Developing a Sociological Imagination: Expanding Ethnography in International English Language Education

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Whereas the importance of ethnography in analysing broad social realities in education is now established, in international English language education, ethnography has often been restricted to oral aspects of classroom behaviour. This paper argues that the cultural complexity and variety in English language classrooms across the world also require ethnographies of non-verbal behaviour and of curriculum and curriculum project design and management beyond the classroom. A professional sociological imagination needs to be cosmopolitan, broad-based, and wide-ranging in the multiplicity of relations between students, educators, the community, and also the people, material, and concepts which the profession transports across cultures. In the search for ethical research, we can and must look wider than the emicism of verbal data. The polyphony of views which is essential to international English language education can be achieved in as many ways as there are cultures.

INTRODUCTION
I will begin with a brief overview of the value of ethnography as a qualitative, interpretative research tool which looks at small groups as cultures, and of how ethnography has been used in education research over the last decade. I will then argue how current issues in international English language education warrant a broad involvement of this type of investigation, in curriculum development and curriculum project management as well as classroom research. I shall conclude by looking at ethical issues and address the ways in which research can move beyond the narrow emicisms of verbatim data and still achieve a desired polymorphism in the development of a professional sociological imagination.

ACHIEVING CRITICAL COSMOPOLITANISM
A key role in being a teacher is to ‘connect pedagogical theory and practice to wider social issues’ (Pennycook 1989: 613, citing Giroux and McLaren). One important social issue is the degree to which professional practices are autonomous or ideological in their orientation—indeed, independent from or motivated by interest and culture (Coleman forthcoming and Rampton 1995, both citing Street). We are in very interesting times. Within general education in Britain and America, the power of ideology has long been realized in some quarters (e.g., Young 1971, Apple 1979), acknowledging that educators need to evaluate their...
action through critical experience. This has contributed to a now established role in general education for ethnographic studies and less formal ethnography in teacher reflection and action research. In contrast, more recently this liberation may well be in decline towards a process of removing the educator from social decision-making. One might discern a gradual de-skilling characterized by increase in conformity to behavioural objectives, state intervention, teacher-proof materials, and institutional control of classroom practice (Pennycook 1989, 610, citing Giroux) culminating in emphasis on control and accountability with regard to institutional quality and academic standards. Belief in autonomous education practice may thus be in ascendancy.

I would argue that in international English language education there is an opposite tendency. A belief in autonomy of practice is well-established. There is a strong 'culture of positivism' in which what happens in the classroom and the curriculum is seen as 'abstracted from the context of the wider society' (ibid, 591, citing Giroux), as is the 'professionalism' which has driven a particular attitude to the teaching of English across the world (Phillipson 1992). Especially within commercial 'ELT' in Britain, Australasia, and North America (BANA), there has long been a desire to 'fix' the nature of classroom expertise within a climate of competitive quality control. Unlike general education, the possibility of the ideological nature of practice is only just being addressed, with accusations of linguistic or professional imperialism and criticism of traditional tenets such as the value of native speakers and exclusion of the first language begin to emerge (ibid, Holliday 1994a). There is thus growing discussion of the social meaning of international English language education (Pennycook 1989, Coleman forthcoming a) which is relevant not only to teachers, but to all English language educators.

There is, thus, in international English language education also a tension between the need for a greater social awareness and a desire for culture-free professionalism. No matter how well founded are accusations of ethnocratic imperialism or the desire to fix classroom expertise, all English language educators need to be constantly critical and aware of the social influences and implications of what they do. I shall use C Wright Mills' (1970) term, sociological imagination, to label this social perspective—the ability to locate oneself and one's actions critically within a wider community or world scenario.

For the English language educator to achieve a sociological imagination, broad-based ethnography needs to become as much a part of the professional scene as it has become in general education. This does not have to be through formal research, but can also be through each educator achieving an informal ethnographic perspective (Hitchcock and Hughes 1989, 35–6). It is implicit in action research or reflection which considers the social reality of a particular situation from the point of view of the actors. Within a prevailing culture of positivism (as mentioned above), it provides a qualitative check on the rulings of definitions of method and bureaucracies of equivalences and accountability, by assessing them against the pluralities of what teachers, students, communities—the grassroots stakeholders in English education—need and expect. This is a
similar role to that of critical discourse analysis, as an independent means for critiquing 'political philosophies that actively claim consent as a basis of legitimacy', but which may in effect be dubious (Fairclough 1989, Rampton 1995 242) Within the multicultural nature of international English language education, this might be seen as a *cruel cosmopolitanism* in which there is an 'ethos of macro-interdependencies with an acute consciousness' (Rabinow 1986 258) How far ethnography can be independent is, of course, debatable, and the need to extend the sociological imagination to the cultural agendas which influence its own inception and practice will be discussed later It must never be forgotten that ethnography became a justification for colonialism in the nineteenth century by emphasizing the ‘primitive’ nature of ‘other’ peoples (Nzimiro nd, Asad 1973, Tyler 1986, Comaroff and Comaroff 1992) Whereas pure ethnography operates for its own sake, it is also applied by a number of professional interests, one of which is educational research, and increasingly so since the early 1970s (Lutz 1981 51, Spindler 1982 1-2, Delamont and Hamilton 1984 6, 17, Sharp 1986 120, Walford 1991)

