



PERSPECTIVE

ESOL and EFL: An unhelpful distinction?

A report commissioned by CfBT Education Trust

Eddie Williams and Ann Williams

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Acronyms

ABSSU	Adult Basic Skills Strategy Unit (now SfLSU)
ALBSU	Adult Literacy and Basic Skills Unit
ALI	Adult Learning Inspectorate
ALRA	Adult Literacy Resource Centre
ALU	Adult Literacy Unit
BSA	Basic Skills Agency
CELTA	Certificate in English Language Teaching to Adults
DELTA	Diploma in English Language Teaching to Adults
FEFC	Further Education Funding Council
FENTO	Further Education National Training Organisation (now SVUK)
LSC	Learning and Skills Council
MOI	Medium of instruction
NAO	National Audit Office
NATESLA	National Association of Teachers of English as a Second Language
NATECLA	National Association of Teachers of English and Community Languages
NIACE	National Institute of Adult Continuing Education
NLS	National Literacy Strategy
NRDC	National Research and Development Centre for Adult Literacy and Numeracy
PGCE	Postgraduate Certificate in Education
QCA	Qualifications and Curriculum Authority
SfLSU	Skills for Life Strategy Unit (formerly ABSSU)
SVUK	Standards and Verification, UK (formerly FENTO)

Abbreviations

EAL: English as an Additional Language, sometimes used as an alternative to ESL (b) below, and often used to refer to the teaching of English language in primary and secondary schools. The term was widely adopted in the 1990s on the grounds of equity and diversity.

EFL: English as a Foreign Language, typically used to refer to:

- (a) the teaching of English in countries where it does not have a significant role as a language of communication in the major state institutions (such as government, the law, education). Examples are teaching English in France, China, Brazil. It is carried out in state schools and private schools.
- (b) the teaching of English in the UK to students from countries referred to in (a). In the UK it is typically carried out in private language schools and further education colleges.

ELT: English Language Teaching, a general term used to cover both EFL and ESOL.

ESL: English as a Second Language, typically used:

- (a) at a national level, to refer to English in countries where it has a significant role as a language of communication in major state institutions (such as government, the law, education) but where it is not the home language of the majority of the population. For the most part these countries are ex-British colonies (e.g. English is a 'second language' in India, Nigeria, Zambia).

- (b) to refer to English as a language taught to non-English speaking migrants to the UK, whether economic migrants or refugees, typically delivered by voluntary and/or government supported institutions. The term ESL in this sense is increasingly being replaced by ESOL – see below.

ESOL: English for Speakers of Other Languages. This is typically used in English-speaking countries such as the USA, Australia and New Zealand to refer to both EFL and ESL. It is increasingly being used as a similar 'cover term' in the UK, although many in the UK still use it as a synonym of ESL (b).

The use of the term ESOL was adopted at an institutional and regional policy level in the 1990s as it was felt to represent more accurately the many multilingual learners for whom English was a third or fourth language.

Executive Summary

“ While EFL organisations provided general language courses and bespoke courses tailored to the needs and demands of their various customers, ESOL teachers concentrated on providing valuable social support, and the basic language skills necessary for newcomers to settle in the community. ”

Within the UK, the distinction traditionally made between EFL (English as a foreign language) and ESOL (English for speakers of other languages)¹, was that the latter was for migrants, typically from the New Commonwealth, while EFL was for foreigners, typically middle-class Europeans who wished to learn English for general or specific purposes. The two fields developed separately: EFL was oriented to language provision, generating theory, research, teaching materials and academic courses, and developed largely by the universities and the private sector; ESOL, in contrast, focused on language as an essential component in assisting migrants to settle and work in the UK, having developed out of emergency language tuition provided by volunteers for groups such as the Ugandan Asians in the 1960s and Vietnamese refugees a decade later. When local education authorities (LEAs) assumed responsibility for ESOL in the 1970s, it was grouped with Adult Literacy and Numeracy, and has since come under the auspices of a series of government agencies ranging from the Adult Literacy Resource Agency in 1975 to the current Skills for Life Strategy Unit (SfLSU).

The classification of ESOL with Basic Skills, despite there being separate provision and separate teacher training, meant that for many years, the importance of language teaching *per se* was under-emphasised. There was little interaction with the EFL community at the outset, and little exploitation of the considerable body of research, resources and expertise on language education that had built up in the EFL field. While EFL organisations provided general language courses and bespoke courses tailored to the needs and demands of their various customers, ESOL teachers concentrated on providing valuable social support, and

the basic language skills necessary for newcomers to settle in the community. Although both were concerned with language teaching, the additional social dimension differentiated ESOL from EFL.

Considerable progress has been made in ensuring consistent quality in ESOL provision since 2000 when concerns over standards expressed in the 1999 Moser Report *A Fresh Start* and the follow-up report, *Breaking the Language Barriers*, led to the introduction, in 2001, of a national strategy for ESOL and the *ESOL Core Curriculum*². Nevertheless, recent Ofsted and ALI³ reports found certain aspects of current provision to be unsatisfactory, citing:

- too few places on ESOL courses to meet the demand
- shortage of skilled and trained ESOL teachers
- larger than average class sizes (22 students per class in the large conurbations)
- failure to cater adequately for the whole range of learners
- inadequate provision and advice for more advanced learners in particular
- classes sometimes held at unsuitable times with no crèche provision
- teaching quality sometimes poor.

Many of the above difficulties result from a lack of resources but they are exacerbated by the rapidly growing numbers of refugees, asylum seekers and economic migrants and by the changing profile of ESOL learners. Although there are still many students who require basic English, the single largest group of migrants is now those from the new EU countries, many of whom have high levels of

¹ Until the 1990s the term ESL (English as a second language) was used in this context. While the distinction between ESOL and EFL is maintained in government-funded provision, ESOL is now frequently used to refer to both ESOL and EFL in other contexts.

² New Skills for Life qualifications were introduced in 2004 and new ESOL teacher training qualifications in 2003/4

³ Office for Standards in Education and Adult Literacy Inspectorate

“ Although there may now be little difference between EFL and ESOL students in terms of their language skills, the distinction is crucial in terms of funding. ”

education and skills similar to those usually associated with EFL learners. This means that not only does ESOL provision need to increase but also it needs to become more varied and flexible, to meet the needs of this diverse and demanding student body.

Although there may now be little difference between EFL and ESOL students in terms of their language skills, the distinction is crucial in terms of funding. ESOL tuition is government funded and free up to Level 2, to refugees, asylum seekers and those resident for a minimum of three years in the European Economic Area. All other students fall into the EFL category and pay tuition fees which have risen sharply in the last decade. The take-up of EFL classes in many FE colleges has fallen to such an extent that classes have been merged with ESOL classes or discontinued altogether.

It would appear that the long-standing distinction between ESOL and EFL, which does not exist in other English-speaking countries, is no longer relevant in the UK context. Derek Grover CB⁴ maintains ESOL provision is currently 'one of the biggest challenges we face'. The considerable body of resources accumulated in EFL and used globally in language teaching, syllabus design, management of learning and teacher training could help to meet this challenge.

Recommendations

- (1) ESOL should be seen as a language teaching operation, and distinct from adult literacy and numeracy provision (a recommendation also made in Breaking the Language Barriers (DfEE 2000) and the KMPG Report (2005)).
- (2) The fields of ESOL and EFL should be integrated.
- (3) There should be an adequate contribution of EFL expertise and experience to the NIACE Committee of Enquiry into ESOL.
- (4) EFL organisations should be considered as possible sources of high quality delivery and management of needs-targeted language teaching operations.
- (5) Relevant findings from language learning and teaching research should be disseminated to those involved in the direction of ESOL in the UK.
- (6) The LSC should consider funding the delivery of ESOL by providers outside the statutory further and adult education sectors.
- (7) Consideration should be given to institutionalising ESOL provision in large firms and business enterprises.
- (8) The private sector should be allowed to bid for LSC funding to offer teacher training in ESOL.

⁴Derek Grover CB, chair of the NIACE (National Institute of Adult and Continuing Education) enquiry into ESOL, December 2005.

1. Background

“ Throughout the 19th century English had a dominant status in the British colonies, and the assumption was that it should be taught and used in colonial education in exactly the same way as it was in the mother country, especially at secondary level and beyond. ”

1.1 The EFL/ESL distinction in the UK

Although it is difficult to give with certainty a precise starting point for the EFL/ESL distinction within the UK, it is acknowledged that it had become established by the mid-1950s. It is a distinction that has its origins partly in British history, namely colonisation by Britain, together with subsequent immigration from the ex-colonies into the UK, and partly in the differing ideologies which have underpinned the teaching provision for what was perceived as two different constituencies: roughly speaking, the EFL (English as a foreign language) constituency was composed of foreigners educated through the medium of their national language who wished to learn English for limited purposes or temporary stays in the UK, while the ESL (English as a second language) constituency consisted of migrants coming to settle permanently in the UK who needed English to enhance their opportunities in life⁵.

1.2 The Origins of ESL

Throughout the 19th century English had a dominant status in the British colonies, and the assumption was that it should be taught and used in colonial education in exactly the same way as it was in the mother country, especially at secondary level and beyond. Very little explicit English language teaching provision was made for non-native speakers of English in the colonial education systems, and teachers focused on their subject areas rather than the language through which they taught them.

An important objective of colonial education was that a sufficient number of colonial subjects should be taught through the medium of English, to prepare them to take part not only in the administration of the British

Empire, but also in commercial and related activities. There was thus from the outset a ‘utilitarian’ objective to the use of English in the colonies, which in many cases continued after independence⁶, with Catford (1959: 170) noting that in countries ‘such as India or Pakistan, English may be primarily needed as an essential instrument of practical everyday life in certain spheres of activity (for instance, telecommunications, commerce, technology, higher education)’. Nonetheless, there was little explicit teaching of English, and the expectation was that students would acquire English through being exposed to it as a medium of instruction (MOI). This practice is still the case in many parts of the non-English world, notably Africa, where many countries adopt a ‘straight for English’ approach and use the language as the MOI from the first day.

In the 1960s migration to the UK from Commonwealth countries such as Pakistan and India, began to occur to an increased degree. Eventually Local Education Authorities in urban areas where there was significant migrant settlement began to incorporate ESL as a part of their community learning provision through their adult education centres. These classes generally came under the auspices of ‘Language and Communication’ or ‘General Studies’, were often associated with basic literacy and numeracy for native speakers of English, and were often taught by people who did not have specific language teaching qualifications⁷.

The term ESL (later ESOL) came to be applied to these classes, possibly bolstered by the fact that the bulk of the students were adults who came from countries where English was a ‘second language’ in institutional terms. English was therefore not ‘foreign’ to the

⁵ That simple dichotomy is no longer, if it ever was, entirely valid. The globalisation of English has meant that English can also enhance opportunities for those who do not reside in English-speaking countries.

⁶ It is noteworthy, however, that in some Muslim countries, such as Malaysia, parts of the population felt that education through the English language was an instrument of Christian proselytisation and accordingly many, especially women, did not participate in it.

⁷ It should be noted that there were also non-qualified teachers of EFL in the 1960s and 1970s. The belief that anyone who speaks a language can teach it has been detrimental to the professionalisation of both EFL and ESOL fields.

learners in the sense that they had already had a degree of exposure to the language, and were familiar with its functions in their country of origin. However, a further reason for adopting ESL as a label was that there was a perception among some ESL practitioners that EFL involved a good deal of formal grammar teaching, whereas ESL learners needed more emphasis on communication skills. Interestingly, the publication of David Wilkins' work on notional syllabuses in the 1970s meant that EFL practitioners also began to move towards more functional approaches to language teaching.

