



世界知名TESOL专家论丛

Foreign Language Teacher Education and Development –
Selected Works of Renowned TESOL Experts

Series Editor: Yilin Sun

英语教学的批评性研究

Critical Approaches to English Language Teaching

Alastair Pennycook

“世界知名TESOL专家论丛”集萃了国际知名英语教育和学术机构——世界英语教师协会（TESOL International Association）的多位资深专家在教师教育发展领域的研究精华。丛书每种致力于教师教育发展的一个研究专题，从国际范围的广阔视野，对英语教师的教学、科研和职业发展等领域的热点话题进行深入探讨，既有丰富的理论知识，又有鲜活的课堂实例，旨在为国内高校外语教师教育与发展提供切实有效的理论指导和实践借鉴。

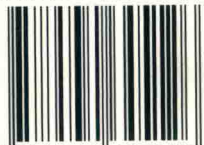
Alastair Pennycook是TESOL协会权威专家之一，现为悉尼科技大学教育学院教授，担任多部国际知名学术期刊的编委。本书汇集了作者近30年的研究成果，从多角度对语言教学法、语言与话语、英语的全球传播等进行了批评性分析，提出了许多关于英语教学的现实问题，观点犀利，见解独到，发人深省。对英语教学的批评性研究感兴趣的读者必能通过阅读本书启迪思考，收获新知。

Foreign Language Teacher Education and Development – Selected Works of Renowned TESOL Experts highlights the works of a number of leading researchers and educators in the TESOL field, aiming to exemplify the diversity and complexity of the ELT field. *Critical Approaches to English Language Teaching* opens up a whole new way of examining the teaching of English and heralds a new era of the research and practice of critical approaches to ELT.



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出版说明

“世界知名 TESOL 专家论丛”由上海外语教育出版社约请国际知名英语教育和学术机构——世界英语教师协会（TESOL International Association）的前任主席孙以琳（Yilin Sun）教授担任主编，针对国内教师教育发展的需求，精心策划推出。丛书主编及作者均来自 TESOL 协会，在国际英语教学研究领域颇有建树。这是 TESOL 协会专家首次集中与我国外语界合作，联袂将国际教师教育与发展领域的研究精华向广大读者呈现。

丛书每种致力于教师教育发展的一个研究专题，集萃了作者在该领域的研究成果，既有丰富的理论知识，又有鲜活的课堂实例，从国际范围的广阔视野对英语教师的教学、科研和职业发展等领域的热点话题进行了探讨，展现了该研究领域的发展历程和研究成果。

丛书注重理论联系实际，具有很强的实用性和指导性，可供高校外语教师自学阅读，也可作为教师培训机构的辅助教材或参考读物。相信本套丛书的出版将从教学、科研、职业发展等角度为国内高校外语教师的教育和发展提供切实有效的理论指导和实践借鉴。

Preface

The field of TESOL has transformed itself over the last 50 years, especially in the last 20 years. It is diverse, complicated, multifaceted and “glocal”. The increasing demand for global English has resulted in an expanded global landscape of ever-diversifying profiles of users, uses and contexts. This series, entitled *Foreign Language Teacher Education and Development — Selected Works of Renowned TESOL Experts*, highlights the works of a number of leading researchers and educators in the TESOL field, aiming to exemplify the diversity and complexity of the ELT field. This particular book, written by Alastair Pennycook, is a collection of the author’s work on Critical Approaches to English Language Teaching for the series.

Each book in this series focuses on a specific area in the ELT field. Other examples include second language acquisition research, second language writing research and practice, second language reading research and practice, World Englishes, teacher education, corpus based grammar/lexical studies, English for specific purposes (ESP), language assessment, bilingual/multicultural education and language policy, etc.

The purpose of each book is to bring together both earlier and recent articles to show the development of the author’s work over his/her academic career. The articles have been selected to address both theoretical issues and practical implications in English language teaching for in-service and pre-service ELT professionals, as this series is intended to not only help foreign language teachers grow professionally, but also as textbooks or recommended reading in teacher training institutes in China and other parts of Asia.

Each book begins with an autobiographical introduction by the author in which s/he identifies issues that have been critical in their areas of expertise and how their work has evolved over time. The rest of the book consists of chapters based on articles published over the author’s professional career. The book ends with a chapter where the author provides a summary of the work, as well as predictions and suggestions for moving forward.

