohn (2012) uses the theory of ‘McDonaldization’ (Ritzer 1993) to demonstrate how English language materials promote a commodified, highly prescriptive and overly-standardised teaching approach in which all classroom interaction is carefully scripted and controlled within the tasks provided. Copley’s study of neoliberalism in ELT coursebooks concludes that their content is ‘not merely reflecting a neoliberal zeitgeist, but in many respects is strategically positioned within it’ (Copley 2018, 59).

The inclusion of ‘citizenship education’ in learning content has also been criticised, with Sears and Hughes (2006) claiming that ‘...what passes for citizenship education...is often more akin to indoctrination’ (Sears and Hughes 2006, 3). They define indoctrination as ‘...the push for uncritical, often universal acceptance of ideas and the eschewing of evidence’ and ‘...a process that narrows and limits possibilities’ (Sears and Hughes 2006, 4). These concerns are relevant to the UK ESOL context, where the introduction of citizenship content in the UK ESOL context following the introduction of a test on ‘Life in the UK’ for citizenship applicants prompted the likes of Han et al to raise concerns about ‘...a move away from multiculturalism towards a policy of assimilation’ (Han, Starkey, and Green 2010, 63). The subsequent introduction of the Prevent Strategy (UK Government 2011) also requires the active promotion of ‘British values’ and, furthermore, encourages the demonisation of immigrants’ own values and norms by ‘...problematizing a whole faith community and pathologising actions that are simply an expression of religious observance’ (Hafez 2017). The manifestation of such policies in the ESOL classroom, therefore, is likely to actively *disempower* learners by closing down discussions before they arise, limiting the range of language presented to that which is deemed by dominant forces to be normative, and denying them opportunities to learn how to express and justify their own ideas.

ESOL for empowerment

An alternative approach, and one that may be more beneficial to learners, is to regard education as a source of individual empowerment. Classical liberalist conceptualisations of knowledge and power promote the development of autonomous rational thought to empower the individual, which should naturally lead to the ‘enlightenment’ of society, as ‘free thought acts even on the fundamentals of government’ (Kant 1784, n.p). This assumption that individual empowerment leads to wider social betterment has heavily influenced the philosophy of education and its perceived social impact. For example, Simon (1987), claimed that developing individual capacities for critical thinking leads to ‘...the identification of oppressive and unjust relations’ (Simon 1987, 374, quoted in Fielding 1997, 181). The expectation is that empowering individual learners through the development of critical thinking skills will naturally lead to a broader emancipation of society. A liberal approach to education, therefore, seeks to retain and promote individual freedoms, allowing people to flourish on their own terms, rather than having those terms imposed on them by external, dominant forces.

Liberalist influences are not difficult to identify in Communicative Language Teaching, the approach that tends to inform most contemporary language teaching practice (Richards and Rodgers 2001, 153-177). This approach prioritises communicative purpose and

individual expression over the mastery of specific linguistic structures. Rather than merely listening to and repeating utterances that are fed to them by a teacher, students in the communicative classroom ‘...must be involved in interpreting a meaning from what they hear and constructing what to say as a response.’ (Hedge 2000: 57). The prioritisation of communicative purpose has led to the development of task-based language teaching (Richards and Rodgers 2001, 223-243), which seeks to empower learners by developing capacities to perform ‘real-world tasks’, ensuring that what they learn in the classroom will be directly beneficial in their everyday lives.

However, despite its enduring prevalence, the liberalist assumption that individual enlightenment naturally leads to the wider emancipation of society has long been criticised. Marx regarded emancipation as a social phenomenon, and therefore something that required a focus beyond that of the individual:

Human emancipation will only be complete when the real individual man... has recognized and organized his own powers...as social powers so that he no longer separated his social power from himself (Marx and Engels 1978, 46).

Foucault claimed that ‘functioning through discourse, power regulates expectations and actions for participants in that structure’ (Worthman 2008, 444), which also raises questions about the extent to which education can ever be truly empowering for learners while its discourses are imposed upon them from above. Inglis (1997) draws on the Marxist conceptualisation of emancipation and Foucauldian analyses of power to make this distinction between empowerment and emancipation as educational goals:

empowerment involves people developing capacities to act successfully within the existing system and structures of power, while emancipation concerns critically analysing, resisting and challenging structures of power. (Inglis 1997, 4).

From this perspective, a liberal approach to education *cannot* be emancipatory on a social level as it only serves to perpetuate existing power structures.

Foucauldian analysis of power locations leads Inglis to claim that attempts to develop rational autonomy and individual empowerment in education simply allow individuals to work more effectively *for* the system:

Empowerment...is about encouraging workers to rationally choose to commit themselves to the values, goals, policies, and objectives of the organization as a rational means of improving their life chances. (Inglis 1997, 6).