In the early days, teaching in adult ESOL classes was generally oriented more to informal contexts of 'community' and followed programmes which reflected a more pragmatic approach to language teaching than did EFL at the time. ESOL students, whether migrant workers, refugees or asylum seekers were not able to afford EFL classes which required expensive course-books and needed a different kind of support (e.g. with housing, children's education, health issues) from that provided for EFL students. The role of the ESOL teachers extended beyond language teaching and they were urged to base their teaching on real-life situations, relevant to the learners' needs. Tuition was free, and the classes aimed to enable learners to communicate in a range of everyday situations (e.g. with medical staff, teachers, welfare officers). The learners were frequently women, and the classes were often held in the daytime, when the children were in school and husbands at work. Some idea of the origins of ESL in the UK may be gained from the position in Reading, where ESL classes were established in the early 1970s on primary school premises for mothers bringing their children to school. Art, dancing and sewing classes were held alongside the language classes, all of which were taught by unpaid and largely untrained volunteers. When the volunteers did receive a token payment, they pooled the money to fund a crèche for the mothers' children. Home tuition for women who were unable to attend classes was also offered. ESOL's central purpose in the 1960s and 70s was to help those migrants from non-English-speaking backgrounds to settle in the community. It should be added here

that the teachers were frequently the only members of the host community that the women learners met on a non-institutional basis and that the teachers saw part of their role as providing a friendly and non-threatening entry into wider society.

In the early days of ESL there were no clear English language curricula, and learners did not work towards any recognised language qualification. The situation with regard to school-aged children in migrant communities was somewhat different: provision for these became a concern in the 1960s, and a Materials Development project was set up in Leeds to write materials, funded by the Schools Council. The results of this were *Scope* published in 1969, followed in 1972 by *Concept 7-9*. Since then English teaching has continued in schools under the label of English as an Additional Language (EAL), a term adopted in place of ESOL on grounds of equality and diversity.

In some cases, ESOL teaching grew out of concerns about racism. Thus after the Race Relations Act of 1968, Glasgow Community Relations Council, which had been set up in 1971 'to improve harmonious relationships between host community and ethnic minority groups', began to organise home tuition in English (Irvine & Rice 2000). The anti-racism theme expanded in some quarters to a view that ESOL teachers should themselves be recruited from the migrant community. (In EFL circles there had also been debates as to whether native speakers of English or non-native speakers of English should be preferred as English language teachers. However, the EFL debate revolved not around issues of race *per se*, but language pedagogy: that Spanish teachers, for example, would have better insights into the language problems of Spanish learners of English; whereas English native speakers might provide better models of the English language.)

The informal nature of the ESOL operation in its early days is also demonstrated by the fact that there was little in the way of national co-ordination in the UK. It was only in 1978 that NATESLA (the National Association of Teachers of English as a Second Language to Adults) was established with a training

programme associated with the RSA Certificate in the Teaching of English to Adult Migrants. From the 1980s onwards, the RSA Diploma in TESOL was delivered in areas with large migrant communities. This built on the RSA Dip. TEFLA (later DELTA, the Diploma in English Language Teaching to Adults); staff in many awarding institutions (for example, Westminster College, London) worked between the two programmes. The RSA diploma was a recognised training route for qualified EFL teachers returning from abroad who wanted to work in ESOL. Both ESOL and EFL Dips/DELTA were amalgamated by UCLES in the early 1990s with the result that the recognised training route for both ESOL and EFL teachers was the same until the introduction of the new FENTO training standards for ESOL were introduced.

The aims of ESOL teaching continued to be to teach English to enable newcomers to work and settle in the UK. However, in the late 1980s research studies began to appear which suggested that provision did not fully meet the needs of the learners. The findings demonstrated that a very high proportion of these minority communities were operating at low levels of English competence. Many could not even attempt survival level tasks in English and only a tiny minority of those surveyed had language skills adequate for study or training. (Carr-Hill *et al.*, 1989).

More recently Dimitriadou (2004) claimed that ESOL continues to have a 'laid back' nature which has resulted in the language provision offered being generally at a lower level than that required by employers. Likewise Schellekens (2001) holds that ESOL has continued in a tradition of catering for lower levels of language learning, despite the fact that employers whom she interviewed said that the main barrier to employment for migrants was insufficient competence in English.

One possible reason for the lack of attention to principled language teaching in ESOL is that since the earliest days, it has been associated with adult literacy. The Adult

Literacy Campaign in the mid-1970s led to the establishment of a series of bodies whose role was to support the development of literacy and numeracy provision in society and to enable learners to read, write and speak English and to use mathematics at a level necessary to function at work and in society in general. Thus ESOL was included in the remit of a series of agencies⁸, the first of which was ALRA (Adult Literacy Resource Centre), whose principal focus was adult literacy, rather than language teaching *per se*. Not all ESOL practitioners welcomed this association and believed that language teaching required specialist skills which differed from those needed in literacy work: while ESOL learners need to learn to read and write English, and in a minority of cases are not literate in any language, their needs are not identical with those of native speakers of English who already have command of the spoken language. While the two fields have common elements in that ESOL teachers need to be able to teach literacy as well as language, there are nevertheless organisational and methodological differences. Adult literacy has a strong and commendable tradition of volunteerism but the same approach is not suitable for ESOL teaching whose practitioners need specific training in language teaching. In addition, literacy practitioners' traditional reluctance to intervene to change a student's spoken language, cannot be applied in ESOL teaching where it is important that the teacher addresses all four skills.

1.3 The Origins of EFL

EFL emerged from a reinterpretation of the role of English in the Empire, when attention began to turn to the teaching of the English language as a subject in its own right (rather than English for literature, or English as the grammatical parsing of sentences). An early figure in this movement was Michael West (1888–1973) whose research in India in the 1920s led him to devise approaches to the teaching of reading in English which incorporate principled decisions on language such as lexical selection and distribution. West's *New Method*

⁸ The list includes: 1975: ALRA (Adult Literacy Resource Centre); 1978: ALU (Adult Literacy Unit); 1980: ALBSU (Adult Literacy and Basic Skills Unit); 1995: BSA (Basic Skills Agency); 2003: ABSSA (Adult Basic Skills Strategy Agency).

Reader Scheme (1927) was followed by other New Method publications on conversation (1933), on composition (1938) and grammar (1938), the latter written by Harold Palmer, who also prepared a series of *New Method English Practice* books. Another widely used language course written along similar lines was Eckersley's *Essential English* published in 1938 (see Howatt 1984 for a fuller account).

In the USA Fries' *Teaching and Learning English as a Foreign Language* (1945) also advocated employing linguistic principles in the teaching of English, and in the following year the first journal dedicated to English language teaching appeared in the UK, entitled, unsurprisingly, *English Language Teaching*⁹. In the early 1950s it featured a number of influential articles by W. F. Mackey, the titles of which, *Selection* (1952–3), *Grading* (1953–4) and *Presentation* (1954–5), are indicative of the more 'rigorous' approach to ELT. Further evidence of this approach appeared in 1959 when Quirk and Smith edited *The Teaching of English*, to which Quirk himself contributed a chapter entitled 'English language and the structural approach', while Catford's¹⁰ contribution was 'The teaching of English as a foreign language'. The new approach was epitomised in *The Linguistic Sciences and Language Teaching*, edited by Halliday, MacIntosh and Strevens, published in 1964. The 'scientific' approach in brief was concerned with taking principled decisions on the English syllabus based on an analysis of the English language. These decisions concerned not only vocabulary selection, but also the sequencing and grading of grammatical structures.

The approach was enthusiastically adopted from the mid-1950s onwards by those who identified themselves as practitioners of English as a foreign language (following the usage established by such as Fries and Catford). Indeed the fact that EFL was informed by this 'scientific' approach

was to remain one of its key features. EFL practitioners by and large agreed with Catford's view that 'the study of language in linguistic terms can contribute much of value to the Teaching of English as a Foreign Language'. (1959: 189).

In the 1960s there was also more overt introduction of psychological theories of learning (especially behaviourism) to underpin the content, which had been selected and organised according to the aforementioned 'linguistic' principles. A number of EFL course-book series appeared which made direct appeal to behaviourism, notably *Success with English* (Broughton 1968) and *New Concept English* (Alexander 1967). It is noticeable that these courses, like others that have since appeared, utilised a monolingual approach, avoiding translation and advocating only the use of English for instruction and explanation. In this sense EFL contrasts with the teaching of other 'modern foreign languages' in the UK, such as French.

During these same decades i.e. the 1920s to the 1960s, the practice of EFL also became institutionalised as the object of academic study. In 1932 a start was made on EFL teacher training at the Institute of Education, London, where in 1948 a Chair with responsibilities for English as a foreign language was established, and a PGCE (TEFL) was instituted. The influential Diploma in Applied Linguistics (subsequently the MSc in Applied Linguistics) was established in the School of Applied Linguistics at the University of Edinburgh in 1957, catering primarily for participants recruited from an EFL background, with comparable courses being later set up in the universities of Leeds, Essex, Lancaster and Reading¹¹.

In short, by the end of the 1960s EFL had been established in the UK as a recognised professional discipline, complete with a supportive framework of academic courses

⁹In 1972 *English Language Teaching* became the *English Language Teaching Journal* – commonly referred to as *ELTJ*.

¹⁰Catford was at the time Director of the English Language Institute, University of Michigan, having previously been Director of the School of Applied Linguistics in Edinburgh.

¹¹It is indicative of their orientation that many of these diplomas and masters courses were set up in departments of (applied) linguistics or English language, rather than education.

and qualifications together with associated publications and periodicals. Although there were disagreements on issues of theory, and there have been since the 1960s significant shifts of emphasis, particularly as regards language syllabus design, and language learning psychology, these took place within an organised and institutionalised framework whose practitioners have largely recognised the essential unity of the field of EFL, but have maintained a cross-disciplinary approach to their work, drawing particularly on linguistics, and also on education, psychology, sociology and anthropology.

1.4 EFL and ESOL: Separate Enterprises

As the above historical summary indicates, both in organisation and in implementation ESOL and EFL within the UK were from the beginning separate enterprises. In ESOL the emphasis was on providing a socially useful service to migrants, rather than simply a language service to people who wanted to learn a language. An important dimension of ESOL teaching has always been pastoral care and in an effort to reach out to the new communities, classes were set up in schools, churches, community centres and in some cases in work premises. Thus ESOL provision grew up rather organically, with classes taught predominantly by socially concerned and often part-time teachers. Although the classes gradually came under the aegis of the LEAs, and tutors began to receive payment, official concerns appeared to focus on the administrative structure and funding of ESOL, rather than questions of course content or methodology.

Once the ESOL classes had been established, there often was little co-operation or linkage between them and the EFL constituency, despite the fact that EFL and ESOL classes were often held in the same college premises. In many colleges, EFL was grouped with modern languages while ESOL was included under Adult Literacy¹². The reasons for the lack of contact are not always easy to establish. It is possible that some ESOL practitioners were unaware of the body of expertise on language

teaching and learning that was available in the EFL field, and misunderstood the aims and nature of EFL. From the EFL perspective there was also a degree of ignorance of the nature of ESOL. Furthermore, and especially in the early days, the fact that much ESOL teaching was voluntary or part-time meant that it was not a practical option for EFL practitioners who had frequently invested time and money in obtaining an EFL qualification, and were keen to find posts overseas, which offered, especially with British Council schemes, a more promising career structure.