Following the trajectory of each author's own research and teaching career (over 40 years in some cases), each book provides readers with a vivid snapshot of the development in the author's perspectives on the issues addressed, reflecting the changes in theory, research and practice focus that have occurred in the specific area of inquiry over a period of time. It is our hope that this series will contribute to a more plural knowledge base and constructive disciplinary growth for the ELT field.

This book by Alastair Pennycook brings together a powerful collection of the author's work on *Critical Approaches to English Language Teaching*. I have known Alastair for more than two decades since our graduate studies at OISE/University of Toronto back in the late 1980's, and I have always been inspired by his field-leading and field-transforming publications, which have been instrumental in deepening the understanding of critical approaches to ELT and generating much debate and research on the fundamental issues of language and power. In this collection, Pennycook outlines three main themes which constitute critical approaches to ELT: 1) The domain or area of interest: To what extent do particular domains define a critical approach? 2) A transformative pedagogy: How does the particular approach to education hope to change things? 3) A self-reflexive stance on critical theory: To what extent does the work constantly question common assumptions, including its own? (p.4) Its central importance lies in the fact that "the position of English is complex and many-sided. To understand the power and politics of ELT, then, we need detailed understandings of the role English plays in relation to local languages, politics and economies. This requires meticulous studies of English and its users, as well as theories of power that are well adapted to contextual understandings. As ELT professionals, we are never just teaching something called English but rather are involved in economic and social change, cultural renewal, people's dreams and desires." (p.464)

Over the past 30 years, no ELT scholar has contributed more to our understanding of the importance of critical approaches to ELT than Alastair Pennycook. This collection illustrates the evolution of his own thinking on language and power, from its origin in his own life and work experience back in Xiangtan (湘潭), China through to his ongoing work

as a critical applied linguist and critical pedagogy scholar.

In these articles Alastair mentions that since he first started writing critically about the global spread of English, and the assumptions, methods, beliefs, and inequalities that went with it, English teaching has become an ever greater endeavor (particularly in the context of China), and so has the need for critical approaches to ELT become more significant than ever. I could not agree more, and this collection opens up a whole new way of examining the teaching of English and heralds a new era of the research and practice of critical approaches to ELT.

Yilin Sun
Seattle
April 2016

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Introduction:

Critical Approaches to English Language Teaching

The first paper included in this selection was published in 1989. It was not the first paper I had published — a paper on nonverbal communication and language teaching was published in *TESOL Quarterly* some years before (Pennycook, 1985) — but it was the first in the line of thinking that we might call critical approaches to English Language Teaching (CAELT) or critical applied linguistics (CALx) as I described this work the following year (Pennycook, 1990a; and see Pennycook, 2008b). The question I want to pursue in this introduction is what made that 1989 article critical in a way that the 1985 one was not? Or more broadly, how can we understand what is meant by the term *critical* in the context of English language teaching (ELT)? And, on a more personal level, what were the influences that changed my approach to ELT in those years between 1985 and 1989?

One of the most obvious influences in those intervening years was that I worked at Xiangtan (湘潭) University in Hunan Province from 1985 to 1988. This experience had a range of influences, some of which are mentioned in some of the papers collected here (Pennycook, 1996) or other work reflecting on those times (Pennycook, 2012a). I had lived and travelled quite widely by the time I moved to China: I had studied at a university in France, taught English in Germany, worked in Japan from 1981–1983, and completed my Master's degree in Montreal in Canada. But China was something very different. The “Open Door Policy” had started to have its effects as China moved from its more isolationist years towards the position it now plays in the world. Deng Xiaoping had urged Chinese to “learn from the West”, but for some of us taking up this opportunity to work in China, we wanted this to be a reciprocal learning experience. We were there not only to provide knowledge of the English language and Western ideas more generally, but also to provide both a critique of all that we saw as problematic in capitalism, the dominance of the US in global politics, and the limitations of Western individualism, and at the same time to learn from Chinese culture and politics.

