The background is a vibrant yellow color. It is decorated with various abstract geometric shapes and patterns in blue, red, and black. These include circles, squares, diamonds, and stripes, some of which are partially cut off by the edges of the frame. The patterns are scattered across the page, creating a dynamic and modern aesthetic.

# **Making the Invisible Visible: A Teacher's Guide to Language Ideologies**

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# How to gently bring elements of criticality into your teaching

**01**

## **The Invisible Forces**

That influence teaching and learning

**02**

## **Language Ideologies**

Definition and Examples

**03**

## **Making the Invisible Visible**

How and why to explicitly discuss ideologies in class

**04**

## **Q & A**

Sharing Experiences



01

# Invisible Forces

That influence teaching  
and learning





# Have you ever heard anything like this in your professional life?

**A**

“Students must only speak English in the classroom if they want to improve.”

**B**

“You’ll never achieve professional success if you can’t speak English.”

**C**

“Good grammar, writing and reading skills are essential; speaking and listening are secondary skills”

**D**

“Native speakers of English make the best teachers.”

**E**

“The English from the UK is the most beautiful and correct English, and is the ideal variety to learn.”

**F**

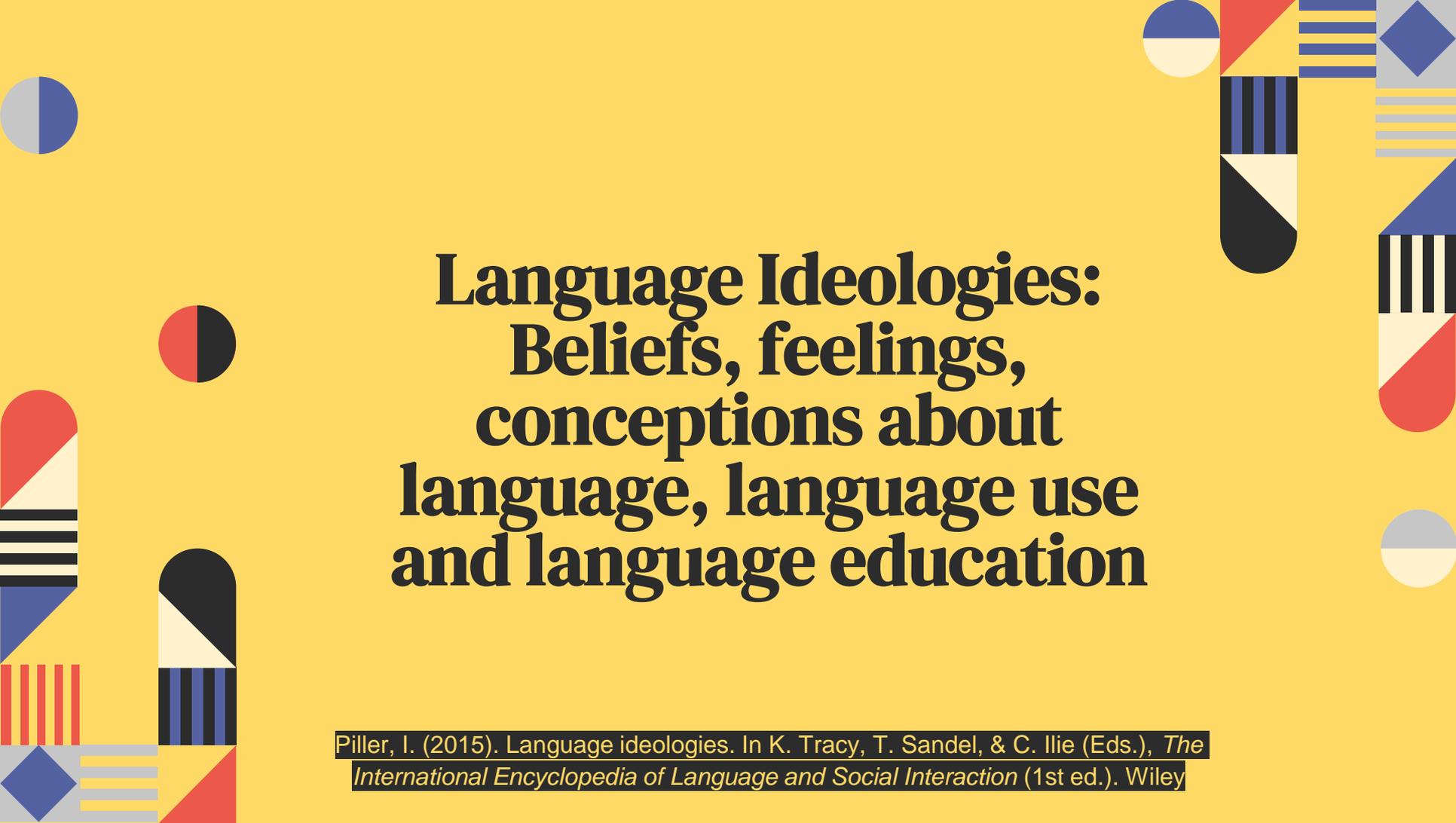
“You shouldn’t mix two languages in one sentence; it’s lazy!”