An important way in which ethnography can maintain a methodological independence in its defence of pluralism is the way in which it interprets reality In most forms of social science research, the questions asked by the researcher tend to come from outside the cultural scene Ethnography begins with a different assumption as far as possible, both questions and answers must be discovered in the social situation being studied (Spradley 1980 32)

Thus, the research does not begin until after the researcher has entered the social situation At this point, a research cycle commences with (1) a generalized asking of ethnographic questions, moving on in stages to (2) the collection of data which progresses gradually from broad, to focused, to selective observation, (3) the making of an ethnographic record, and (4) analysis of the data (ibid 29) Thus

In ethnographic research the development of the research problem is rarely completed before fieldwork begins, indeed, the collection of primary data often plays a key role in the process of development (Hammersley and Atkinson 1983 40)

There continue to be opportunities for the revision of the research aims during the research process This gradual focusing, in dialogue with increased experience of the situation, is by nature what Swales (1980) refers to as a ‘maturing and organic response’ As the interpretive paradigm provides the methodological alternative to positivism in social science (Hitchcock and Hughes 1989 17-37, Cameron, Frazer, Harvey, Rampton, and Richardson 1992 6-10), ethnography applies a methodological base which is in itself a check on the culture of positivism inherent in autonomous education (see above)

The choice of research focus must also be essentially pluralistic Although traditionally ethnography has looked at isolated communities in ‘other’ parts of the world, a researchable group can be any human entity which has a culture, which can range from work and leisure groups, factory work groups, holiday-
makers, and groups as small as the people queuing at a drinks machine or the crew of an aeroplane (Beales, Spindler, and Spindler 1967 1–15, Spradley 1980 54, Holliday 1994a 22–23) A pluralistic, broad-based ethnography has been achieved in British and American general education One finds, for example, investigation of hidden curriculum in a ‘white ghetto’ school and the analysis of the classroom group as a microcosm of wider community (Gearing and Epstein 1982), observation of the daily professional life of a high school and of the researcher as therapist in a California elementary school and a German village school (Spindler and Spindler 1982), the role of teachers in the socialization of young people in a girls’ secondary school in Egypt (Herrera 1992), comparison of national curriculum issues in Britain and in two French primary schools, involving an investigation of the bureaucratization of education (Sharpe 1992, 1993), investigation of institutional and micro-political conflicts within a British curriculum project (Shipman, Bolam, and Jenkins 1974) Particularly significant, considering the current culture of quality control in curriculum projects in English language education, is the role ethnography has had for over a decade in the evaluation of educational programmes (Wolcott 1982 88–9) Smith (1991 15) sees ethnography as essential in determining culturally appropriate methods for evaluation in international contexts.

NARROW CONCERNS IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE EDUCATION
However, whereas in general education, the focus of ethnography has thus ranged from the classroom and the curriculum to the wider institutional environment, this broad perspective is matched by a significantly narrower role in international English language education This is shown by a comparison between the two columns in Table 1 There are several possible reasons for this First, the emphasis on applied linguistics at a micro, psychological level has placed a major focus on what happens to language during the classroom teaching process Concerns with student participation in classroom communication (e.g. Long and Porter 1985), influenced by interaction analysis and oral discourse analysis (Allwright 1988) have drawn attention to what is said in

Table 1 Differing foci for ethnography

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>General education</th>
<th>International English language education</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a Looking at classrooms and the wider institutional setting</td>
<td>1 Looking mainly at classrooms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b Looking at a wide range of behaviour</td>
<td>2 Looking mainly at talk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c Concerned with the wide business of education</td>
<td>3 Concerned mainly with teaching methodology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d Well established qualitative interpretative, reflective tradition within BANA national research and teacher education contexts</td>
<td>4 Competing with a positivist view of method, and a strong psychometric tradition in TESEP countries</td>
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</table>
the classroom (ii in Table 1) Second, the abstraction of the classroom from the wider social context within the prevailing culture of positivism has led to an emphasis on teaching methodology regardless of its context (iii in Table 1) Third, reinforcing the focus on what is said, qualitative research in applied linguistics often seems to have adopted a particularly emic approach which emphasizes the 'importance of collecting data in the form of verbatim texts from informants in order to preserve the original meaning of the informant' (Pelto and Pelto 1970 55) Hence, as well as providing verbal data of classroom discourse, there is a movement to report teacher and student attitudes through transcriptions of what they say—getting at the reality of their worlds by recording their 'voices'—e.g. the work of Bailey and Nunan in process (Nunan 1995 21) Just as the popular view of communicative language teaching is that it is to do with oral communication in the classroom (Holliday 1994a 170), the popular view of ethnography in English language education is that it is to do with transcriptions of what students and teachers say either in or about the classroom