Hunan Province I always remember as red and hot, not only for its sizzling summers and wonderful chilli-laden food, but also for its political history. This was peasant country. Down the road was Shaoshan (韶山), a small village with a vast railway station, a remnant of the years during the “Cultural Revolution” when “red guards” would pour into the Hunan countryside to visit Mao Zedong’s (1893–1976) birthplace. By the 1980s it was another sleepy Hunan village, a bicycle-ride away, where we would go now and then, pilgrim-like, clutching an old copy of the Little Red Book. Across these rice fields between his birthplace Shaoshan and the provincial capital Changsha, much of early communist thought and action was grown, from his education (1914–1918) at the First Provincial Normal School of Hunan Province, the development of local education for peasants in the 1920s, the anti-elitist, practice-based, revolutionary educational principles he came to espouse: “Our educational policy must enable everyone who receives an education to develop morally, intellectually and physically and become a worker with both socialist consciousness and culture” (Mao Zedong, 1957/1972, p.165); the 1927 Autumn Harvest Uprising, when he led the Revolutionary Army of Workers and Peasants against the local authorities, before marching to the Jinggang Mountains on the border with Jiangxi Province, where, with Zhu De, he created the Workers’ and Peasants’ Red Army of China.

This was red country, where the land reforms after the 1949 revolution were still remembered by old peasants, sitting smoking ragged cigarettes under the eaves of their houses on land reclaimed from the former landowners; where students and workers flocked in their millions to visit the birthplace of the Great Leader; where bourgeois intellectuals and capitalist roaders were sent during the “Cultural Revolution” to be reformed among the peasants and workers; where Mao Zedong himself used to return to his secret hideout — the Di Shui Dong (滴水洞) (dripping water cave) — in the hills above Shaoshan. Here he was still seen by some as the “Red Sun that never sets”. And in the university dining hall, old cadres with long memories and tenuous links to the university came to eat in their low-collared jackets and caps, eyeing foreign nouveaux-Maoists with suspicion. So much that China has been over the last century has emerged from the thick, red earth of Hunan.

All of this seeped into my mind and body in the late 1980s and changed the way I thought about the relation between academic work, life and politics (and chilli). Those years between 1985 and 1988 were a

time of great learning for me, learning the beauty of Chinese calligraphy, learning a tonal language for the first time, learning about Chinese history and politics, learning about the lives of the peasants who lived on the other side of the wall, learning how drivers and cooks (*shifu*, 师傅) were treated as respected workers rather than as employees. During those years in China I unlearned much of what I had assumed before, becoming more able to see the world through others' eyes, to accept uncertainty, to avoid reducing others to their collective identities (Pennycook, 2012a). There were other influences too; my colleagues, coming from different disciplinary backgrounds in literature and anthropology, gave me books to read by George Steiner (1975) that opened up a whole new world of language and translation, Roland Barthes (1977a), whose work on images and signs opened up new ways of thinking about semiotics, and above all Michel Foucault (1970), whose work has inspired much of my thinking ever since.

Reading Foucault taught me to think otherwise — *penser autrement*, as Foucault (1984) called it — not just to think differently, or to question or critique, but to think in different ways. As Foucault argued towards the end of his life, it becomes indispensable at a certain point to try to think otherwise if we want to continue to think and reflect usefully. If philosophy is to do anything other than continue to rethink the already-thought, we have to ask how and how far we can start to think otherwise. These works and the discussions we had around them pushed me not only towards new bodies of thought but also towards the imperative to think in other ways. And when I reluctantly left Xiangtan University in 1988 — travelling slowly by train via Beijing, Moscow, Warsaw, Paris, London, and eventually to Toronto in Canada — to study for a PhD, there were many ideas buzzing in my head about how we might start to think otherwise about ELT.

In Toronto, several other factors came together to change how I would think about language education. A remarkable group of students (including Sun Yilin, the editor of this book series) converged around the same time in Toronto and together we started to develop a distinctive approach to critical pedagogy (Pennycook, 1990b). Whereas previously I had often kept these two parts of my thinking — a critical view of politics and an interest in applied linguistics and ELT — separate, it started to become clear that they could be put together, that we could develop CAELT as an educational and critical project. Many of the graduate

students who were part of that extraordinary cohort have gone on to produce highly significant work in the field of language education, most notably Bonny Norton's (2000) work on identity, Ryuko Kubota's (2004) on critical multiculturalism, Angel Lin's (2000) work on language and class, their joint work on race and ELT (Lin and Kubota, 2009; Kubota, 2014), Brian Morgan's (1998) work on critical pedagogy.