Indeed, it can be argued that the promotion of empowerment and autonomy *within* existing societal constructs could simply facilitate a form of panopticism. In his analysis of discipline, Foucault described how hierarchical forces seek to turn individuals into ‘docile bodies’, so that they will perform the tasks required of them by those in power (Foucault 1977). Gillies (2011) updates this vision for the contemporary neoliberal context by using the term ‘agile bodies’, whereby individuals and organisations are required to adopt ‘...a more dynamic and proactive position’ (Gillies 2011, 207). Gillies argues that placing the responsibility on individuals to adapt and conform to the demands of a changing society can be interpreted as a ‘...subtle, insidious form of governance where ends can still be aimed at merely by shaping actors’ own choices’ (Gillies 2011, 215). Within such a construct, individuals become self-regulating, and ‘empowerment’ becomes, in effect, compliance with

the requirements of hegemonic forces. We are therefore left with an education model which, according to Fielding, promotes an ‘unacceptably limiting dependency that is too often prone to deference, none of which is in any genuine sense transformational, inspiring or democratically fitting’ (Fielding 1997, 188). Ultimately, Fielding concludes, ‘Empowerment has run its course; it is time to move on’ (Fielding 1997, 188).

ESOL for emancipation

Perhaps what is required, then, is an approach to education that recognises emancipation as a social, rather than an individualistic, phenomenon. Such an approach would be congruent with Marx’s view that ‘...there could be no individual emancipation without wider societal transformation’ (Biesta 2010, 43). Education would therefore need to include ‘...the analysis of oppressive structures, practices, and theories’ (ibid) in order to expose social injustices and to look for solutions. This is the basis for *critical pedagogy*, an approach to education that has emerged from the work of Paolo Freire (Freire 1996), and which Giroux describes as being ‘...rooted in a project that is tied to the creation of an informed, critical citizenry capable of participating and governing in a democratic society’ (Giroux 2011, 7). Drawing on the emancipatory agenda of critical theory, critical pedagogy actively eschews indoctrination, promoting instead a focus on social justice, the development of capacities to critically engage with existing structures, and a transformative approach to societal development. It seems appropriate, then, to consider the application of critical pedagogy in ESOL provision, with the aim of facilitating the transformation of society in order to address the social injustices and inequalities that ESOL learners often suffer from.

As previously discussed, ESOL appears to be heavily influenced by indoctrinatory methods and content that uncritically promotes neoliberal ideology and British values, and individual empowerment tends to have a very limited transformative impact. However, a third alternative exists, which is for language education to take a more emancipatory approach. A study by Worthman (2008) explored the emancipatory potential of English language provision for immigrant communities in the United States, highlighting how different teaching approaches can lead towards learning programmes having either an empowering or an emancipatory impact on learners. More recently, Cooke and Peutrell describe the ‘duality’ of ESOL in this way:

...on the one hand, it can be seen as a site for the reproduction of neoliberal values and ideologies; but on the other, it has the potential for nurturing critical capabilities and resistance (Cooke and Peutrell 2019, 8).

While there is little evidence to suggest that the global ELT profession is influenced by emancipatory pedagogies, Cooke and Peutrell illustrate how its application in the more localised context of ESOL, in which learners are invariably from disadvantaged backgrounds and occupying low-status social positions, can clearly be beneficial to such learners. Orienting ESOL in this way requires the use of participatory methodologies that give space for learners to decide learning content and outcomes, the use of social justice topics to problematise issues and develop critical consciousness, and an understanding that learning is multidirectional rather than unidirectional so that ‘the teacher is no longer merely the one-who-teaches, but one who is himself taught in dialogue with the students’ (Freire 1996, 61).

The emancipation continuum

Drawing concepts together

So far, I have presented three possible models for the settlement of immigrants – assimilation, integration and inclusion. The extent of the contribution ESOL can make towards social inclusion depends, of course, on the nature and focus of the interaction that is taught, and the contexts within which language is presented. We must therefore consider that ESOL programmes can be used to facilitate any one of the three settlement models. An approach that seeks to indoctrinate immigrants by presenting the norms of the host country and expecting them to accept and conform to these norms is likely to promote an assimilation model. A curriculum that promotes ‘British values’ or develops ‘citizenship skills’ runs the risk of becoming a programme of assimilation, indoctrination or even coercion and control if it follows a unidirectional format and expects uncritical acceptance of these values. An integration model, on the other hand, can ostensibly be facilitated through a liberal, empowering approach to education that aims to develop capacities to perform necessary tasks and to establish key relationships in the form of social capital, so individual learners can flourish in their new society. However, as previously discussed, the use of individual empowerment as an educational goal has its limitations, and can lead to ‘...a more subtle form of incorporation’ (Inglis 1997, 4).