As well as these direct influences on the nature of ethnography in English language education, there is also ideological opposition to ethnographic work in many parts of the profession (iv in Table 1) The culture of positivism in the profession's preoccupation with methods prescribes classroom procedure to the extent that interpretative investigation would be reduced to validation of what should happen, and to affirm autonomy (Pennycook 1989 594) Even the so-called 'learner-centred' communicative approach is liable to 'methodization', imposing a packaged classroom ideal on students rather than being sensitive to their cultural needs (Holliday 1994c, 1995a)

Although reflective modes of teacher education and classroom research already present in general education (d in Table 1) are beginning to be adopted in BANA English language education (Nunan 1990, Wallace 1991, 'exploratory teaching' in Allwright and Bailey 1991, Allwright 1992), there is still much opposition outside the BANA sphere to such ethnographic orientation Amongst researchers and academics in many parts of the world, especially within the state tertiary, secondary, and primary sectors (TESEP) (iv in Table 1), a positivist, psychometric tradition still views qualitative, interpretive approaches as 'informal' and lacking in 'seriousness' (Chapman 1991, Shamim 1993 111 citing Vulliamy et al.) In many countries, it would not be considered proper for MA or PhD work to be anything but statistical survey or experimental Characteristic of this approach is the prescriptive teaching of methodology-as-theory within a subject-content-oriented collectionist code (Holliday 1994a 73, following Bernstein 1971)

Concern with the behaviour of language and method within the confines of the classroom is of undoubted value, but not sufficient to encourage analysis of the wider social realities which influence the classroom. I am not suggesting that these realities are never addressed by English language educators in their day-to-day work, but that they are at the level of common-sense, tacit or informal 'folk knowledge' What I am suggesting is that professionalization of this folk
knowledge to bring it up to the same status as applied linguistics and concern
with language teaching method. As early as 1980, Kelley saw a similar need in
general education to professionalize the analysis of ‘the perceptions of pupils,
administrators and the public on curriculum matters’ (Kelley 1980:78) Interna-
tional English language education still needs to catch up in this respect. Ethnography has ready-made systematic procedures to fulfil such a need. For
example, Hammersley and Atkinson’s (1983) chapters on gaining access to
situations and data, and on field relations in ethnography would be of help to
any English language educator who needs to collect base-line data, carry out
needs analysis, or work within sensitive cross-cultural relationships between
students, teachers, curriculum developers, administrators, aid agencies, and so
on. Whether or not these relationships are across international divides, they
span professional, academic, institutional, or classroom cultural divides which
are equally sensitive.

BROADENING PERSPECTIVES

The role and value of ethnography in broadening perspectives beyond language
and the classroom can be seen in the work which is beginning to emerge, mainly
concerned with what many might consider ‘exotic’ scenarios far away from the
‘ideal’ classroom presented in the literature. In reality, they are not exotic at all,
but represent contexts found all over the world, where English language
education takes place in a mêlée of problematic attitudes and expectations
surrounding relationships between teachers, students, experts, administrators,
communities, and large classes. Some of the work focuses on the classroom,
some on the wider curriculum and teacher attitudes, some on the special but
informative milieux of curriculum projects. Examples of such work are listed in
Table 2. The right-hand column is not an exhaustive list, but an illustration of
variety in focus.

Pre-ethnographic awareness

The studies listed range from small-scale observations from curriculum
development locations to short studies by MA students to PhD research. That
few of the studies listed actually claim to be ethnographic (marked in
parentheses in left-hand column) indicates a development from a less formal
pre-ethnographic awareness to more developed ethnographic studies. In the
erlier works, authors tend to state a ‘need for’ anthropological, sociological, or
ethnographic research, a ‘maturing and organic response’ (Swales 1980,
Andrews 1984), or a ‘novelistic’ approach (Coleman 1988), precipitated by the
nature of the data the author is finding crucial. What qualifies these earlier works
for the list is that they involve essentially qualitative, interpretive investiga-
tions, locating the issues and appreciating the need for a more developed ethnographic
take in the future. That my own work (1991a) and that of Barmada (1994)
developed from and were inspired by the less formal studies of Swales (1980),
Andrews (1984) and Coleman (1988), shows what might be a coming of age of
ethnographic applications of the broader nature in international English
## Table 2 Wide-ranging ethnography in international English language education