So what, finally, distinguished this approach to ELT from earlier work? What is a critical approach to ELT? A lot of us were influenced by Roger Simon's (1992) work on critical pedagogy. More broadly, we drew on a way of thinking about language and education that centres on questions of power, class, race and gender. As I discussed in my introduction to a special issue of *TESOL Quarterly* on critical approaches to TESOL (Pennycook, 1999), we can consider this in terms of three main themes which constitute critical approaches to ELT: the domain or area of interest: To what extent do particular domains define a critical approach? A transformative pedagogy: How does the particular approach to education hope to change things? And a self-reflexive stance on critical theory: To what extent does the work constantly question common assumptions, including its own?

Critical domains

A first important aspect of critical work concerns the domain. At the most general, this has to do with attempts to connect the micro-relations of ELT — classrooms, teaching approaches, interactions — with broader social and political relations (and see in particular Pennycook, 2000a for a discussion of this topic). It is not enough, however, simply to draw connections between the micro and the macro. This is typically what an area of work such as sociolinguistics purports to do, but as Williams (1992) suggests, sociolinguistics can only be critical to the extent that it has a critical sociology as part of its make-up; that is to say it needs a form of sociology that aims not merely to describe social formations such as class or gender, but also to critique the ways in which such social formations are linked to questions of power and inequality. Thus, while it might be important to critique work in second language acquisition, for example, because it has tended to locate the process of learning solely in the psychological domain without taking into account the social, economic, cultural, political or physical domains in which language learning takes

place, it is also important that these contexts of learning are dealt with critically.

Typically, therefore, critical work has focused on issues of class, race or gender, where relations of power and inequality are often at their most obvious, both in terms of social or structural inequity — unequal pay, access to jobs and education — and the cultural or ideological frameworks that support such inequity — discrimination, prejudice, beliefs about what is normal, right, or proper. More recently, however, critical work has sought to broaden the scope of such domains, focusing increasingly on areas such as sexuality, ethnicity and representations of “Otherness” while also attempting to explore how these domains are frequently interconnected. This reorientation, therefore, seeks to explore multiple ways in which power may operate in social life; it tries to take on board the complex intersections between different forms of identity; and it shifts the focus away from considering only material conditions of inequality in order to show how culture or discourse may play crucial roles in perpetuating how difference is understood, reproduced or changed.

The first constitutive element of critical work in ELT, then, is an attempt to locate aspects of ELT within a broader, critical view of social and political relations. It is not enough just to try to connect ELT to the world in which it occurs: it is crucial that this is done with a focus on questions of power, inequality, discrimination, resistance, struggle. The collected papers in this book all address such questions in one way or another, with a number, for example, addressing the problems that emerge from the global spread of English (see Pennycook, 1995; 2000b; 2003a). This is of course a central issue for the discussion of topics such as “nonnative” speakers of English, which has become such a central topic in recent times. What starts to emerge then, especially when these articles are taken together, is an intricate patterning of power relationships involving language, gender, sexuality, race, class, ethnicity, popular culture, education, immigration, teaching practices, curriculum development, and so on (Pennycook, 2003b; 2005). The contexts in which ELT occurs are interwoven with these concerns, and these articles seek to explore how a critical understanding of these relationships is crucial for an understanding of the contexts of ELT. The very idea of context is viewed politically.

There are of course objections to such a stance, some suggesting that it is “too political”. Politics, some would say, should stay out of ELT. The counter-argument to this position (and I enlarge on this theme in the

conclusion) is that for a domain that is inevitably political — the global spread of English has its roots in colonialism (Pennycook, 2007b) and owes its current position to the rise of global capitalism and the dominance of the USA — an apolitical stance is the one that should be questioned. The idea of the political here, furthermore, is not one that promotes a particular party or position, but rather one that makes questions of inequality, injustice and discrimination central to the analysis. Again, some might object that this espouses a certain politics, and on this point I will only suggest that those who do not actively oppose inequities are themselves engaging a particular form of politics (what I have elsewhere called “liberal-ostrichism” — burying one’s head in the sand and ignoring the world around; Pennycook, 2001).