The background is a solid yellow color. It is decorated with various abstract geometric shapes and patterns. On the left side, there are vertical strips of shapes: a blue diamond, a red triangle, a white circle, a blue and white striped rectangle, a blue and white triangle, a black and white striped rectangle, and a red triangle. On the right side, there are similar shapes: a red and black circle, a red and white triangle, a black and white striped rectangle, a blue and white triangle, a red and white striped rectangle, and a blue diamond. In the center, the number '02' is written in a large, bold, black font.

02

# Language Ideologies

Definitions and  
Examples



# Language Ideologies: Beliefs, feelings, conceptions about language, language use and language education

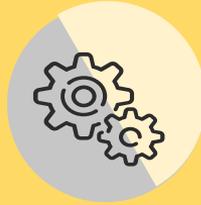
Piller, I. (2015). Language ideologies. In K. Tracy, T. Sandel, & C. Ilie (Eds.), *The International Encyclopedia of Language and Social Interaction* (1st ed.). Wiley

# Language Ideologies



## **Socially Shared**

Held by students, parents, administrators, and ourselves



## **Implicit, Unspoken**

People don't always realize they have these beliefs, feelings and conceptions



## **Accuracy?**

Sometimes misguided, out dated, or discriminatory



# Language Ideologies in ELT



# Language Ideologies in ELT

- Are the “lenses” we look through to see the world
- Affect teachers, students, parents, policy makers, etc.
- Determine what is considered
  - Logical, common sense
  - Unspoken, taken for granted, expected
  - “The way things are”

# In ELT, language ideologies influence:



## WHAT is taught

Which variety of English is more valued?  
Which language skills are considered most important?



## HOW it is taught

What methods?  
What type of materials?  
Early immersion?  
Private language schools vs. public institutions?



## WHO teaches and learns

Who is considered the ideal teacher, and what are their characteristics?  
Which students are required to study English?



## HOW it is assessed

What are the valued forms of assessment?  
What aspects of language are being tested and which ones are not?

The background is a solid yellow color. In the four corners, there are decorative geometric patterns. The top-left and bottom-right corners feature a blue circle with a white-to-blue gradient. The top-right and bottom-left corners feature a red circle with a white-to-red gradient. The bottom corners also contain complex geometric shapes made of triangles, squares, and rectangles in blue, red, white, and black, some with horizontal or vertical stripes.

# Common Ideologies in ELT

# The Native Speakerist Ideologies

The idea that the native speaker is the ideal teacher, the desired interlocutor, and provides the best model of English for learners.





# Colonial Language Ideologies

For languages spread around the world via colonialism, that the language “belongs to” the colonizing country and/or the variety associated with the colonizing nation is superior, more “beautiful”, etc.



# Language Ideologies of Neoliberalism

The belief in the need for a global language and the belief that using English for business or education will increase competitiveness (Piller, 2014, p.9)

Learning English becomes instrumental: increasing one's value to the economic market

Minimizes all the other reasons one might want to learn English (cultural, educational, social, transformational, etc.)

## Job Requirements

Don't have any teaching experience? You don't need any, even though it's always welcomed. You will, however, need the following for the Chinese government to issue you an ESL teaching work visa.