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Study</th>
<th>Focus</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Andrews (1984), Khartoum Polytechnic, Sudan</td>
<td><em>English medium classes taught largely in L1 (informal order)</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>Baloyi, Baxter, and Delkurt (1993), Canterbury Christ Church College</td>
<td><em>Characteristics of the ‘good student’ in group work</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>Cooke and Holliday (1982), Damascus University, Syria</td>
<td><em>Insider, collaborative evaluation of an ODA-funded curriculum project</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>Delkurt (1994), Damascus University ESP Centre, Syria (ethnographic)</td>
<td><em>Effects of centralized administration on teacher attitudes</em></td>
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<td>Cooke and Holliday (1982), Damascus University, Syria</td>
<td><em>Teacher and student cultures</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>Coleman (1988), Hasanuddin University, Indonesia</td>
<td><em>Teacher interests governing behaviour in collaborative evaluation</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cooke and Holliday (1982), Damascus University, Syria</td>
<td><em>Conflict between English Department and curriculum project</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delkurt (1994), Damascus University ESP Centre, Syria (ethnographic)</td>
<td><em>Ambivalence of teachers towards having to represent Western forms of thinking and values in the classroom</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>Coleman (forthcoming b), Hasanuddin University, Indonesia</td>
<td><em>Teachers not taking responsibility for teaching materials written by expatriates</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>Cooke and Holliday (1982), Damascus University, Syria</td>
<td><em>Developing role of ‘counterpart/researcher/centre director</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>Dalbani (1992) Damascus University Syria (ethnographic)</td>
<td><em>Need to consider informal order in syllabus design</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>Dehkurt (1994), Northern Cyprus (ethnographic)</td>
<td><em>Library not used by staff or students because reading considered too difficult</em></td>
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<td>Douglas (1977), Khartoum University Sudan</td>
<td><em>Classroom events as ritual</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>Gabriel (1991), Canterbury Christ Church College (ethnographic)</td>
<td><em>Wider social influences on classroom behaviour</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>Holliday (1991a), Faculties of Education, Egypt (ethnographic)</td>
<td><em>Analysis of classroom, teacher and institutional cultures as input to ESP curriculum</em></td>
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<td></td>
<td><em>Effects of resources and educational attitudes on the teaching of writing at university level</em></td>
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<td><em>Ability of ODA-funded projects to address real needs of secondary education</em></td>
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<td></td>
<td><em>Parallel formal and informal systems in university life</em></td>
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<td></td>
<td><em>The realization of ‘communicative’ in foreign language classroom cultures</em></td>
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<td></td>
<td><em>Factors governing effectiveness of outsider curriculum innovation in ODA-funded project</em></td>
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<td></td>
<td><em>Student collaboration for distributing lecture notes and organizing seating in large classes (informal order)</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>Study</td>
<td>Focus</td>
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<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>Holliday (1995b) oil company un-named country (ethnographic)</td>
<td>- Classes finishing early to allow students to commute home to villages (informal order)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Micro-politics governing local department heads, materials writers, lecturers, and technicians</td>
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<td>- Hospitality towards classroom visitors, seating them at the front of the class (deep action)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- High resilience to classroom visitors (deep action)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Low regard and less need for classroom instructions among local lecturers (deep action)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Classroom communication opaque to outsiders (deep action)</td>
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<td>- High proximity in space sharing (deep action)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- ‘Learning only takes place when there is formal teaching (deep action)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Anomalous behaviour (intercompetence) brought about when people (either foreign or local) find themselves outsiders to a new professional culture (either foreign or local)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Holliday (1995c), In-service teacher development seminar, South Africa (ethnographic)</td>
<td>- Assessing institutional language needs</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Expatriate oil company staff finding alternative work strategies when local staff cannot use English (informal order)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Choice of location for company English courses influenced by local staff interests (informal order)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May (1993), Canterbury Christ Church College, Britain (ethnographic)</td>
<td>- Rivalry between native- and non-native speaker trainee teachers in Diploma course</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shamim (1992), secondary school, Pakistan (ethnographic)</td>
<td>- Alliances, rivalries, and social constructions governing who sits at the front, middle, and back of classroom</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shamim (1993), secondary schools, Pakistan (ethnographic)</td>
<td>- Teacher attitudes to large classes</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Subjects disinterested in researcher coming clean</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Researcher’s struggle for acceptance</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shamm (forthcoming), Karachi University Pakistan</td>
<td>- Postgraduate student resistance to group work influenced by wider Pakistani culture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swales (1980), Khartoum University Sudan</td>
<td>- Problems of information collection for expatriate curriculum developer</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Fewer marks allocated to difficult exams to allow students to pass overall (informal order)</td>
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</tbody>
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Table 2 (cont)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Study</th>
<th>Focus</th>
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| Zikn (1992), Ain Shams University, Egypt (document analysis) | • Analysis of failure of ODA-funded curriculum project  
• Conflict between English Department and expatriate personnel |

language education In some of the more developed studies, which still do not have the full rigour and system of ethnography (e.g. Dalbani 1992, Shamim 1993), the authors state that the methodology being used is a ‘case study’, or ‘qualitative’. Both sets of assertions indicate to me a caution and an unsureness as to what exactly constitutes ‘true’ ethnography, which is indicative of the uneasiness already stated with which ethnography is accepted into what has traditionally been a more positivistic paradigm. In other words, many of the studies listed in Table 2 might be better described as becoming-ethnography, and illustrate a development of awareness and application.

Non-verbatim data
A significant feature of the studies in Table 2 is that, unlike much classroom research in English language education, little of the data comprises verbatim accounts of what teachers or students say. The reason is that what is being investigated to a large extent concerns behaviour and contexts which cannot be captured in such accounts. Although some of the data includes personal accounts during interviews (Shamim 1992, 1993, Barmada 1994, Holliday 1995a), much of it is based on what actors said during meetings and impromptu conversations which could not be recorded verbatim. Barmada notes down fragments of what teachers say during evaluation meetings, and Shamim and Barmada note fragments of what teachers and administrators say during their day-to-day dealings with them.