There were possibly underlying ideological differences between the ESOL and EFL establishments: ESOL, with its genesis in adult education, had a co-operative and anti-elitist ethos. Bellis (2000, cited in Dimitriadou 2004) maintains that 'the marginal status of ESOL is largely a construction of the culture within adult education and subcultures within ESOL (such as literacy and basic skills – instead of academic English)'. While ESOL addressed the learners, rather than the discipline of language teaching, EFL tended to address the discipline, rather than the learners. Sceptics saw the EFL concern with theory, or the tendency to seek experimental evidence on the efficacy of methods as 'technicist', and were possibly suspicious of the commercial side of EFL and its connection with the private English language sector.

There were exceptions to this EFL/ESOL divide, a notable case being Ealing College of Further Education – later Thames Valley University and now Ealing, Hammersmith and West London College – where a strong staff team produced some particularly innovative courses and English language teaching materials in the 1970s and 1980s. There were also some large urban centres such as London, where staffing structures were quickly established. The Language and Literacy Unit of ILEA (Inner London Education Authority), spearheaded changes in all London colleges, with the result that within a few years there was a full range of ESOL programmes

¹² Some ESOL practitioners however, felt that this approach ignored their specialist language teaching skills and reflected an image of 'volunteerism' rather than professional skills.

and departments, with permanent staffing structures which included the higher grades. At the same time ILEA actively recruited EFL trained teachers and established a conversion course to familiarise them with issues in ESOL. Many of the teachers recruited in the 1980s remained within the ESOL establishment and have since played a significant role in educational and government departments.

1.5 Commonality and Contrasts in EFL/ESOL

What ESOL and EFL clearly have in common is the teaching of English. The commonality between the two sectors was clearly recognised by examination boards in the 1990s when the CertTEFL and the DipTEFL were redeveloped. UCLES specified that the new CELTA and DELTA programmes were targeted at teachers of ESOL, EFL or other areas of English language teaching. ESOL teacher education programmes were involved in the pilot schemes for the CELTA and many used the qualification after its introduction in 1996. UCLES/Cambridge ESOL had at least one Joint Chief Assessor for ESOL from the 1990s onwards.

However, while ESOL at grassroots level has for the most part remained a relatively autonomous, localised operation aiming at equipping its learners with workplace skills, EFL has evolved into a hugely diverse and specialised operation across the world. Communicative syllabus design led the way to EFL teaching for a variety of specific contexts, to a variety of learners, and with a range of learner-driven objectives: there now exist English language teaching programmes for business people, diplomats, waiters, aeroplane pilots, mariners, and students of the humanities, sciences and technology to name but a few. These programmes typically do not restrict themselves to language and to teaching the 'four skills' (listening, speaking, reading and writing), but also attend to the needs of the learners in terms of typical processes associated with the roles in which they will find themselves using English.

While EFL students who come to the UK tended until recently to be fairly homogeneous in terms of economic and educational background, students of EFL in a global context have always varied considerably in their levels of ability, linguistic backgrounds and cultures. Developments in the communicative syllabus field have helped EFL practitioners to target their work, not only in terms of the immediate needs of their learners, but also in terms of the learners' aspirations. Although functional English and the communicative syllabus were the basis for ESOL teaching qualifications in the 1980s, ESOL has not embraced English for Specific Purposes to the same extent as EFL, while funding restrictions have meant that ESOL practitioners have not been able to focus on teaching English for Specific Purposes to high levels of fluency.

A factor that may blur the traditional distinction between ESOL and EFL is the change in ESOL students' profiles. The traditional association of ESOL with Adult Literacy and Numeracy¹³ has meant that ESOL learners have generally been categorised as students who need basic skills, i.e. English, to enable them to survive in the workplace. In reality ESOL students have always come from a wide range of language and educational backgrounds, although it is possible to identify broad categories of learners. In the 1960s and 1970s the majority of ESOL students were migrants coming to work in the UK from the Asian sub-continent, and groups of displaced persons such as the Ugandan Asians in the 1960s, and the Vietnamese a decade later, who needed English to enable them to settle successfully in UK. With the arrival of refugees and asylum seekers in the 1990s, the priority was to provide safe and unthreatening learning contexts. Currently the profile of ESOL learners appears to be changing again, with the arrival of workers from the EU. Since the accession countries joined in mid-2004, approximately 600,000 workers from the new EU countries have come to work in the UK. Thus in one FE college in a medium sized provincial town, there were, in late 2005, 400 students in ESOL

¹³In some areas such as Tower Hamlets, Literacy and ESOL were separate departments.

classes. A further 60 enrolled on a single recruitment day in January 2006. Most of these students, according to the Language Co-ordinator, were from Poland. Many of the new migrant workers come to the UK with high levels of education and high aspirations, and want ESOL to enable them to get good jobs. There is research which suggests that many ESOL courses are at present 'too basic' for learners with high levels of education (Khanna *et al.*, 1998), and that they do not yet provide the level of competence required by employers (Schellekens, 2004). The new wave of ESOL students have more in common with what are considered to be traditional EFL learners, rather than with adult literacy students and a move towards the more targeted programmes such as those offered

in EFL would be more suited to their needs. Barton and Pitt (2003: 21) suggest:

We need to rethink the way learners are categorised. Policy decisions can become a barrier in terms of learners' needs and accreditation. Recent policy changes which have brought ESOL provision together with literacy and numeracy are raising questions about the differences between ESOL and the other areas impacting on pedagogic practice

So although the aims of ESOL have remained fairly similar (i.e. to permit learners to settle into British society), there have been subtle changes in the expectations of the learners. Many students now require English courses to enable them to function at a high level of competence.

2. Developments in ESOL 2000–2005

“ Breaking the Language Barriers was produced in 2000 by a group of ESOL practitioners assembled in the wake of the Moser Report to advise on ESOL provision. ”

2.1 Background

The Moser Report, *A Fresh Start* (1999) reported that an estimated 7 million adults in the UK had poor basic skills, including up to one million who ‘struggled with English’. Lack of fluency in English was recognised as a ‘very significant factor in poverty and under-achievement in many ethnic minority communities’. ESOL provision was reported to be ‘patchy and the quality of teaching very variable’; there was little workplace provision and in inner city areas there was insufficient provision and long waiting lists. Increased numbers of refugees and asylum seekers had reduced the availability of places for established residents. A FEFC (Further Education Funding Council)¹⁴ Inspectorate report of 1998/99 on Adult Basic Education, including ESOL, stated ‘the standard of much of the provision in this area [ESOL] is a cause for concern when compared with the standards in other programme areas’ (DfEE, 2000).

2.2 Breaking the Language Barriers

Breaking the Language Barriers was produced in 2000 by a group of ESOL practitioners assembled in the wake of the Moser Report to advise on ESOL provision. Their main recommendations were that adult ESOL teaching should have:

- a clear framework of standards
- a national curriculum framework which identifies the skills to be learnt
- sound assessment with qualifications mapped against nationally agreed standards
- high quality teaching with teacher training programmes which recognise the specific needs of ESOL learners
- a range of learning opportunities which include multimedia, family learning and distance learning programmes
- provision integrated with other programmes of learning and vocational training.

The principal ESOL client groups were identified as:

- settled communities e.g. from China, Bangladesh and Pakistan, many employed in the restaurant trade (for whom unsociable working hours may cause attendance problems)
- refugees or recent asylum seekers who may have experienced trauma or suffer from culture shock or settlement difficulties
- migrant workers from Europe (those who come for a short period would be required to pay for EFL classes)
- partners or spouses of students from different parts of the world who are prevented by family responsibilities or financial hardship from pursuing EFL courses.

The Committee reported that, unlike EFL students, ESOL learners were likely to come with a wide range of individual differences, ranging from those who lacked basic literacy and numeracy in their own language to highly educated individuals with professional training. *Breaking the Language Barriers* stressed that ESOL learners’ ‘primary learning need is not literacy or numeracy but English language skills’ and that although provision for these learners should be the responsibility of the Adult Basic Skills Strategy Unit, ‘ESOL needs should be addressed alongside but distinct from basic literacy and numeracy’.

The position ESOL had traditionally held in the Adult Literacy field, however, becomes evident in Section 3 of *Breaking the Language Barriers*, ‘Quality and Quality Assurance’. The panel of experts appear to have been split on the question of whether ESOL required its own separate standards. Certain members maintained that ‘having separate standards would allow more precise descriptions of language skills, allow more relevance to language learning and more easily provide a base for a specialist ESOL curriculum’.

¹⁴ FEFC’s responsibilities were taken over in April 2001 by the Learning and Skills Council (LSC)

Others, on the other hand, clearly considered ESOL should continue to be subsumed under literacy, arguing that ESOL provision had always been 'equated with low status and value' and 'that separate standards might perpetuate this marginalisation'. The report stated that literacy encompasses 'oral communication' and that oracy (listening and speaking) should be given the same weight as literacy (reading and writing). It was also agreed that there should be provision for ESOL learners to develop their competence to Level 3 and beyond¹⁵ in order to access higher education.

With regard to teacher training, the authors were at pains to point out that there may be fundamental differences between typical basic skills students who 'often have histories of failure at school, non-promotion at work or exclusion from the workforce because of literacy problems' and ESOL students 'particularly those from groups who may have high levels of academic and professional skills'. They concluded that ESOL teacher training needs to be different from basic skills teacher training: 'Teachers working with ESOL students need to use a combination of English Language Teaching (ELT) and Basic Skills teaching and there are often close links with the teaching of EFL and Modern Languages.'

Breaking the Language Barriers proposed a teacher training programme that would include:

- linguistics
- pronunciation and intonation
- English grammar (e.g. subject verb agreement, verb tenses used in conditional sentences, collocations)
- theory and practice of teaching literacy skills
- cultural and racial awareness.

Although the above topics are justifiable, they seem oddly assorted, while a notable omission

from the list is the theory and practice of language teaching and learning. Nor is it clear what would be included under 'linguistics'.

2.3 The Skills for Life Strategy

As a result of *A Fresh Start and Breaking the Language Barriers*, the *Skills for Life Strategy* was launched in 2001 to improve basic skills¹⁶ provision in the UK. The DfES Adult Basic Skills¹⁷ Strategy Unit was set up 'to co-ordinate strategic developments', and £3.7 billion was to be allocated to implementing the programme by 2006 (National Audit Office 2004). The targets were:

1. to improve the basic skills levels of 1.5 million adults from 2001 to 2007 with milestones of 750,000 by 2004, 1.5 million by 2007 and 2.25 million by 2010
2. to reduce by 40 per cent the number of adults in the workforce who lack NVQ at level 2 or equivalent
3. to ensure that 1 million people in the workforce achieve NVQ at Level 2 between 2003 and 2006.

The aims of the Skills for Life Strategy were 'to raise standards, increase learner achievement, boost demand and ensure capacity of provision'. It was to focus on 'priority groups who have the greatest need, including hard-to-reach learners, the unemployed, offenders and lone parents.' (LSC, 2005). Core curricula, national tests and new standards for teacher training were to be part of the remit. In its introduction to the Strategy the DfES stated:

'Good quality English language provision must be available to support people who have a first language other than English. We must make sure that provision is suitable.... The ESOL curriculum will be central to achieving the government's goal of improving the quality and consistency of teaching.' (www.dfes.gov.uk/curriculum_esol/ack/).