Don't have all these documents on hand? You can apply and provide them later.

What varieties of English is valued?  
Who is the valued teacher?  
What are the most important characteristics of an English teacher?

✓ A Bachelor's Degree

✓ A clear background check

✓ Ability to live abroad for at least one year

✓ A TEFL Certification

No TEFL? No problem! Find out if you qualify for a FREE TEFL when you apply.

✓ Passport holder from:



# Monolingual Ideologies

- Monolingualism in English is the standard and default; multilinguals are an anomaly
- English is best taught and learned monolingually.
- E.g. in materials, classroom interaction, instructional strategies, outcomes



# Communicative Language Teaching is Superior

- Methods which focus on language use are superior to those which focus on language itself.
- E.g. CLT is more effective than “traditional” methods: teacher-centered, grammar-translation or audiolingual approaches, which focus on language

Beaumont, M., & Chang, K.-S. (2011). Challenging the traditional/communicative dichotomy. *ELT Journal*, 65(3), 291–299. <https://doi.org/10.1093/elt/ccq091>





The English language only policy requires that all staff and students speak English inside the school, including the lobby area and the front desk. This policy exists because:

1. Speaking a language in the presence of people who don't speak that language is disrespectful because it excludes them. Speaking English is a mark of courtesy to those around us, students and staff alike. In addition, students show respect to their teachers by speaking English.
2. You have come to Pattison High School in order to improve your English. This can only be done if you try to speak English at all times. Your teachers will insist you speak English to them in order to help you develop your English skills and to teach you better.
3. You are now living in Canada, where one of its two official languages is English.



03

# Making the Invisible Visible

How and why to explicitly discuss ideologies in class

The image features a bright yellow background with four abstract geometric compositions in the corners. Each composition is a collage of shapes including circles, squares, triangles, and rectangles in primary colors (red, blue, black) and secondary colors (grey, white). Some shapes are solid, while others are filled with horizontal or vertical stripes. The patterns are asymmetrical and modern in style.

**Why bother?  
Isn't this just "the way it is"?**

The background features a vibrant yellow color with abstract geometric patterns in the corners. These patterns consist of various shapes like circles, squares, triangles, and rectangles in shades of red, blue, black, white, and grey, some with stripes or solid colors.

# Why bother Isn't this just “the way it is”?

Maybe, but....does it have to be?

**“The heart of criticality in teaching is not to explicitly teach students to resist, but to *support their agency and position them to make fully informed decisions* about their learning and lives within a complete understanding of the ways their decisions are meaningful within [a global context].”**

Motha, S. (2014). *Race, Empire, and English Language Teaching: Creating Responsible and Ethical Anti-racist Practice*. New York, p. 130. As cited by Chan, E. (May 13, 2022). *Social Justice, Inclusion, and Radical Self Care: Reflections for English Language Educators*. TESL Nova Scotia conference keynote address.





# Making the Invisible Visible

- Grammar is not enough: Ideologies are part of the real-life complexities of how language is used
- Helping students, parents, colleagues realize they're "wearing the glasses" of language ideologies
- Encourage them to take off the glasses, have a look around, and decide in what circumstances to deliberately put them back on again.

# Language Ideologies in the Classroom



## Critical Awareness-Raising

Through discussion, learning activities  
E.g. analyze materials, readings, for underlying language ideologies and discuss alternatives. Reflecting on our own beliefs



## Identifying ideological mismatches

Closing the gap through explanation, learner/parent training  
E.g. Explain pedagogical reason why you might allow translanguaging, include a variety of Englishes, etc.



## Diversity of Materials

Include curricula, materials, assessment, from a variety of linguistic ideological viewpoints  
E.g. don't assume neoliberal aspirations



## Pushing Back

Teach skills to appropriately push back against discriminatory ideologies in  
E.g. framing your language skills in a job interview

The background is a solid yellow color. In the four corners, there are abstract geometric patterns composed of various shapes like circles, squares, triangles, and rectangles in colors such as blue, red, black, and white. Some shapes have internal patterns like stripes or dots.

# What are your experiences with language ideologies?

With students, parents, administrators, colleagues?  
As teachers, as language users?

# THANKS!



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