The Head of English setting aside ‘other pressing duties’ had ‘neither the time nor, in practice, the authority to maintain detailed knowledge of Faculty programmes’ (Barmada 1994 184)

Other data is description of events (Swales 1980), and much of it is observation of behaviour. Barmada notices the way which teachers sit and interact during evaluation meetings.

There was a very strong group pressure that was, though invisible, playing a role in making individual members conform with the points of view of the majority displayed through facial expressions, body language and indirect comments. M just looked at her as if she had said something terribly wrong and then turned her back to her (Barmada 1994 310–11)
Some describe classroom events

Teacher B spends a lot of time talking quietly to a few people in the front row and is absolutely inaudible to people at the back. There are some serious conversations going on around me, undisturbed by the fact that an English lesson is happening somewhere else in the room (Coleman forthcoming b).

Many students came to the front—two for each line of the dialogue (written on the blackboard) on which they had to mark the intonation and stress. One student who had been sitting on a cupboard at the front of the room got up and went to ask the lecturer a question, apparently unnoticed in the general hurly-burly of the lesson (Holliday 1991a 313).

So he resorts to asking a student volunteer to write his paragraph on the board or to read it to the rest of the class. [This] can be very humiliating to be cross-examined by an error-hunting teacher in front of a massive audience (Dalbani 1992 67).

Especially in very large classes, where the three scenarios cited here take place, verbatim data of student-teacher interaction could not possibly capture the whole significance of what was going on. In all three of these cases, there is a backdrop of other action which gives meaning to the events or attitudes on which the observer is focusing. There are also descriptions of the institutional or classroom environments which provide such backdrops.

The room was a large, tiered theatre with wooden benches. The acoustics were tolerable. The lecturer had to stand on a very high stage with a free standing blackboard. I used the microphone and held it to the speaker of the tape recorder I had brought to improve the sound (Holliday 1991a 509).

The pigeon-holes indicate the existence of channels of communication unheard of and alien to those at the University, since members of staff at other institutions at the University normally communicate only verbally. The keyboard, too, marks a cultural difference from other parts of the University since all the keys to the seminar rooms and the language laboratory are kept there to be used by the teachers when needed (Barmada 1994 204-5).

Zikri (1992) carries out an investigation of documents—105 reports, memos, and minutes—without which what had been happening in classrooms and between expatriate and local colleagues over more than a decade of a curriculum project could not possibly be understood.

Several of the studies deal with psycho-cultural deep action comprising often hidden, tacit cultural rules governing behaviour (Holliday 1994a 130), informal orders comprising unofficial, non-professional features of institutional life (Swales 1980, Coleman 1988, Holliday 1992a, 1994a 130) or the micro-politics of either classrooms or institutions (marked in the right-hand column of Table 2). This involves observation of behaviour which would be unlikely to come out into the open in verbatim reports—e.g. Barmada's observation of meeting interaction.

The need for variety in what the ethnography looks at is represented in Figure 1, which illustrates how what actors say is one part of a wider complex of observable action and deep action.
EXPANDING ETHNOGRAPHY

Figure 1  Researching elements of ethnographic reality

**What actors say**
- interviews, questionnaires
- asking people what they think
- diaries, monologues: letting people say what they like

**Deep action**
- discovering tacit rules
- governing social behaviour (recipes, traditions)
- discovering interests
- motivating social behaviour (e.g., micropolitics)

**What actors do**
- observing what people do in real events
- observing what people say in real events

**Broad connections**
Characteristic of much of the work in Table 2 are the broad connections which are drawn from different aspects of a holistically described scenario. Making such connections is especially important in the study and evaluation of curriculum projects, where what finally happens in the classroom in terms of methodologies, content, or materials is the product of complex negotiation between a wide range of parties and interests which often span international boundaries (Holliday 1994a). Barmada (1994) thus links a sociological analysis of cultural systems and sub-systems, ideologies and attitudes surrounding educational resources, teacher attitudes to foreign experts, the micropolitics of collaborative evaluation, and her own developing role as a centre director and evaluator. Dalbani (1992) similarly links lecturer and student attitudes, classroom resources, and the teaching of writing. Shamim (1993) links teacher attitudes to large classes with their response to her as a researcher. Coleman (forthcoming b) links classroom behaviour with social and institutional educational ideologies, and is part of a collection of papers which make the same connection (Coleman forthcoming a). Holliday (forthcoming), in the same collection, draws connections between large class behaviour and the effects of urbanization on student relations.
Another feature of the studies in Table 2 is the way in which research procedure and focus develops in response to the research environment. Barmada investigates the attitudes of medical students to ESP courses during collaborative evaluation as the result of a consensus decision, and because her colleagues think 'it would be easier for you, as Director, to gain access' (1994 227) That this should happen is central to the interpretive research paradigm, and is the best evidence that the researcher really is going some way to liberate her or himself from any prescriptions of interest which might have been there at the beginning of the research project. This is sometimes referred to as 'opportunistic research' (Hammersley and Atkinson 1983 40), but I think Swales' 'maturing and organic response' is a more positive way of labelling a state of affairs where 'stops and starts, false trails and blind alleys' are the reality of the research situation (Measor and Woods 1991 59) The researcher has to take positive action with regard to changes in direction or focus at various 'decision points' (ibid) Unfortunately, much published work comprises 'antiseptic accounts of what really happened (ibid), whereas in reality shortcuts, hunches, and serendipitous occurrences mean that