¹⁵ See Table 1

¹⁶ Basic Skills comprise adult literacy, numeracy, language (ESOL) and ICT, whereas the Key Skills which are 'communication, application of number, information and communication technology, working with others, improving one's own learning and performance and problem solving'... 'concentrate on the application of this knowledge and understanding (i.e. basic skills) in a range of contexts' (Ofsted and ALI 'Literacy, numeracy and ESOL: a survey of current practice'. Sept. 2003)

¹⁷ Renamed Skills for Life Strategy Unit (SfLSU) in 2005.

Although the ESOL curriculum was clearly going to be a language curriculum, it was to be based on the Standards for Adult Literacy developed by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority. It was drawn up using a range of sources including 'the core curriculum for literacy, the National Literacy Strategy in schools and curricula for English as a Foreign Language (EFL)'

The curriculum was to be designed specifically for ESOL learners up to Level 2. Characteristics of ESOL learners which teachers were advised take into account were diverse educational backgrounds, culture shock problems, settlement difficulties and racist attitudes in the host population. It should be noted however, that good ESOL teachers were familiar with such problems and had been tackling them for several years already. Language providers were also advised to bear in mind the following considerations when designing a language programme:

- learners' short-term goals and the contexts in which they will need to use English
- learners' educational and employment aspirations
- learners' wider needs for skills, such as Information Technology, study skills, problem solving, job-search or specific subject skills
- the local community context
- techniques for teaching mixed-level groups and groups of learners with very mixed educational backgrounds
- techniques for teaching individuals whose listening/speaking skills are much higher or lower than their reading/writing skills
- communicative language-teaching techniques, including ways of working with learners who do not share a language with the teacher
- cross-cultural approaches which draw on learners' knowledge of other languages and cultures
- strategies for tackling specific learning difficulties such as dyslexia
- the need to move learners towards independence
- the effect of psychological or physical trauma, personal loss or culture shock on learning.

2.4 The ESOL Core Curriculum

The ESOL Core Curriculum was organised across the four skills: speaking and listening, which were combined in one strand 'because these skills are almost always used together in one communication between native speakers', reading and writing. The reading and writing strands match the Adult Literacy Core Curriculum, with both using 'the overarching framework for teaching reading and writing that is used in the NLS for schools'.

The ESOL core curriculum is divided into Entry 1, 2, and 3, followed by Level 1 and Level 2. The vast majority of ESOL students are currently enrolled in Entry 1 and Entry 2. (Further details of the ESOL Core Curriculum appear in Section 5.2.)

2.5 ESOL Skills for Life qualifications

The ESOL Skills for Life qualifications were designed to be equivalent to any other qualification in English on the NQF (National Qualifications Framework) including those designed for native speakers of English. They were finally approved by QCA and became available from September 2004. The QCA website states that the new ESOL qualifications differ from earlier certification in that:

- assessment tasks are designed to reflect the skills learners need to live, study and work in the UK
- each qualification is assessed against national standards and level descriptors for level and mode
- assessment integrates speaking and listening in 'the way it occurs most frequently in real life'
- at levels 1 and 2 the assessment of reading is through the National Test in Adult Literacy
- the language content is aligned with key grammatical features and the communicative functions for each level in the ESOL Core Curriculum
- the new qualifications incorporate 'robust assessment measures to ensure they are valid and reliable indicators of learners' achievements'.

Table 1: Qualification Equivalence

	Entry 1	Entry 2	Entry 3	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5
Basic Skills Tests (including ESOL)	ü	ü	ü	ü	ü			
Key Skills				ü	ü	ü	ü	
NVQ				ü	ü	ü	ü	ü
GCSE 4 at grades D–G				ü				
GCSE 4 at grades A–C					ü			
A Level						ü		

All previous ESOL qualifications which acted as basic skills ‘proxy qualifications’ in the interim period ceased to be valid from December 2004. From January 2005, Entry 1 to 3 and Levels 1 and 2 became the only ESOL qualifications eligible for Learning and Skills Council funding.

The DfES have investigated the attitudes of tutors and learners towards the new Skills for Life tests. It was found that only 50 per cent of tutors thought the tests were ‘positive’; they also felt that the tests might alienate learners. On the other hand 75 per cent of students said they enjoyed the tests and found them easy to read and understand, and more importantly, gained a sense of achievement from their qualification.

2.6 Teacher Training

The developments in the teaching of ESOL, and the introduction of new qualifications have had major repercussions for teacher training. In 2003, the new Stage 3 Certificate in FE teaching for ESOL was introduced. The aim of the government is that all FE teachers except new entrants should be fully qualified or at least enrolled on a suitable course by 2010, with 90 per cent of full-time and 60 per cent of part-time staff teachers qualified, or working towards being fully qualified, by 2006. It is up to colleges to work out how to train their staff.

FENTO, now SVUK, was responsible for setting standards for professional awards in FE teaching, including ESOL. The course specifications were released in spring 2003;

by autumn of that year, only the Institute of Education, University of London and South Bank University had received approval for courses, which were for experienced teachers only. Other courses approved by FENTO in 2004 included Cambridge ESOL’s two-module version of the certificate, catering for teachers holding various specialist and generic qualifications, or none at all. The first module is the CELTA (Certificate in English Language Teaching to Adults), a qualification that was already well established; the second module covers subject specialist knowledge and involves 180 contact hours, a 120 hour placement and 10 written assignments. A Trinity College two-stage certificate, which consists of a generic FE qualification combined with an ESOL subject certificate, has also been approved. Other SVUK-approved awarding bodies include the City and Guilds of London Institute.

A spokesperson for the National Research and Development Centre applauded the introduction of the Cambridge and Trinity qualifications:

‘This is a first in combining the experience of international TESOL qualifications with the mainstream certification for the post-16 learning and skills sector. The qualifications held by EFL teachers may need to be added to for full professional recognition but such teachers won’t need to repeat and start from the beginning as if they were untrained, as they had to in the past.’

(Guardian Weekly 19 February 2004)

The CELTA and DELTA diplomas were intended for training English language teachers in both EFL and ESOL and the CELTA has been used in ESOL training programmes since the 1990s as a basis for the subject specialist element in teacher training.

2.7 Funding for ESOL

Since the introduction of the Skills for Life Strategy, the demand for ESOL has risen sharply, accounting for 31 per cent of all enrolment in Skills for Life classes in 2003–04 (an increase of 11 per cent from 2000–01). Funding for ESOL has more than doubled during the same period rising from £103m in 2000–01 to £279m in 2004–05. A total of £1 bn of the Skills for Life budget has been spent on ESOL since 2001. The average funding level for each enrolment increased from £588 in 2001–02 to £619 in 2002–03.

In 2000–01 and 2002–03 approximately 50 per cent of uptake and funding was in the London area. The 10 largest providers, 9 of whom are in London, utilise over 26 per cent of total ESOL funding. The main ESOL providers fall within one of the following categories:

- further education colleges
- adult education colleges
- training organisations
- voluntary and community groups.

The Learning and Skills Council is the funding body for all Skills for Life provision including ESOL. It has 47 offices located throughout England. Despite the growth in ESOL, interviews carried out with local Learning and Skills Councils by KPMG in their survey of ESOL provision (KPMG, 2005) revealed that:

- ESOL did not feature prominently in most local Learning and Skills Councils' planning and was most often regarded as a sub-area within Skills for Life
- planning and staff did not correlate with the volume of provision
- there was relatively little quantifiable planning on demand other than for refugees and asylum seekers

- most Learning and Skills Council regional offices expect growth in this area to continue when the Citizen Language Requirement gains momentum.

The KPMG report recommended that ESOL be identified as a separate area in all national and local plans of the Learning and Skills Council, and be considered separately from literacy and numeracy in future planning. KPMG further recommended that specific support and guidance be provided to local Learning and Skills Councils to ensure they fully understand the range and volume of ESOL provision in their area.

2.8 Eligibility for ESOL Tuition

In order to be eligible for free ESOL tuition, a learner must be 'settled' i.e. have been resident in UK for the three years preceding enrolment and either have indefinite leave to enter or remain (ILE/R) or right of abode in UK. Those with right of abode include:

1. holders of British Citizen passports
2. British Dependent Territory Citizens (now known as British Overseas Territory Citizens)
3. those whose passports have been endorsed to show that they have Right of Abode in UK
4. those who have a certificate of naturalisation or registration as a British Citizen
5. nationals of European Union countries (or the children of EU nationals) who have been resident in the European Economic Area (EEA) for the three years preceding enrolment and who have come to the UK to work
6. EEA migrant workers or spouses or children of EEA migrant workers who have been resident for three years in an EU country
7. anyone who is recognised as a refugee by the UK government (i.e. granted refugee status) or the spouse or child of such a refugee
8. anyone who has been refused refugee status but has been granted leave to enter or remain

9. asylum seekers in receipt of income-based benefits or assistance under the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999 or The Children Act 1989, or subsistence payments under the National Asylum Support Service
10. persons with exceptional leave to enter or remain or with recently settled status.

Those not eligible for funding include:

1. students from outside the EU and EEA whose main reason for residence is to attend a fee-paying school
2. learners attending short courses, which include holiday or summer school courses, and in particular short courses in English as a Foreign Language.

The demand for ESOL has overtaken EFL in a number of FE colleges. Anecdotal evidence suggests that few EFL classes exist in the large urban centres such as inner London, but are still thriving in some more affluent suburbs and provincial towns such as Oxford.

The rapidly increasing demand for ESOL means that costs have soared. The new LSC funding guidelines for 2006/07 have established the threshold for free tuition at Level 2. Any person with an educational background above Level 2 will be classed as EFL and liable to pay. The rules might be difficult to implement, however, since ascertaining a student's level of education if their English is poor or non-existent may be problematic.

2.9 Inspection Reports on ESOL 2001–2005

Since the introduction of the Skills for Life Strategy in 2001 and the core curriculum for ESOL in 2002, the DfES has published a number of evaluation documents, including reports by Ofsted and ALI. The following section summarises findings from the reports on Adult ESOL teaching between 2001 and 2005.

2.9.1 Demand

Report writers generally concur that it is difficult to quantify the demand for ESOL, with the National Audit Office (NAO, 2004) noting

that 'There is no information equivalent to the Skills for Life Survey available for ESOL, but numbers are increasing.' There is, however, information on numbers enrolling on courses, and Ofsted (2005) reports that 'ESOL is the largest single subject for enrolment on Skills for Life courses'. In 2001 there were 98,000 ESOL enrolments: by 2005, the number had grown to 243,000. If non-Skills for Life courses are included in the count, the number of ESOL enrolments is nearer 400,000. Most enrolments are for Entry 1 and 2 courses.

2.9.2 Provision

The demand for places on ESOL courses has not been matched by a commensurate increase in provision. In 2003, David Griffiths (in a paper for the Home Office) reported that the waiting list for ESOL classes was over 1,000 in one London borough alone. A report published in December 2005 (ALI, 2005) states that there are waiting lists in most colleges in London and other urban areas, and that, for the first time, demand is exceeding supply in rural areas where many European workers have found employment in the fruit and vegetable-growing sector.

The demand for places means that most ESOL students find themselves in classes averaging 22 people (larger than other basic skills classes), and also many find themselves in classes that are unsuitable. 'Many providers are failing to cater for the wide range of learners' (Ofsted and ALI 2003). Both Griffiths (2003) and Ofsted (2005) found that there was a shortage of ESOL provision for students at the higher levels 'for refugees/migrants who need professional or vocational development' (Griffiths, 2003). There was also too little attention given to the progression from ESOL to vocational subjects or academic study (Ofsted, 2005). It was also reported that although advice and welfare support for many learners at Entry level were good, help and guidance for ESOL learners who have high levels of education and professional qualifications were not yet adequate (Ofsted, 2005).