An inclusive approach to immigration, by contrast, requires learners not only to develop skills to function within the current social model, but also to have a transformative impact by engaging actively with the host community; this in turn can improve learners’ own social status, but also contributes to the development of a more inclusive society. This inclusive approach to immigration is congruent with the aims of critical pedagogy, where learning is participatory and multi-directional. Such an approach to education goes beyond empowering students as individuals, seeking instead to emancipate in the Marxist sense by providing learners with the knowledge and skills to effect change on a societal level.

Table 1 presents the concept of emancipation within the contexts of immigration and education. It is effectively an expansion of Worthman’s conceptualisation of ‘...the continuum of empowerment to emancipation’ (Worthman 2008, 443). Worthman’s observations of ESOL teaching practice allow us to identify approaches that are either empowering or emancipatory, and to establish that classroom activities can be placed on a continuum according to their empowering or emancipatory impact. I have extended this continuum to include indoctrination - also a potential outcome of education - and have tied different models of immigration to each concept. The table can therefore be used to identify how different approaches to ESOL practice impact the settlement of migrants into society.

Applying the continuum: an analysis of ESOL in Scotland

Having presented the Emancipation Continuum, I now wish to apply it to the Scottish ESOL context to demonstrate its usefulness as an analytical framework. As the table shows, an indoctrinatory approach to ESOL involves a highly prescriptive syllabus that orients learners towards developing the knowledge and skills that the host country requires of them, which, given the disadvantaged positions that society tends to locate them within, is unlikely to benefit the learners themselves. UK-wide measures such as the Prevent Duty and the introduction of the Life in the UK Test require immigrants to accept and assimilate into existing normative social structures, and also to eschew any of their own values that conflict with

Table 1. The emancipation continuum.

Concept	Indoctrination	Empowerment	Emancipation
<i>Immigration Model</i>	Assimilation	Integration Through Social Capital	Inclusion
<i>Educational Approach</i>	Prescriptive Curriculum: Content selected to develop learners' capacities to meet the needs of dominant forces in society.	Needs-based Curriculum: Content aims to develop knowledge and skills that allows learners to reach their potential within existing power structures.	Co-created Curriculum: Learners identify/select content that allows them to critically engage with existing societal structures, and develop skills to effect change.
<i>Features</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Pre-determined content and outcomes -Tasks socialise learners into subordinate positions -Existing structures/values presented as positive -Teacher dispenses knowledge as dictated by syllabus 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Content selected to develop skills for life, work and further study -Tasks relate to real-world situations and address learners' practical needs -Little/no critical engagement with social justice issues -Teacher dispenses knowledge according to perceived learner needs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Content negotiated between learners and teacher -Tasks develop critical thinking skills -Learners encouraged to identify and challenge social injustices -Learning is multidirectional, between students and teacher and also among students



such structures. Framing ESOL provision in this way allows dominant forces to blame immigrants for their own marginalisation, as a failure to integrate merely indicates a lack of effort on their part. The indoctrinatory nature of ESOL in the UK and the assimilationist outcome it promotes has long been a concern, with Cooke (2006) declaring that ESOL classes were '...serving the needs of the state for immigrants to be socialised into low paid positions in which they generally complied and rarely complained.' (Cooke 2006, 70).

While the Prevent Duty and the Life in the UK test apply UK-wide and no doubt influence ESOL in Scotland to an extent, both education and integration are devolved issues, and are therefore driven primarily by Scottish government policy which, on the surface at least, appears to be led by different priorities. A national ESOL Strategy for Scotland, first developed in 2007, seems to advocate an emancipatory agenda from the top down, describing ESOL as '...central to giving people a democratic voice and supporting them to contribute to the society in which they live' (Scottish Government 2015, 6). The strategy was refreshed in 2015 to include the following objectives:

- ESOL learners co-design their learning experience.
- ESOL learners transform their lives and communities through learning choices in personal, work, family and community settings.
- ESOL learners effectively influence strategy and policy at local and national levels. (Scottish Government 2015, 20-21).