[the] careful, objective, step-by-step model of the research process is actually a fraud and that within natural science as well as social science, the standard way in which research methods are taught and real research is often written up for publication perpetuates what is in fact a myth of objectivity (Walford 1991 1 citing Medawar)

At least as significant as the substantive findings of these studies are the researchers' procedural accounts of the development of their own interaction with the research scenario. These constitute important data in the sense that we learn about a culture from the way in which it interacts with ourselves. An example of this is the revelation in Shamim's research thatTeachers used different ways of showing resentment to my presence in their class, e.g. quietly slipping to their class when we were together in the staff room, changing their class time without informing me, or leaving the class quickly at the end of the class period without waiting for me to join them (Shamim 1994 105)

and that 'none of the teachers showed any interest in reading or discussing my observation notes more than once' (ibid 108) Another example is Dalbani's account of how making appointments with lecturers was difficult and that seeing them was often reduced to brief meetings in corridors, and that, moreover, they did not like what they said to be written down and would not give away their marking schemes (Dalbani 1992 56) Mercer (1991 47–8), commenting on experience of doing ethnography in a British school, notes that 'we disrupted proceedings by entering classrooms with a video camera' but that this did not ruin validity because the children were only temporarily and superficially disturbed. Here is an important example of an apparently disruptive action creating even better conditions under which to sample teaching and learning in
an intense form. Rather than causing 'serious distortion of phenomena', the act of observation either 'causes or creates artefacts' (ibid). This is an important feature of reflexivity, in the sense that 'we are part of the social world which we study', and that this is an existential fact (Hammersley and Atkinson 1983 14–15). In my own research, the way in which I am received into Egyptian classrooms indicates a classroom hospitality which becomes an important factor in curriculum innovation (Holliday 1991a 260–4).

As well as helping us learn about and respond to the research environment, such observation of developing relationships reveals the culture of the researcher. In my brief study of the 'handing over' of a seminar towards the end of a curriculum project, I conclude:

The case study reveals much more about the ethnocentrism of myself as expatriate observer than it does about my local co-participants. It is also important to note that in their eyes, the mystery is in the behaviour of the expatriate—in why she or he should wish to write a paper like this. The only way to get any of the 'other side' would be through an ethnographic study of the behaviour of the expatriate from the point of view of a 'local' person. This paper is therefore my story, but a story which I must investigate if I am going to carry out my work effectively and fairly (Holliday 1995c 68).

An important point emerges here in all the studies in Table 2, the roles of researcher and project worker, curriculum developer, educational innovator, etc merge, as do those of 'local' teacher, student, administrator, and researched. I have already made the point that educators working in complex social contexts can learn about field relations from the ethnographer. In essence, ethnography becomes an integral part of professional action. Gellner (1992 39) throws scorn on what he considers a hypochondriac 'anthropologizing' of the researcher, but the fact remains that in many work scenarios in international English language education, what actually happens is in reaction to the strangeness brought by the outsider, whether researcher, teacher, or curriculum developer (Holliday 1992b).

COSMOPOLITAN POLYPHONY
The studies in Table 2 go far in the development of a professional sociological imagination in that they develop broad perspectives on the situation they investigate. However, there are important issues at stake. Recent concerns about the ethics of research are well founded, especially in ethnography, which delves into the more private, tacit regions of cultures, thoughts, and actions. I have already mentioned ethnography's imperialist past, and many argue that there is still a 'significant thread in western discourse about "primitive" culture and racial inferiority' (Cameron et al. 1992 3). This tribalization of the other is a temptation not only in the practice of research, but also in the practice of foreign or second language teaching methodology. Here, there is still considerable cultural stereotyping in cases where particular national groups, such as the Japanese, appear as constraints on 'ideal' classroom practice (Holliday 1994c 138). Such stereotyping gives the easy impression that all, for example Japanese,
share a homogenous 'culture', therefore less complex, more tribal, and perhaps therefore less 'advanced' than our own (ibid 126-7)

Fear of power

There are at least two ways of addressing the danger of cultural imperialism in ethnographic research. The first, which I consider flawed when applied to international English language education, sees the relationship between researcher and researched as one of unequal power and seeks to rectify this state of affairs by empowering the researched (Cameron et al 1992). Here, the researcher is seen as someone who has the potential to disrupt 'cultural patterns among the researched' (ibid 3) and to manipulate the powerless for the sake of academic gain in data collection. It cannot be denied that 'social science is not and never has been a neutral enquiry into human behaviour and institutions' (ibid 2 citing Foucault, also Kuhn 1970). However, Cameron et al's observation that 'an enormous proportion of all social research is conducted on populations of relatively powerless people', such as 'factory workers, criminals and juvenile delinquents' (ibid), although perhaps true of much sociolinguistic research (ibid 3), is not necessarily true in international English language education. None of the studies cited in Table 2 involve 'disadvantaged' research subjects.