2.9.3 Quality of Provision

Ofsted and ALI (2003) found that provision in literacy, numeracy and ESOL was generally inferior to that in other subjects, noting that

'the proportion of good provision is much lower in literacy, numeracy and ESOL than in any other area of learning and there is significantly more unsatisfactory provision'. Ofsted and ALI regard the quality of ESOL provision as poor in many places and, unlike literacy or numeracy provision, 'there was no evidence of the quality improving' (NIACE, 2005a). Ofsted 2005 reported that 'the quality of ESOL provision deteriorated in 2003–04. Nearly 33 per cent of ESOL classes inspected in General Further Education colleges were unsatisfactory in 2003-04 compared with 26 per cent in the previous year' (Ofsted 2005).

Examples of what constitutes poor provision are provided in the reports:

- Skills for Life materials are being used indiscriminately in some colleges, without regard for the local context or the varied language levels of the students.
- ILPs (individual learning plans)¹⁸ are often written in language that is too complex for learners, and teachers fail to employ aids such as bilingual dictionaries or translation (although it is difficult to see how in practice teachers could be expected to cope with translation into/from all possible languages of the learners).
- In some cases ESOL providers fail to take account of students' needs and do not offer classes at suitable times or with crèche facilities, etc.
- Ofsted (2003) found that the rooms used for ESOL were of a lower standard than those used for literacy or numeracy.
- Most reports stated that some teachers were not adequately trained to teach mixed ability classes.

Ofsted (2005) stated: 'ESOL students are three times more likely not to have their needs met, and four times more likely not to be able to enrol on a programme that meets with their aspirations and potential.'

2.9.4 Teacher Supply and Teaching Quality

All reports on ESOL highlight the serious shortage of teachers. Ofsted (2005) reported: 'There has been significant progress in implementing some aspects of the Skills for Life Strategy, but the lack of skilled teachers still remains, seriously affecting the quality of provision and capacity to improve.' The report continues: 'The recruitment of trained and qualified staff continues to be a concern and many ESOL teachers have insufficient training in language teaching. Overall the progress made is not good enough.' The poor literacy and numeracy skills of a minority of vocational teachers 'are cause for concern' according to Ofsted (2005).

In relation to the quality of some of the teaching observed, Ofsted (2005) reported: 'There is often an over-emphasis on completing written tasks: students copy text without understanding the language content. Teachers fail to take into account students' prior learning and do not meet their individual needs.' Inspectors also commented that many materials were insufficiently challenging for advanced students but too challenging for the weaker ones.

However, while the 2003 Ofsted report had found that students' listening and oral skills were not being developed, the 2005 report stated that the quality of the teaching in this area had improved with some students demonstrating high levels of fluency. Recent inspections (Ofsted 2005) also found evidence of the increasing use of authentic materials and more stimulating lessons. It was also reported that there was good practice in discrete ESOL provision in colleges where ESOL teaching is well established and substantial.

The new teaching qualifications are now available, and there appears to be reason for cautious optimism. Ofsted (2005) states: 'The new subject specialist teaching qualifications have been introduced successfully. Courses attract highly motivated trainees with a wide

¹⁸ It is by no means certain that ILPs which are based on a literacy model are suitable for language students whose learning covers all four skills. In addition they are difficult to manage for teachers with classes of 20+ students with 'spiky' profiles.

range of experience and qualifications and they have begun to raise the qualifications and levels of skill of Skills for Life teachers.'

Anxieties about ESOL provision prompted NIACE to launch a high level enquiry into ESOL. It was headed by Derek Grover CB, former Director of Adult Learning at the DfES, who was also involved in the Moser Report. He released the following statement to the press on 28 November 2005:

'ESOL is one of the biggest challenges we face. The demographic shift means there is greater demand in the labour market for migrant workers. The enlargement of the European Union means there are important new client groups to be catered for. The Enquiry will review existing evidence on the provision of ESOL in England, with

particular emphasis on the quality and quantity. The Enquiry will also identify the extent and nature of the current demand for ESOL provision. The role of ESOL in its wider context, including how it relates to citizenship and the connection it has to employment and social justice will also be discussed.'

The NIACE enquiry also aimed to identify what can be done to improve provision, make recommendations on how ESOL should be paid for, and provide realistic and helpful recommendations to policy makers, funding bodies, providers and practitioners. It invited input from individuals and interested bodies. The preliminary findings were made available in May 2006, and the final report published in October 2006.

3. Training and Teaching in EFL

“ EFL providers who are members of accredited organisations such as the British Council and EQUALS are regularly inspected, but there is no EFL inspection regime as rigorous or as comprehensive as that of Ofsted and ALI’s examination of ESOL teaching. ”

3.1 Background

Teacher training for EFL in England and Wales was originally provided in one-year full-time courses leading to the Postgraduate Certificate in Education in TEFL (PGCE TEFL), provided by university education departments (including among others, Bangor, Leeds, and the University of London Institute of Education). Students were normally fully funded by their local education authorities, and the certificate conferred qualified teacher status within the UK. However, most PGCE TEFL graduates pursued careers overseas¹⁹, and these PGCEs were discontinued some years ago. UK-based EFL teacher training is now largely delivered through Trinity College and UCLES (University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate), a body that took over the Royal Society of Arts qualifications in this field in 1988. UCLES and Trinity do not run courses themselves, but validate courses that meet their criteria.

EFL providers who are members of accredited organisations such as the British Council and EQUALS are regularly inspected, but there is no EFL inspection regime as rigorous or as comprehensive as that of Ofsted and ALI’s examination of ESOL teaching.

3.2 UCLES/Cambridge ESOL

Cambridge ESOL has a range of awards which are taken by over 1.75 million people in 135 countries each year (www.cambridgeesol.org/).

The awards are:

- TKT (Teaching Knowledge Test)
- CELTA (Certificate in English Language Teaching to Adults: this is the most widely taken initial TESOL/TEFL qualification in the world)
- CELTYL (Certificate in English Language Teaching to Young Learners)
- ICELT (In-service Certificate in English Language Teaching)

- DELTA (Diploma in English Language Teaching to Adults)
- IDLMT (International Diploma in Language Teaching Management)

The Cambridge ESOL CELTA with the addition of a Stage 3 module corresponds to a PGCE in ESOL, qualifying the candidate for publicly funded ESOL teaching in the UK.

3.3 Trinity College

Trinity have over 100 training organisations around the world, with over 4,500 trainees annually achieving the Certificate, and over 500 achieving the Diploma. Their awards are:

- CertTESOL: Certificate in TESOL (Level 4 Certificate in TESOL)
- CertTEYL: Certificate in Teaching English to Young Learners
- LTCL Diploma TESOL: Licentiate Diploma in TESOL (Level 5 Certificate in TESOL)

(The CertTESOL and the CertTEYL are accredited by the QCA at Levels 4 and 5 respectively for ESOL teaching in the UK, although they were originally associated with EFL contexts.)

3.4 Other Qualifications

Other EFL-related qualifications in the UK are offered by universities, who validate their own degrees. They include Certificates, BAs with a TEFL component, and over 80 different MAs in EFL or related disciplines (Applied Linguistics, Language Education, (T)ESOL)

¹⁹In some cases this meant failing to complete the requisite probationary year, in order to fully qualify as a teacher. The result was that when they wished to return from abroad they were not eligible for jobs in state schools.

4. EFL in the UK Economy

“ *The report (Johnes, 2004) includes income from ELT, which refers to what we have identified as EFL teaching.* ”

In order to estimate the global value of EFL education to the UK economy, the DfES commissioned a report in the early 2000s. The report (Johnes, 2004) includes income from ELT, which refers to what we have identified as EFL teaching. The figures relating to EFL for 2001–2002 are as follows:

Expenditure on tuition in UK:	£716.0 million
Miscellaneous expenditure in UK (accommodation etc.):	£496.4 million
Provision of EFL in other countries by UK residents:	£100.0 million
Total:	£1,312.4 million

5. Teaching Materials and Methodologies in EFL and ESOL

“...in the 1980s and 1990s bodies such as the National Extension College produced a good deal of ESOL materials in the form of books and work packs. The available teaching material and the mass of reports and reviews suggest that the ESOL focus was on facilitating the learners' passage into British society, with language provided as a necessary tool.”

The language teaching materials and methodologies underpinning EFL and ESOL in the UK reflect their differing origins. EFL teaching methods have invariably had English language as their focus, although there have been a number of historic changes in the methodological approaches. ESOL methodologies have been more difficult to characterise, particularly since at the outset there were a variety of unco-ordinated providers, and furthermore, appropriate commercially produced materials were largely unavailable. ESOL materials do not attract large publishing houses: ESOL learners do not normally have funds to buy commercially produced materials; they are fewer in number than the body of EFL learners and teaching institutions generally have limited funds to spend on materials. Nonetheless, in the 1980s and 1990s bodies such as the National Extension College produced a good deal of ESOL materials in the form of books and work packs. The available teaching material and the mass of reports and reviews suggest that the ESOL focus was on facilitating the learners' passage into British society, with language provided as a necessary tool.

5.1 EFL Teaching Materials and Methodologies

A rough and simplified historical sequence of the main approaches to EFL in the UK is as follows:

- Grammar-translation: originating in the teaching of Latin, this approach featured the use of grammatical terminology (e.g. *pronoun, subject, third person singular*, etc) and translation, and was criticised for 'talking about' language rather than teaching language. It was a common method of teaching English as a foreign language outside the UK, while inside the UK it was the predominant method of teaching 'modern languages' such as French until the 1960s.
- Structuralist-behaviourist: the crucial feature of this approach was that it organised

the English language syllabus in terms of language structures, from simple (e.g. *I am Chen*) to complex (e.g. *My mother said that I wouldn't have been named Chen if my aunt had had anything to do with it*), and taught them according to the behaviourist principles of repetition and drills. It was, as has been mentioned, the realisation of the 'scientific' approach to language teaching, and coincides with the beginnings of EFL. It was very widely used from the mid-sixties but was eventually criticised for not adequately addressing issues of contextually appropriate language use, for not paying sufficient attention to meaning (especially in its relative neglect of vocabulary), and for not being sufficiently sensitive to learner differences.

- Functional-communicative: this approach aimed to organise the language syllabus according to language functions (e.g. *agreeing, suggesting, refusing, greeting, describing*, etc.) while 'communicative' teaching methods attempted to model real life communication through pair work and group work, using contextually appropriate realisations. The stress on real life also featured in reading activities, with 'authentic' texts such as advertisements being employed for 'simulated authentic' exercises. The functional approach to syllabus design originated in a Council of Europe project in the early 1970s to harmonise language syllabuses across Europe for general purpose language teaching (see Wilkins, 1976). The approach was also influential on the development of English for special/specific purposes (ESP), where the communicative needs of learners, as well as appropriate linguistic realisations, could be specified through analysis of the target situation. A proliferation of ESP course-books and programmes for various academic and vocational purposes appeared with a broad range of specialisations e.g. English for accountants, architects, doctors, engineers, firemen, plumbers, vets, waiters, and others.

The above characterisation of the three approaches to teaching EFL is inevitably grossly simplified – there was variation within each, and also a tendency for successive approaches to add to, rather than entirely displace, their predecessors. It might also be noted that, although the orthodox sense of ‘communicative’ was as indicated above, it was in some quarters extended to apply to syllabuses or curricula which advocated incorporating learner-teacher negotiation into both content and method of teaching, and espoused a more critical pedagogy. However, such process-oriented approaches to syllabus did not seem to feed through to mainstream teaching, although it generated lively debate among applied linguists.