Critical approaches to ELT are fundamentally political. This is a very different sense of the critical from the rather bland, apolitical notion of “critical thinking” (Benesch, 2001). Critical approaches to ELT must necessarily take up certain positions and stances: the view of language, literacy or of language learning cannot be an autonomous one that backs away from connecting language to broader political concerns; the understanding of education must be one that sees pedagogy as a question of cultural politics; and the focus on politics must be accountable to broader political and ethical visions that put inequality, oppression and compassion to the fore. At the same time, it is important to avoid a narrow and normative vision of how those politics work. Foucault (1980) suggests that “the problem is not so much one of defining a political ‘position’ (which is to choose from a pre-existing set of possibilities) but to imagine and to bring into being new schemas of politicisation” (p.190). This is one of the crucial challenges for critical approaches to ELT: Rather than mapping a static pre-given politics onto contexts of ELT, this collection of papers is about imagining and bringing into being new schemas of politicisation.

Transformative pedagogies

If a constitutive element of critical approaches to ELT is a focus on the inequitable contexts in which language education takes place, a second element is a pedagogical focus on changing those conditions. This goes to the heart of a key issue in critical work: the questions of reproduction and transformation. Critical analyses of social structure and the ways in which social relations may be culturally or ideologically maintained often tend to

be pessimistic, deterministic and reproductive; that is to say, they tend to suggest that we're all trapped in unequal relations of power (men are more powerful than women, the power of English goes on increasing, racism has always been and will always be part of human life) and that most of what we do simply reproduces those relations. A more useful approach to critical work, and particularly an approach to critical work in education, however, needs to have some vision both of what a preferable state of affairs might be, and how one might start to work towards that. Thus, a second crucial element of a critical approach to ELT is the inclusion of a means of transformation.

But to envisage possibilities of change, we need a way of thinking about how people can act differently. The liberal humanist view of individuals as completely independent, free, creative entities is rightly rejected from a critical standpoint: freedom of thought, movement and speech are always constrained in multiple ways. Yet an all-encompassing view of people as nothing but ideological dupes or discursive ventriloquists (everything we say, do, or think is predetermined by ideologies or discourses) is surely over-deterministic, leaving no possibilities of change or agency. This is one of the toughest conundrums in critical work: How to reconcile degrees of freedom with degrees of constraint? A critical approach to ELT that aims to do more than describe pessimistically what's wrong, and instead suggests possibilities of change, therefore needs a way of suggesting how change might happen.

A common, though by no means unproblematic, argument in critical work is that an initial step in the process of change is awareness. Thus, Norman Fairclough and his colleagues (e.g. 1992) have developed the notion of "critical language awareness" as an essential element of social change. Also significant in this context is Paulo Freire's notion of "conscientization" (e.g. 1970), a cornerstone of his work in critical literacy. A first step in critical work may therefore be seen as the development of awareness of the issues: nothing is going to change unless we know things need to (if it ain't broken, don't fix it). But it is important to consider very carefully what awareness might mean. Work that aims to make people "more aware of their own oppression" can often be pessimistic and patronizing, especially if it is only a top-down attempt to get people to see how they are "oppressed". It is this stance of preacherly modernist-emancipatory pedagogy, of which some critical writers and educators have been accused, that many other teachers, students and readers have come to reject (see

Gore, 1993; Johnston, 1999).

Critical approaches to ELT need to start with students' everyday experiences, as Paulo Freire (1970) always pointed out: his generative word lists for literacy were generative both in the sense that you could generate other words from them and, more importantly, that they had been generated by the communities themselves. I give an account in my article on what I have called the TESOL *praxicum* (Pennycook, 2004a) of how I struggled to reconcile my own critical agenda with the particular perspectives of a student teacher I was observing (the idea of a *praxicum* combines the notion of *praxis* — see below — and a *practicum* or teaching practice). More generally the challenge here is how to develop forms of critical ELT pedagogy that aim to bring about social change, or as Crookes (2013) puts it, a form of critical ELT that focuses on social change, social justice and the development of active engaged citizens through learning English. While Crookes and others focus on issues of social justice and citizenship, my own agenda tends towards a more anarchist position (drawing on a range of thinkers from Zhuang Zhou [庄周] to Mikhail Bakunin, Ivan Illich and the “postanarchist” thought of Michel Foucault and Judith Butler). Indeed, I like to think of the collection of papers gathered in this volume as an *anarchive* of critical approaches to ELT.