The unequal power paradigm is supported by Phillipson's (1992) equally flawed centre-periphery model in which the developing world is considered powerless to negotiate the imperialist English language technologies it receives from the 'core' English-speaking countries. Almost all the teachers who are the subjects of the studies in Table 2 do indeed fall into the 'receiver' category. However, they are not 'powerless' receivers, nor are they 'periphery'. Several of the studies reveal that they have far more power than initially thought by expatriates, whether by covertly neutralizing the effect of imported course design (Swales 1980, Holliday 1991a, 1995c), openly resisting imported teaching methodology (Shamim forthcoming), redesigning imported courses (Barmada 1994), or belittling the researcher as an unfortunate student who needs to collect data for her studies (Shamim 1993 96). Especially the teachers in Shamim's study view themselves as central, and the researcher as periphery. The notion that the researcher is in a position to empower the researched seems inherently patronizing in such contexts (see Holliday and Wilkinson 1995).

The emic solution to the unequal power paradigm, which insists on verbatim accounts which the researched would be invited to edit and thus 'share' authorship, is also flawed. Tyler sees the emphasis on verbatim accounts as just another stage in reducing, rather than enhancing, the humanity of the research subject. Whereas through the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries ethnographers moved from perceptions of the 'noble savage' to 'fallen', 'primitive', 'living fossil' (Tyler 1986 27), in the twentieth century, the 'savage' was no longer even 'primitive'. She was only 'data' and 'evidence', the critical disproving instance of the positive rhetoric of political liberalism [which]
tamed the savage, not with the pen, but with the tape recorder, reducing him to a 'straight man', as in the script of some obscure comic routine, or even as they think to have returned to 'oral performance' or 'dialogue', in order that the native have a place in the text, they exercise total control over her discourse and steal the only thing she has left—her voice (ibid 128)

Pelto and Pelto's criticism of extreme emicism still rings true, that we must also consider—as in some of the studies cited—'nonlanguage factors, such as material conditions, social relationships' and body language (Pelto and Pelto 1970 60), that the researched themselves are not always well-informed and are not invariably better than the ethnographer in categorising their own social reality, for the simple reason that (1) they are not social scientists and (2) their (arbitrary) categorisations were not constructed for the purpose of cross-cultural study of behavioural systems (ibid 65)

Also, lack of analysis of data, for the purpose of preserving rawness, adds nothing and can lead to parody rather than illumination of the human condition (ibid 59) Furthermore, the interview, which produces the verbatim text, does not sit easily with the interpretive principle of ethnography because of its unavoidably contrived nature Whether or not prescribed, 'positivistic' categories are used, the subject is placed within a discourse event which by its nature belongs to the researcher, thus becoming a puppet to researcher intentions (Holliday and Wilkinson 1995)

The straight observation of behaviour seen in many of the studies in Table 2 may be in danger of invading privacy, but it does not entangle the researched in the researcher-dominated research discourse which surrounds such confusing notions as 'this is for your benefit, you will be allowed to participate' (ibid), which must to most people, no matter where they come from, sound more like advertising hype than a democratic commitment Ernest Gellner makes a sharp critique of the postmodern ethnography for which we seem to be striving, which puts the current discussion into perspective

What the authors seem to be after is to eliminate all clanty, all objectivity, but in the end not to deprive themselves of the pleasure of still feeling guilty about a residue of observer's intrusion In the end, they are still there, however hard they strove to escape through 'dialogue', 'heteroglossia', or whatever All those stylistic innovations are meant to bring the informant right into the book, undistorted by interpretation, but this is followed by the agreeably sinful realisation that, after all, the author(s) had brought him there, in a context which also constitutes interpretation (Gellner 1992 28-9)

A more culture-sensitive view

I am not suggesting that emicism is in itself inappropriate It is central to interpretive ethnography that social worlds should as far as possible be seen in the terms inherent in those worlds There must however be other ways of achieving this than restricting data to verbatim reports—a restriction which would deny the possibility of half the studies cited in this paper and thus deny the discovery of just how much power exists amongst the researched A less restrictive
principle which addresses the dangers of an unethical, culturally imperialist
ethnography is described by Tyler. Like those concerned with unequal power-
relations, he is

opposed to monologue, and emphasises the co-operative and collaborative nature of
the ethnographic situation in contrast to the ideology of the transcendental observer
(Tyler 1986 126)

However, unlike them, he ‘rejects the ideology of “observer–observed”’ as far
too simplistic (ibid.) Indeed, Shamim’s account of how the teachers in her
research rejected her overtures to ‘come clean and could not see what her
‘research’ had to do with them gives the impression that they were refusing to be
the ‘researched’. Rather than struggling to involve the teachers as equals,
Shamim found herself struggling to overcome her own ‘marginal’ position by
finding ways to increase her ‘credibility’ with them (1993 93–6)

Rather than simply invite the ‘researched’ to edit the text of what they have
said, Tyler talks about ‘co-operative story making that, in its ideal forms, would
result in a polymorphic text, none of whose participants would have the final
word’, the form of which would depend on the context (1986 126)