A constant theme throughout EFL from the structuralist-behaviourist 1960s to the present is a concern with ‘grammar’. Since some have claimed this to be a crucial feature in the EFL/ESOL divide, some elucidation of the term is in order. It is important to appreciate that the term ‘grammar’ is used in a special sense in the EFL teaching context to refer to acceptable sentences or structures, and their meanings. Grammatical (as opposed to lexical) meaning may be indicated by:

- word order (e.g. *The boy burned the soup* as opposed to *The soup burned the boy*)
- word form (e.g. *book*, or *books* indicating singular or plural; *write* or *wrote* indicating present or past tense)
- structural elements (a large and disparate collection including articles e.g. *a/the/some*; prepositions *to/from/at*; auxiliary verbs *be/have/do*; negation *not/never*).

Mastery of grammar in this sense is of crucial importance for learners of any language, including those of English as a foreign/additional language. However, certain mother-tongue speakers of English who are linguistically naïve or have never learned a second language, often regard such grammatical meaning in English as ‘obvious’ or ‘intuitive’. While this may be excusable on the grounds that mother-tongue speakers acquire their language relatively painlessly and unconsciously, by exposure and engagement with it during their first few years of life, it is obvious from the mere fact that world has

more than 6,000 different languages, each with differing grammars, that grammatically encoded meanings are far from intuitive, nor are they obvious to those who do not speak those languages.

In the EFL classroom the teaching of ‘grammar’ does not imply teaching students ‘traditional grammar’ such as naming parts of speech, or analysing sentences into constituent parts. What it does imply is teaching students to produce and understand grammatically acceptable language. The term ‘communicative grammar’ (Leech and Svartvik, 1975) is arguably a more accurate description than the simple term ‘grammar’ to represent this notion, since it highlights the fact that grammar teaching in EFL focuses on the meanings that are communicated by the different grammatical devices.

Thus sentences such as *Joe has worked in Watford* and *Joe worked in Watford* are both grammatically acceptable, as are *That must be the postman* and *That may be the postman*. However, the sentences in each pair have different meanings which are encoded in the grammar. On the other hand, *Ellen can to drive* or *Where was you buy this bread?* are not grammatically acceptable because they violate the formal rules of the structure of Standard English (they may be comprehensible, and they may also be representative of the errors that some English language learners commit as part of the learning process, but that is a different matter).

Opinions within EFL have varied as to how explicitly communicative grammar should be addressed in the classroom, and how much use, if any, should be made of grammatical terminology. Early structuralist courses such as *Success with English* (Broughton 1968) eschewed grammatical terminology, although later courses use basic terms such as *noun*, *verb* or *tense*. A number of books, for example the *Cobuild English Course* (Willis and Willis 1988) include a ‘discovery’ approach to communicative grammar, where students are required to work out for themselves grammar rules from examples of language.

Most current EFL textbooks do pay attention to grammar in the form of exercises explicitly

addressing grammatical points. Many EFL programmes also include an additional communicative grammar component, where teachers use grammar practice books such as Murphy (1985), or Swan and Walter (2001). Such EFL grammars have been available for many years, with Stannard Allen's *Living English Structure* (1947), being one of the earliest, although the degree to which they are incorporated into programmes varies according to the prevailing pedagogic attitudes.

However, it should not be thought that EFL has been preoccupied with communicative grammar to the exclusion of all else. A number of other aspects of language teaching have also been prominent: sophisticated approaches to vocabulary have emerged since the 1980s, aided by lexical analyses via corpus linguistics, while lexical approaches to the syllabus such as *The Lexical Syllabus* (Willis, 1990) have also featured discourse analysis; and pragmatics have contributed to the functional-communicative approach, influencing EFL teaching across all four language skills (listening, speaking, reading, writing), which are now addressed as skills in their own right, rather than as opportunities for language practice, as was the case in structuralist-behaviourist days. The teaching of reading, for example, has addressed reading styles (e.g. scanning, intensive and extensive reading), reading comprehension strategies (e.g. guessing unknown words from context), and critical reading. In the teaching of writing, attention has been given to features of different text types, as well as to the process of producing texts, rather than simply assessing the student's final written product.

In brief the EFL field has been extremely vibrant since the 1960s, and although there have been controversies, especially as regards process versus product syllabuses, they have taken place within a recognisable discipline where practitioners are, by and large, in touch with the field, and developments within it. The development has been stimulated through EFL's contact with linguistics, applied linguistics, psychology, sociology and anthropology, and supported by a range of qualifications (Certificates, Diplomas, and MAs), as well as by organisations such as IATEFL and BAAL,

and institutions such as the British Council and CfBT. Publishing in the field reflects this vibrant development, which is of course, fundamentally due to the fact that English currently appears to be the *lingua franca* of the global village. (There is legitimate debate to be had on the question of whether such global dominance is the result of imposition (Phillipson, 1992), or of demand (Brut-Griffler, 2002), and also on the associated question of whether such dominance is desirable. However this debate is not directly relevant to the present discussion.)

5.2 ESOL Teaching Materials and Methodologies

The methodology underpinning ESOL teaching in the UK in its early years is difficult to characterise. The field was not as coherent as EFL, and although there was a substantial body of qualified staff in the large urban centres, in other areas ESOL was taught by teachers with little background in language teaching. In the absence of commercially published materials appropriate for ESOL students, teachers were encouraged to produce their own materials or to use materials produced by bodies such as ILEA and the National Extension College.

The exception to this dearth of evidence for ESOL is *Scope*, published for the Schools Council in 1969. It was intended for use in secondary schools with the children of migrants, and comes under the heading of EAL rather than ESOL. *Scope* contains much about 'traditional' British culture (history, stately homes), as well as contemporary culture (street furniture, transport). It is subtitled *An Introductory English Course for Immigrant Children* and focuses on English, but the language input, although simplified, is not as rigorously controlled as that of contemporary EFL productions, neither is there such clear and comprehensive focus on grammatical structure. The methodology implied in the material includes behaviourist-based exercises requiring structural repetition, combined with a degree of personalised work familiar in mainstream English teaching. It consists of a teacher's book, pupil's books, and sets of work cards. There is anecdotal evidence that *Scope* was, in some centres, used as input to adult ESOL, which does not

appear unreasonable, given the absence of widely available alternative published material at the time.

A rather worrying feature of Scope is that its content suggests that it was intended for migrants from both the Asian subcontinent, and the Caribbean, although the language needs of the two groups were quite distinct. Migrants from the Caribbean were already competent in English, albeit a Caribbean English rather than a British English variety, and also in English orthography, whereas this might well not be the case for Asian migrants. This early tendency to 'lump together' all learners who were not educated speakers of standard English irrespective of background (including, in some cases, native speakers of English with poor literacy skills) was not infrequent at the time and presumably made it difficult to focus on the needs of specific groups.

The situation changed with the publication in 2001 by the Basic Skills Agency (on behalf of DfES) of the *Adult ESOL Core Curriculum* (DfES 2001). As mentioned in 2.3 above, this curriculum was the outcome of *Breaking the Language Barriers* (DfEE, 2000) itself the product of the DfEE initiative *A Fresh Start: Improving Literacy and Numeracy* (Moser 1999). The *Adult ESOL Core Curriculum* has a foreword by the Minister for Adults Skills, and input from a host of contributors including those with experience in ESOL and adult literacy, as well as specialists in English grammar and linguistics.

According to the Foreword, the *Adult ESOL Core Curriculum* is 'based on the QCA National Standards for Adult Literacy' and 'is a parallel curriculum to the core curricula for literacy and numeracy'. The curriculum is linked to the National Qualifications Framework, and is specified in the curriculum (Introduction p. 4) in terms of the five sections covering the ESOL stages of that framework, namely Entry 1, Entry 2, Entry 3, and Levels 1 and 2. The qualifications for each of these stages were approved by the QCA in 2004 (see Section 2.5).

The *Adult ESOL Core Curriculum* is a massive and enormously detailed piece of work, totalling 412 pages. It is specified 'by level

across the four skills of speaking, listening, reading and writing' (p. 4), and is organised in five columns across double pages, with columns for:

- basic skill standards level descriptor
- component skill and knowledge and understanding
- example of application and level
- sample activities
- national standards level.

The Curriculum also has (pp. 30–37) a table of 'Key grammatical structures' showing progression at each level (using grammatical terminology, together with examples), while at end of each of the five levels there is a fold-out section containing, for the relevant level:

- communicative functions
- strategies for independent learning
- features of formality and informality in English
- a table of key grammatical structures.

It is an ambitious and complex document which is primarily addressed to ESOL teachers and is intended to be used 'to devise processes for placing learners into classes... to design learning programmes...[and]... as the basis for summative assessment of learners' progress' (p. 2). At first sight this curriculum seems somewhat complex, and probably both difficult and time-consuming to navigate. However, producing such a comprehensive work seems to have been regarded as a necessary move towards professionalising the ESOL teaching workforce, and promoting a sense of inclusion within the wider ELT community. The reference section at the end of the curriculum includes books that 'will be found useful for further examples of terms used about language and about ESOL topics' (p. 412). However, in addition to books with 'examples of terms about language' (which are perfectly justifiable), it might also have been useful for ESOL teachers if the list had included more books that directly addressed English language teaching. While ESOL teachers themselves might find security in books that explain linguistic terminology, there is a danger that this might persuade

some of them that English language teaching necessarily involves terminology, or worse, has teaching terminology as its aim.

Teaching materials corresponding to the *Adult ESOL Core Curriculum* (Entry 1–3 and Levels 1–2) were commissioned by the DfES from CfBT as part of a £3.5 million Skills for Life Materials project. The writing, review and management of the materials which were published in 2003, drew on the combined expertise of ESOL and EFL practitioners. Evidence of the collaboration is particularly evident at Levels 1 and 2.

The Entry materials consist of *Teacher's Notes ESOL* produced in a series of pamphlets (which include photocopiable resources), and *Learner Materials ESOL* produced in a series of plastic-wrapped packs, together with a special ring binder. The material is organised thematically by unit (Entry 1, for example, has 10 units entitled *Getting Started, Daily Life, Shopping 1, Travel, Health, The Neighbourhood, Health, Friends and Family, Shopping 2, Going to Work*). The Teacher's Notes say the materials are 'intended as core materials which can be integrated with and supplemented by other resources.... The materials are designed to be used flexibly... according to the differing needs of the learners.' As the unit titles suggest, the material is oriented towards life in UK, and clearly targets the principal constituency, namely adult migrants.

The impression one has of this material (which contains well over 400 pages) is that it is a sound English language teaching product, very similar to much EFL material that has appeared since the communicative era of the late 1970s. Each unit contains a communicative function focus and a grammar focus, both of which are woven around the situation identified in the unit titles. The structural sequencing in the course moves from simple to complex language, and although the input seems rather less controlled than in a typical EFL course, this reflects the more individualised approach to working with ESOL learners. Supplementary teaching materials entitled *Rules and Tools* and also produced by CfBT, were 'designed to support and clarify some of the language and skills

objectives addressed in the ESOL Skills for Life Entry 1 learner materials'.

The methodology implied by the material in the units is the standard combination of behaviourist repetition in the form of controlled practice exercises, and comprehension tasks, together with some less controlled personalised work, and reading and writing activities which address different text types and different reading styles. The materials seem to be relatively 'teacher-proof', presumably to take account of teachers who might have had limited training. More experienced teachers of course, use additional material or supplement the materials.

Other noticeable features of these ESOL *Learner Materials* are:

- they contain a great deal of information about life and services in the UK
- the early units pay more attention to letter formation, spelling and punctuation than do the most EFL materials for teenagers or adults which are published in the UK (although UK generated EFL materials for young learners do incorporate such elements).