A further set of questions for establishing a critical agenda in ELT hinges on whether the central focus is on access or inclusivity, whether one sees one's pedagogical goal primarily as giving marginalised students access to the mainstream by overt pedagogical strategies, or whether one sees it as trying to transform the mainstream by greater emphasis on inclusivity. Drawing on arguments such as Delpit's (1988) that children from African American backgrounds are not helped by well-meaning white liberal pedagogies that back away from overtly teaching the “cultures of power”, and the similar arguments put forward by “genre theorists” in Australia (e.g. Christie, 1996), Hammond and Macken-Horarik (1999) argue that their concern is not so much with the transformation of the social order as with ensuring that children from less privileged backgrounds gain access to powerful linguistic and cultural tools (genres). They argue, therefore, that what is needed to engage in critical literacy is a prior mastery of generic structure, and if we skip that overt instructional process in favour of a general injunction to be critical, we will be doing a disservice to students from disadvantaged backgrounds.

Such “access” models of critical literacy have been developed in

reaction to what are seen as uncritical “student-centred” pedagogies that appear inordinately concerned with the individual, and lacking in any overt instructional processes. There is a particular danger here that the political in education can become subsumed under a rather bland notion of “power-sharing” in the classroom. It is important that notions such as participatory education do not slide into a concern only with a redistribution of power in the classroom. As I have argued with respect to the notion of “learner autonomy” (1997a), if critical work is reduced to “democracy in the classroom” it becomes elided too easily with so-called “student-centred” approaches to teaching, or even “communicative” or “task-based” approaches. Whatever values such pedagogical approaches may have, they cannot be assumed to be in any way critical in themselves. A critical approach to ELT is more than arranging the chairs in a circle and discussing social issues. Thus it is crucial that any participatory approach to education not only looks at questions of power-sharing in the curriculum but also at the broader critical concerns outlined in the previous section.

Critics have suggested that this orientation towards democracy and the individual underlies the centrality of the notion of voice in some forms of critical pedagogy. As Luke (1996) describes it, the “Freirean model theorises ‘empowerment’ as the opening of pedagogical spaces for marginalised peoples to articulate their interests and develop an analysis of the world; ... power is vested phonocentrically in the ‘dangerous memories’ of individual and collective voice” (p.315). This phonocentric idealism can look less like a radical program for transformation and more like a liberal concern with being inclusive, a romanticization of the notion of “voice”. On the other hand, an access model of critical literacy may look far too much like an assimilatory model to help students enter a mainstream that remains unchallenged. As Luke (1996) suggests, this approach operates with an unexamined “logocentric assumption that mastery of powerful text types can lead to intellectual and cognitive development, educational achievement and credentials, and enhanced social access and mobility” (p.315). As Lee (1997) points out, this can amount to a “pedagogy of deferral”: the critical moment is always put off in favour of mastery of certain forms. Thus, according to Luke, both the logocentric “access” model and the phonocentric “voice” model of critical education “tend to presuppose what we might call a ‘hypodermic effect’ of literacy: that their preferred literate practices directly inculcate ‘power’” (p.315).

In practice, of course, most adherents to any “access” model of

education also emphasize the importance of critical readings of texts; and most adherents to a “voice” model acknowledge that students need both the space for their voices to be heard and the possibility of becoming proficient in dominant forms of language and culture. As Dooley and Thangaperumal (2011) show, any good critical approach to education takes into account both the need for students to gain competence in the language and literacy skills they need, as well as the chance to articulate a critical position on their own lives, hopes and desires. As Luke suggests, without an adequate “sociological theory of power, conflict and difference” that can help “account for why and how some discourses, knowledges and texts ‘count’ more than others” (p.312), we have inadequate grounds to justify our pedagogies. This is one reason why, as I argue further in the next section, our pedagogies must also be linked to adequate theories.