Polyphony is a means of perspectival relativity and is not just an evasion of authorial
responsibility or a guilty excess of democracy. Because it is participatory and
emergent, postmodern ethnography cannot have a predetermined form for it could
happen that the participants might decide that textualisation itself is inappropriate
(ibid 128)

Thus, the lecturers and heads of department in Dalbani’s study chose not to
have what they said recorded, but this did not mean that Dalbani should stop her
research. It was more appropriate to gather information in a less formalized way.
Tyler stresses that ethnography must avoid a single tradition of discourse—
avoid grounding in what may seem to be ‘theoretical and commonsense cate-
gories’, but may themselves be ethnocentric (ibid.) Shamim observes that such
things as gaining access are often considered ‘technical process’, but that really

the only help available is the accounts of other researchers and his/her own
understanding of the norms of behaviour in the culture of the community in which he/she is working (Shamim 1993 90)

Indeed, this necessity is substantiated in the discussion with researchers in
Holliday (1995d), where it immediately becomes apparent that forming
ethically appropriate relationships with the subjects of study will depend on a
wide range of things such as their attitudes towards the notion of, institution of,
or even word, researcher, and whether or not there is an established culture of
research. Smith (1991), reflecting on accounts of evaluative investigations
carried out in Israel, Egypt, Cameroon, Malta, and Ireland, notes that appropri-
ate research relations will depend on cultural variability in how far academics
want their ideas to be known to others within a potentially competitive milieu,
the status of written versus oral communication, protocols governing the giving
of direct answers to questions, subjects' preparedness to say that they do not have information, notions of 'control', 'predictability', 'generalization', and 'objective', and concepts of colonialism. The last factor may seem odd, especially when the whole intention of seeking out an ethical polyphony is to avoid the imperialist ethnography of the past. However, the 'accepted' approach for doing this may to many seem just another instrument of the West (ibid 13, 18, Tyler 1986 128).

Polyphony, therefore, is not just the production of a text which represents the views of the researched because they have been given the chance to edit it, but a research process which adapts to and represents the culture of the context under study. Returning to the problem that straight observation may be an invasion of privacy, the operative word is may. It may or may not, depending on the local protocols, and discovering such protocols will be part and parcel of the overall ethnography. The sensitivity to culture, which underlies ethical considerations, is not something that can be an imported package, but must be learnt as the culture under study is revealed. The researcher learning appropriate research behaviour is part and parcel of the whole interpretive process. The polyphony of views which is essential to international English language education can thus be achieved in as many ways as there are cultures.

CONCLUSION
In this paper, I have argued that a sociological imagination on the part of all those working within international English language education is essential if they are to understand and negotiate the complexities of a cosmopolitan environment. This imagination can be achieved through ethnography, as long as it is as cosmopolitan in its procedures as the environment within which it is applied. For the procedures to be cosmopolitan, the means by which they are deemed appropriate and ethical must also be cosmopolitan.

(Revised version received October 1995)

NOTES
1 By international English language education, I mean all activities involving or enabling the teaching of English as a second or foreign language throughout the world, including teaching, training and educating teachers, designing and implementing materials, courses, curricula, and curriculum projects, writing and publishing textbooks and academic works, research, and policy making. I shall refer to all the people involved in these processes as English language educators.
2 Although Pennycook does not use the terms autonomy and ideology, he implies that anyone who sees education as 'abstracted' from social and political context is in effect making an ideological statement (1989 591). This of course would not be acknowledged by that person, in effect seeing education as 'autonomous'. Pennycook, in effect, sees education as ideological.
3 See also Atkinson's (1990) comparable use of 'ethnographic imagination'.
4 Beyond the immediate concern of this paper, there is also debate concerning the advocacy of applied social science (Gouldner 1970), about how far ethnography is
compromised by the pragmatics of such as education (Hoyle 1970, Lutz 1981, Spindler 1982 1–2, Wolcott 1982, Hitchcock and Hughes 1989 7), and how far social science generally is ruled by the policies of government funding (Pettigrew and Norns 1992, Simons 1993, Pettigrew 1994)

This methodological procedure, despite conflicts between various schools within ethnography, is commonly followed by other ethnographers. Although Hammersley and Atkinson see the principle that ‘research must be carried out in ways that are sensitive to the nature of the setting’ as originating with the naturalist school (1983 6), to which they do not subscribe, they conform to it throughout their description of a reflexive ethnography. The writing up of the ethnographic record is, of course, a place where the interpretation is influenced a great deal by the orientation of the researcher, and a source of much controversy (Atkinson 1990)

An example of this is McCarty’s (1975) description, in ethnographic filming, of his progress through ‘culture shock and language familiarity’, ‘tripod methodology’, and finally close portraiture of everyday life. Temaner and Quinn (1975 54) describe how in cinema vérité, documentary filming is ‘organised by a “found structure” and not by the imposed structure of an artificial story or a theory’

Emic may be interpreted more generally to mean investigating a system from within—as opposed to etic methodologies which look from without (e.g. Sevigny 1981 75, citing Harris). Not everybody would necessarily associate emicism only with the need for verbatim data.

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