These features are probably to be attributed to the fact that the materials are cross-referenced to the ESOL curriculum, which is based on the literacy curriculum, to take account of learners who may, in addition to having limited English, be literate in a script other than Roman, or not be able to read in any script.

In short, the materials represent progress in that adult ESOL now has a model for language teaching material that is being propagated on a national level. However, the fact that this material has had a cumbersome gestation period involving official bodies, committees and reports for over three decades (and doubtless cost a great deal) is instructive. It is important to note however, that unlike the worldwide market for EFL courses, there has been no equivalent market for ESOL to attract investment in production. The body of learners is comparatively small in number and they tend to have little money to buy books and materials. In addition, ESOL providers such as FE colleges have limited budgets. It required a government strategic investment

of some £3.5 million to produce the learning materials under Skills for Life.

We are not aware of any attempt to evaluate the *ESOL Learner Materials* as yet. However, in November 2005, Oxford University Press invited contributions to their English Language Teaching website on the proposition: '*Traditional English Language Teaching Materials are not suitable for ESOL learners. Do you agree?*' A number of ESOL teachers noted in their responses that the *Skills for Life ESOL Materials* were a step in the right direction, but in some cases needed supplementing. Some contributors suggested that the Skills for Life materials do not give learners enough practice in new language, do not contain enough study skills, and do not engage learners. The advantage of EFL materials, it was stated, is that they are more stimulating, have controlled approaches to teaching vocabulary and grammar, and are more likely to produce in the learner the

accuracy necessary for more sophisticated tasks at higher levels. The weakness of EFL materials as material for ESOL learners it was suggested, is that they assume basic ability in reading and writing, and are written for relatively 'affluent European teenage learners with an interest in celebrity', rather than migrant families interested in making their way in the UK. (These observations should be accompanied by the normal caveat as to whether the relatively small sample of respondents is representative of ESOL teachers.)

Some contributors pointed out that no single book will be perfect for a specific situation, and that a combination of inputs from ESOL and EFL materials, together with other sources, was needed for ESOL teaching. Furthermore, part of the ESOL teacher's job was precisely to combine inputs as appropriate for their students (a point that is of course also valid for EFL materials).

6. ESOL in Australia, New Zealand and Canada

“ For those wishing to work as nurses in Australia, for example, an Academic IELTS score of 6.5 for reading and listening and one of 7.0 for speaking and writing are necessary. ”

To provide a more global perspective on the ESOL/EFL question, there follow brief accounts of ESOL provision in three English-speaking countries which have a history of migration: Australia, New Zealand and Canada.

6.1 Australia

Adult migrants wishing to obtain a visa for Australia are obliged to provide details of their English language skills, and for some visas an IELTS (International English Language Testing Service) test score is required²⁰. For those wishing to work as nurses in Australia, for example, an Academic IELTS score of 6.5 for reading and listening and one of 7.0 for speaking and writing are necessary.

Once they have entered the country, those under the age of 50 who wish to apply for Australian citizenship must have a basic knowledge of the English language (Australian Citizenship Act, 1948). This is tested at the citizenship interview. Those who have already achieved ‘functional’ English will receive the Australian Citizenship English Language Record from AMEP (Australian Migrant English Program). Applicants who do not reach the required standard and need English tuition are entitled to 510 hours of free English language tuition, normally to be completed in a period of five years. This is funded by DIMIA (Department of Immigration, Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs), and organised by AMEP. The budget for AMEP in 2001/02 was \$103.9 million (£45.2 million).

AMEP was established in 1948 as the Adult Migrant Education Scheme when free English lessons were provided by the Commonwealth for non-English speaking migrants in their country of origin. From 1951 it was funded and

co-ordinated by the Commonwealth Office for Education and delivered by the States/Territories. From 1967 the TV series *Walter and Connie* and *You say the Word* were widely

used for language instruction across Australia. In 1969 AMEP introduced full-time intensive courses for professional/semi-professional migrants, promoted by DIMIA who appointed bilingual officers to aid new arrivals.

In 1971 provision for English was enacted in legislation with the introduction of the Immigrant (Education) Act 1971. The act led to the widespread introduction of English tuition in the workplace and the launch of the Home Tutor Scheme. In 1983 free childcare was introduced and a distance learning programme was developed. In 1992 it underwent a major review and was renamed the Adult Migrant *English Program*, designated as a settlement programme for new arrivals, while other programmes, notably *English in the Workplace* and *Advanced English for Migrants* were transferred to the Department of Education, Science and Training (DEST). Since 1998 AMEP has been delivered by service providers contracted through competitive tendering. Tuition is delivered through private, public and community organisations. More than 1.5 million migrants have learned English under the programme.

AMEP provides 510 hours of free tuition for migrants. A further 100 hours are available for those such as refugees and asylum seekers who are in need of extra settlement support because of experiences prior to their arrival in Australia. In order to qualify for tuition, migrants must:

- have arrived in Australia after July 1st 1991, or
- be temporary residents with a temporary visa, or
- have been granted permanent residence in Australia since 1 July 1991.

They must be 18 years old or over, or aged between 16 and 18 years and unable to attend English classes in school. Eligible migrants

²⁰IELTS has a scale from 0 to 9. UK universities generally require a score of 6.5 or 7 for entry to most postgraduate courses.

need to register for the AMEP (ideally within three months of arriving in Australia) in order to access it. At the interview they are assessed to ascertain whether they already have functional English. Once they have registered, clients can:

- start classes immediately or defer starting if they wish
- obtain childcare if required
- undertake the AMEP at one of the many institutions located across Australia
- undertake the AMEP at home with a tutor or by distance-learning if they cannot study in a centre
- study part time or full time during the day, in the evening, or on Saturday.

Courses are offered at three levels:

- beginner
- lower intermediate
- intermediate

All courses lead to the qualifications of the Certificate I, Certificate II and Certificate III in Spoken and Written English (www.acl.edu.au/amep/Certificate1.htm, [Certificate11.htm](http://www.acl.edu.au/amep/Certificate11.htm), [Certificate111.htm](http://www.acl.edu.au/amep/Certificate111.htm)).

Students can choose from a range of options to find the most convenient way to study. They can opt for:

- a college-based course
- community classes (suitable for those who might find a college course intimidating; female students who cannot attend college every day; students who prefer to have a bilingual teacher)
- distance learning in which a tutor designs a programme for the individual student and the student attends college occasionally
- a home tutor for those who need to build up their confidence before embarking on a full-time course for example
- blended delivery which can be a combination of home tutor plus part-time classes/distance learning plus home tutor etc.

Institutions offering AMEP courses include universities (e.g. University of New South

Wales), private language schools (e.g. ACL – the Australian Centre for Languages), local colleges (e.g. Macquarie Community College) and community centres. Fee paying students can attend the same courses. There is a single accreditation scheme which covers all providers and requires annual reports, teacher qualifications, quality of learning support, local facilities and promotional strategies.

Individual colleges differ in the range of options they provide. UNSWL (University of New South Wales Institute of Languages), for example, offers special focus courses at Level 3. These include English for Health Professionals, English for Study (including IELTS preparation), English and Translating and Interpreting Skills, English for Business, and for Job-seeking.

ACL, one of the biggest private language schools in Australia, with branches in China, Taiwan and Vietnam, has four AMEP language schools in Sydney, and forms part of a consortium along with community colleges, childcare and refugee agencies.

The Australian system differs from the British system in several ways. Firstly, there has been a recognition since the 1940s that some form of language teaching is needed for migrants, and although the system has grown and been revised since then, English language teaching has developed in its own right, rather than being subsumed under literacy provision.

Second, the funding arrangements and student eligibility appear to be unambiguous and straightforward, and are clearly set out on the websites. The system is no doubt simplified by the fact that the immigration process appears to be run on rather rigorous lines in Australia: prospective migrants to Australia, for example, are screened in their home countries before arrival, while 'unscreened' refugees and asylum seekers are interned on arrival in the country.

Third, ESOL provision is not limited to public institutions. The largest provider of ESOL is ACL, a highly successful language school in global terms, and the largest provider of English language education in Australia (with 7,500 students per annum). As well as providing

AMEP courses, it also delivers courses for international students, English for Academic Purposes etc. The teachers are qualified and experienced English language teachers.

Fourth, tuition appears to be flexible and can be tailored to a learner's needs. A range of learning possibilities is provided from which students can select to suit their needs. In addition, there seems to be an acknowledgement that some students will be highly literate in their own language but may need ESP provision.

6.2 New Zealand

The situation in New Zealand is very different from that in Australia. Traditionally New Zealand has preferred migrants who already possess English language skills and do not require expensive teaching. The New Zealand Immigration Service document 1995 (cited in Watts, 2001) states that 'English is the key to successful settlement... a lack of language skills can impose a cost on New Zealand'. More recently, information issued by the Migration Policy Institute stated: 'New Zealand's immigrant selection system, while non-discriminatory on the basis of source country, is biased towards immigrants who have a good command of the English language' (Bedford 2003). Moreover, the prevailing view appears to be that on arrival in New Zealand, the responsibility to learn English should rest with migrants themselves.

Perhaps not surprisingly, English language provision in New Zealand appears fragmented both in terms of administration and funding. Most migrants seeking permanent residence in New Zealand fall into the 'Business Investor and Skilled Migrant' categories. If, on application for residency, prospective migrants do not reach a specified level of IELTS proficiency (6.5), they are required to pre-pay for English tuition. Approximately 25 per cent of migrants between 1998 and 2004 did not reach the 6.5 standard. The money is forwarded to TEC (the Tertiary Education Commission) who provide a list of teaching institutions, and manage the contract between the ESOL provider and the applicant. The training must be taken up within three years of the date of payment. Between 1998 and 2004 approximately half of all migrants who

pre-purchased tuition, fully or partially used their allocation (NZ Immigration Service, 2005). Most took between one and five courses. Only four per cent of the courses, however, lasted longer than six months. Recent research on those who currently have tuition entitlement (i.e. starting in 2004) indicates that a relatively high proportion have not yet used it.

In addition to the annual quota of migrants who apply through the normal channels (approximately 53,000 in 2002), New Zealand accepts approximately 700 asylum seekers per year. They have a six-week orientation programme which includes ESOL tuition, followed in some cases by subsidised help with English in the workplace.

The only other available source of completely free tuition for refugees and migrants to New Zealand is provided by the Home Tutor Scheme. The service which has been running for 31 years, 'employs' 3,400 volunteers in 25 centres around New Zealand. In 2004, some 7,800 migrants benefited from the scheme which provides one hour's tuition per week for six months (i.e. approximately 25 hours in total).

Recently, the New Zealand government has been developing a new strategy for ESOL provision which 'matches learners' needs'. The Adult ESOL Strategy document (2003) identified several factors which contribute to the current relatively poor provision:

- Administration and funding are fragmented.
- There is no over-arching responsibility for adult ESOL.
- There is a need for more connections between agencies dealing with migrant and refugee issues.
- There is a lack of consultation with migrant and refugees communities.

Among the recommendations are that ESOL should be seen as an integral part of the settlement process, that ESOL should be seen as distinct from (but related to) adult literacy and that some notion of quality – 'such as common measures of progress' – should be adopted.

Information about the provision of ESOL in New Zealand is available via the New Zealand

literacy portal (<http://www.nzliteracyportal.org.nz/ESOL/>).