These objectives imply a clear desire to involve ESOL learners in determining the nature of ESOL provision and in contributing to the development of Scottish society. The ESOL strategy seems, therefore, to be advocating that learners, as long-term residents in Scotland,

should engage in the ongoing project of social emancipation. This engagement leads to an inclusive model of immigrant settlement by allowing social structures to be altered through the actions of ESOL learners. The Scottish Government has also developed a policy on refugee integration (Scottish Government 2018), which is focused on allowing 'new Scots' to participate fully in society, allowing 'everyone to pursue their ambitions through education, employment, culture and leisure activities' (Scottish Government 2018, 10). Policy discourse, then, suggests that the Scottish Government differs from the UK Government by taking an emancipatory, inclusive approach towards ESOL and, more broadly, the immigration settlement process.

However, Ball (1994) reminds us that policy discourse alone is meaningless, and that we must also consider policy implementation; this is where ESOL provision in Scotland begins to lose its emancipatory impact. One reason for this is that adult education in Scotland, particularly in the further education (FE) sector where most ESOL provision takes place, is also influenced by other policies that are based on the neoliberal assumption that 'the fundamental role of further education is to provide people with the skills they need to get a job, ... keep a job, or get a better job' (Scottish Government 2011, 10). Such an approach tasks colleges with 'providing [learners] with the skills, ... qualifications and vocational pathways that will lead directly to employment opportunities', which in turn would '... enhance sustainable economic growth.' (Scottish Government 2014, 7). In a previous analysis of the impact of FE policy on ESOL I concluded that this preoccupation with employability for economic development 'significantly undermines college managers' ability to address the objectives of the ESOL strategy' (Brown 2017, 53), orienting it instead towards an indoctrinatory model – one that limits content to include only what is required by employers.

Another study, this time exploring the perceptions of ESOL practitioners in Scotland (Brown 2019), revealed that the emancipatory impact of ESOL is further inhibited by other factors. The majority of ESOL practitioners in the study did not appear to regard social transformation as part of their praxis, instead limiting their focus to one of individual empowerment, in which ESOL 'helps... students in their current social context' (Brown 2019, 192) and acts as 'a means of improving their own position in society' (ibid). The study also showed that practitioners felt the impact of prescriptive and performative institutional priorities. Following a prescriptive syllabus - one that requires the use of pre-determined materials for the attainment of pre-existing accredited qualifications - reduces scope for learners to co-create content in the way that the ESOL Strategy expects, pulling ESOL further towards a more indoctrinatory model. For many ESOL practitioners in Scotland, then, the 'struggle' appears to be located at the intersection between indoctrination and empowerment: institutions are required by FE-specific policy to assimilate learners into positions of employment to meet industry needs, while practitioners themselves seek only to empower learners within existing structures. The result is that 'the transformational impact of ESOL is minimal, allowing instead for practitioners and learners alike to be more efficiently exploited' (Brown 2019, 206). It appears that, despite Scotland's ESOL strategy containing discourse that ostensibly promotes emancipation and inclusion, existing social structures and power locations that create inequalities and injustices towards immigrants are being retained.

Conclusion

My aims in writing this article were twofold: firstly, to present an analytical framework that can be used to identify and evaluate the impact of ESOL programmes on immigration

settlement, and secondly to apply this framework to the Scottish context. The framework is presented as a continuum, linking indoctrinatory, empowering and emancipatory approaches to ESOL with assimilation, integration and inclusion models of settlement. My analysis of these various concepts leads me to conclude that, while settlement models that seek to assimilate immigrants inevitably lead to ESOL provision acting as a form of indoctrination, the benefits of an integration model are also limited. Empowering learners to succeed within a system designed to disadvantage them is effectively a kind of acquiescence to the social injustices inherent within the current structures. The only way for ESOL to contribute to a more socially just societal model is to take an emancipatory approach, which allows learners to participate in the positive transformation of society by engaging with, challenging and, ultimately, altering power structures to make for a more inclusive society. A truly inclusive approach to immigration accepts that existing structures and power locations naturally disadvantage immigrants, particularly those whose identities contain multiple features that intersect to create a *habitus* that is far removed from what is socially normative. These structures must therefore be removed or readjusted, and this can only happen if immigrants are allowed to participate in the transformative project of societal development.

However, hegemonic forces are, by definition, difficult to challenge and not always easy to identify. Using the Emancipation Continuum to analyse the Scottish ESOL context allows us to conclude that, while discourses contained within Scotland's ESOL and refugee integration strategies seemingly advocate an emancipatory approach to ESOL and the development of an increasingly inclusive society, other factors – namely the undermining of these discourses by conflicting, neoliberal policy, the use of prescriptive (rather than participatory) approaches to curriculum design and methodology, and a general perception amongst ESOL practitioners that empowering individual learners is a sufficient outcome – ensure that ESOL in Scotland retains an indoctrinatory element, and rarely goes beyond individual empowerment within existing structures.

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