6.3 Canada

Before the Second World War, individual school districts and provincial ministries of education in Canada administered ESL programmes usually on an *ad hoc* basis. In the 1960s a federal multicultural policy was introduced, consisting of programmes to promote heritage languages for children, although nothing was provided for adults. Difficulties arose over the question of who should fund ESOL, as education is provincially organised in Canada, while immigration and citizenship is a federal issue. Both felt the other should assume responsibility for ESOL. Ontario and Quebec developed funding formulas that permitted school districts, colleges and community organisations to provide limited access to English, but there was little provision elsewhere.

In 1978 the federal government created the first national language training project as part of the Canadian Job Strategies (CJS) programme. Language training classes were provided for adult migrants and native Canadians who were unable to obtain work because of poor language skills. Students were recruited from among the unemployed, and were offered living expenses and unemployment insurance benefits. The system proved to be unsatisfactory, however, first because there were far fewer places on courses than students who needed tuition; second, places were only offered to heads of households, which meant that few women received language tuition; lastly, many recently arrived migrants had no Canadian work experience, and were therefore ineligible. When responsibility for the training courses was passed from federal to provincial and municipal institutions, the classes were largely discontinued.

When immigrant organisations objected to the inequities in the CJS programme, three new language training programmes were established by the federal government. Of these, the Secretary of State Citizenship and Language Training Program and the Citizenship and Community and Participation Program were short-lived, but the third,

the Settlement Language Training Program (SLTP: 1986) was more successful. This was designed to meet the needs of those who were not destined primarily for the labour force, i.e. women and older members of the community. Childcare and expenses were provided and money was provided to migrant organisations to enrol schools and colleges as language training providers. However, provision was poor and inconsistent, staff generally poorly trained and the whole enterprise under-funded.

Dissatisfaction with the SLTP led the Canadian government to develop a four-year immigration plan (1991 to 1995). Migrants with particular business and work skills were to be given priority and increased federal/provincial

co-operation was proposed. Most importantly, language training for migrants was to be given priority. Two programmes were established: the LMLT (Labour Market Language Training Program) which focused on higher levels of English proficiency and was career-specific; and LINC (Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada). Eventually LMLT was discontinued, and LINC and ELSA (English Language Services to Adults, British Columbia's language teaching scheme) replaced all other training programmes in the country.

LINC/ ELSA courses funded by CIC (Citizenship and Immigration, Canada) provide basic language training and can be accessed by any recently arrived official migrant. They have received higher levels of funding than earlier programmes and incorporate more consistent assessment and placement procedures. However, providers have to apply for funding annually and as a result, hiring teachers, arranging teaching space etc. becomes a yearly process, leading to a potential lack of continuity. The list of organisations encouraged to apply for funding include businesses, not-for-profit groups, NGOs, community groups, educational institutions, individuals and provincial, territorial or municipal governments.

Students eligible for free tuition include adult migrants, permanent residents and newcomers who will eventually be offered

permanent resident status but have not yet acquired Canadian citizenship. Before embarking on a LINC course, students must be assessed under the Canadian Language Benchmarks Assessment (CLBA) scheme which indicates the amount of training the student needs to achieve the LINC Program outcome competency level. According to the website (www.language.ca/) the CLBA scheme provides 'a detailed framework of reference for learning, teaching, programming and assessing adult ESOL in Canada, a national standard for planning second language curricula for a variety of contexts and a common yardstick for assessing outcomes'. LINC courses are delivered by a wide range of schools, colleges and private establishments with some areas providing better services than others. The Canadian government's 'Guide for Applicants' wishing to apply for funding for setting up LINC programs stipulate only that

'All LINC providers should be in a position to teach CLBA stage 1 of listening, speaking, reading and writing skills' (i.e. the most basic level).

Both the Canadian and the Australian ESOL programmes differ from the UK system in that they were originally designed to test and teach *language* (i.e. language teaching is not considered to be a component of a literacy programme). The extremely detailed CLB Assessment schemes aim to test a speaker's communicative competence (linguistic, discourse, socio-cultural and strategic competence) in three areas: listening and speaking, reading and writing. The materials could be used with ESOL and EFL students. Although there is a focus on language, the LINC courses based on the Canadian Language Benchmarks incorporate knowledge about living and working in Canada.

7. Conclusion

“What is important in the debate is not that divisions based on the labels EFL/ESOL be perpetuated, but that the English language teaching exercise should draw on relevant past experiences from all sources, in order to address urgent issues within the UK.”

The reasons for the ‘ESOL/EFL’ divide in the UK would appear to be due to a combination of historical, social, financial and ideological factors.

The origins of ESOL as socially motivated and its location within an adult literacy framework in the UK seem to have been an obstacle to closer integration with EFL, which from its outset was a purely language-teaching operation, oriented more to an overseas-based clientele. However, there would be much to gain if the two came closer together, and an end could be brought to a division that does not seem to be as acute, if it exists at all, in other English-speaking countries. The new ESOL curricula and qualifications offer prospects of this, although entrenched systems, methods, attitudes, structures and processing may present obstacles to fruitful integration. With appropriate adjustments, ESOL in UK could be delivered by traditional EFL providers, and this does appear to be coming about in the context of the QCA framework and the Basic Skills Agency’s *Adult ESOL Core Curriculum*.

From a ‘political’ perspective, ESOL has stronger traditional connections with the UK

educational establishment than does EFL. Moreover, ESOL’s supportive stance towards groups that lack voice means that it has a strong social dimension, whereas EFL could be said in the past to have been technicist and profit oriented (although recently there has been increasing interest in the social aspects of EFL teaching and its relationship with human rights issues). The strengths of EFL are that it has a tradition of flexibility (addressing learners of various categories and with various purposes: young, old, vocational, academic, specific, general etc.), of organisational self-help, of intellectual investigation, and of commercial vigour.

What is important in the debate is not that divisions based on the labels EFL/ESOL be perpetuated, but that the English language teaching exercise should draw on relevant past experiences from all sources, in order to address urgent issues within the UK. The intellectual case for this co-operative venture is powerful. It remains to be seen whether in the real world of competing ideologies, entrenched interests and complex regulations the ambition can be realised.

8. Policy Implications

“*Integration is now occurring at the level of the national framework and will be facilitated as English language teacher training evolves.*”

(1) **ESOL should be seen as a language teaching operation and distinct from adult literacy.** This was recommended in *Breaking the Language Barriers* (see 2.2). Similar recommendations were made in the KPMG report (see 2.7) which suggested that ESOL be identified as a separate area in all national and local plans of the Learning and Skills Council, and be considered separately from literacy and numeracy in future planning. Likewise, in Australia and Canada, ESOL has historically been considered to be a language teaching initiative rather than literacy teaching. In New Zealand there have been strong recommendations that ESOL should be seen as distinct from (although related to) adult literacy (see Section 6). This recommendation is particularly relevant to teachers, teacher educators and local course providers.

(2) **Integration of the fields of ESOL and EFL should be encouraged.** The two have a common aim – the teaching of English – and much to offer each other, with ESOL’s experience in community teaching and social integration, and EFL’s tradition of flexibility, intellectual exploration and research vigour. Furthermore, the distinction is one which does not seem to exist in other countries. Perceived differences between ‘typical’ ESOL and EFL students are growing less distinct with the increase in EU migrants, and this blurring of differences is likely to grow. Integration is now occurring at the level of the national framework and will be facilitated as English language teacher training evolves. The eventual label employed for the integrated field is not crucial, but present trends suggest the term ESOL will predominate. The following implications flow directly or indirectly from this suggestion.

(3) **There should be an adequate contribution of EFL expertise and experience to the NIACE Committee of Enquiry into English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL).** Derek Grover CB, chair of the newly established committee, acknowledges that ‘ESOL is one of the biggest challenges we face’ and that there are inadequacies within existing provision. Given the rapidly changing and now extremely

disparate constituency of ESOL learners, it is likely that EFL expertise could have a useful contribution to make. Input from such organisations as IATEFL (international Association of Teachers of English as a Foreign Language) and BAAL (British Association of Applied Linguistics) may prove useful.

(4) **The experience and expertise of EFL organisations should be considered as possible sources of high quality experience in the delivery and management of needs-targeted language teaching operations.** One of the aims of the NIACE Committee of Enquiry is to ‘develop strategic direction, to champion ESOL learners’ needs... and ensure that provision is wide-ranging, responsive to individual needs while remaining consistently of high quality’ (NIACE 2005b). The paper asks: ‘What do leaders need to do to ensure that ESOL provision is relevant and of consistent high quality?’

(5) **Relevant findings from language learning and teaching research should be disseminated to those involved in the direction of ESOL in the UK.** The NIACE paper (2005b) states: ‘we also need to know what brings about effective language learning’. This is, however, a subject on which there already exists an extensive body of research in Applied Linguistics and which might usefully be exploited by those in ESOL work. Such findings, when incorporated into ESOL teacher qualifications would help to inform the work of current ESOL policy makers and course providers. As NRDC has a key role in disseminating relevant research findings, stronger links between this organisation and the ELT field might prove useful.

(6) **The LSC should consider funding the delivery of ESOL by providers outside the statutory further and adult education sectors.** One criticism levelled at current ESOL provision in the UK is that provision is often inflexible and does not take learners’ needs into account. There might therefore be merit in examining the Australian and Canadian systems where state-funded ESOL teaching is carried out by a variety of institutions, ranging

from universities and private language schools to local community colleges and distance learning programmes. Now that the UK has an ESOL core curriculum in place, together with assessment qualifications and teacher certification requirements, it would be feasible for funded ESOL teaching to take place outside colleges of FE. Private language schools have facilities and trained teachers in place, and many universities now have dedicated EFL/EAP sections offering pre-degree English language courses for students who come to study in UK. These are staffed by experienced and qualified EFL teachers who have worked all over the world, frequently in the countries of origin of ESOL learners themselves.

(7) Consideration should be given to institutionalising ESOL provision in large companies. Although ESOL programmes in the workplace were established 30 years ago in UK, the subject 'has been under-researched almost to the point of non-existence. Moreover there has been a very low level of provision over the past 15 years' (Roberts 2003). In Australia, however, workplace schemes have resulted in benefits for both employees and employers (Roberts 2003). It might also be worthwhile considering systems such as 'Formation Continue' in France whereby several large French companies have on-site language schools, staffed by full-time EFL teachers. Large companies who employ migrant labour in UK might fund ESOL lessons, either on-site or on day-release, for general or specific purposes. The DfES Skills for Life Strategy Unit has been working on

this for five years now and some work-based ESOL already exists under Network, an umbrella organisation for workplace language, literacy and numeracy based at Lancaster University. A few large companies already commission their own courses: a large UK airline recently commissioned an ESP course for non-English speaking airport runway employees. Such company provision could be funded through the funding proposed in Policy Implication 6 (above).

(8) The private sector should be allowed to bid for LSC funding to offer ESOL teacher training. One of the recurring anxieties about current ESOL provision is the shortage of trained teachers. The NIACE (2005b) paper states: 'It is currently possible for tutors who hold a generic teaching qualification to become qualified to teach ESOL by developing their own skills but not acquiring an in-depth knowledge of specific ESOL teaching.' The private EFL sector has been extremely successful in setting up a range of teacher training courses and this expertise could be employed to run courses for ESOL teachers. Although EFL qualifications alone do not meet ESOL's broader requirements, most EFL teachers and teachers have worked abroad and are used to working with students from a wide variety of racial and religious backgrounds. Collaboration between the two sectors would be productive in ensuring that good practice in both fields is built on, whether in re-orienting EFL teacher trainers to deliver ESOL qualifications or in re-training EFL teachers.

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