A further concern for critical approaches to ELT is the need to engage with questions of difference, whether in terms of inclusivity, issues, or engagement. Inclusivity may be seen as the struggle for diverse representations in classrooms and materials. There has been a long struggle, for example, to counter the normative representations in textbooks of families as White, comprising two happily heterosexual parents with blond male and female offspring, and the wife often looking after household chores while the husband goes out to work. Alongside challenges to the consumerist-oriented content of shopping and international travel, arguments have been made for more representation of single parent families, gay and lesbian parents, people of diverse ethnic backgrounds, and different physical possibilities (Gray, 2010). While such alternative representations may broaden the scope of our classes, and allow for greater possibilities for student identification with texts and roles, if the agenda remains only one of inclusivity, there is a limited set of possibilities for social change.

Turning such questions into “issues” and overtly addressing them in classroom discussions may confront social concerns more overtly. As I discuss elsewhere, however, (Pennycook, 1997b), many classroom discussions focus on a rather timid set of safe “social issues” (the environment, for example, rather than, say, homophobia). Arleen Schenke (1996) points to what she calls “the tired treatment of gender and ‘women’s lib’ in many of our ESL textbooks” (p.156). As Ray Misson (1996) argues with respect to homophobia, and Fazal Rizvi (1993) in the context of racism, to develop anti-homophobic or anti-racist education requires much more than a rational, intellectual explanation of what’s wrong with racism

and homophobia. Rather, what we need is an engagement with people's investment in particular discourses, that is, in questions of *desire*: "Our subscription to certain beliefs is not just a rational or a socially-determined thing, but we invest in them because they conform to the shape of our desires" (Misson, 1996, p.121). While discussion of contemporary social issues may provide a richer content than the bland focus of global textbooks, it may fail to engage with the ways in which student desires are constructed (Motha and Lin, 2014).

This leads us on to questions of engagement, an approach to ELT that sees such issues as gender, race, class, sexuality and so on as so fundamental to identity and language that they need to form the basis of curricular organization and pedagogy. Thus, in place of discussions of issues, Schenke (1996) proposes what she calls a "practice in historical engagement", a focus on "the struggle over histories (and forgetting) in relation to the cultures of English and to the cultures students bring with them to the classroom already-knowing" (p.156). From this point of view, questions of difference, identity and culture are not merely issues to be discussed but are about how we have come to be as we are, how discourses have structured our lives. Questions of gender or race, therefore, make up the underlying rationale for the course. "Feminism," Schenke argues, "like antiracism, is thus not simply one more social issue in ESL but a way of thinking, a way of teaching, and, most importantly, a way of learning" (p.158). Critical approaches to ELT need to engage with the ways in which race and colonialism (Motha, 2014), gender and sexuality (Nelson, 2009) are bound up with language education.

A critical approach to ELT is not about the introduction of a "critical element" into a classroom, but rather is about an attitude, a way of thinking and teaching. Bringing about change in our students is not about the predictable results of "awareness" or "mastery", but about the unpredictable effects of a changed relationship to histories and desires, so critical approaches to ELT need a transformative dimension as well as a critically analytic one. The notion of a critical "approach" to ELT is in no way reducible to teaching techniques, methods or approaches as these are commonly understood within ELT (the notion of method is also critically discussed in various papers, e.g. 1989; 2008a). Neither should it be conflated with notions such as critical thinking: Critical thinking is generally an apolitical approach to developing a sort of questioning attitude in our students; critical approaches to ELT have to do with a political

understanding of the location of pedagogy and the development of a way of teaching aimed at transformation. If critical approaches are to engage with questions of power and difference, they need both theoretical and pedagogical means of doing so, and it is to the role of theory that I turn in the next section.

Critical theory as problematizing practice

Critical approaches to ELT need to be grounded in some form of critical theory. The field of ELT has at times been resistant to theory, a view based on an assumption of the primacy of practice, the importance of experience and the difficulty and irrelevance of theory: The real work is being done in classrooms, and theory is only the empty babble of those with too much time on their hands. Any pedagogical choice, however, implies some kind of theory, and if we are to talk about “empowerment”, knowledge, power, inequality, race, class, gender, sexuality, and so on, it is important that such notions are theoretically grounded. Neither pedagogical practice nor personal experience can be assumed to be unmediated by theoretical standpoints. As Weedon (1987) argues, “rather than turning our backs on theory and taking refuge in experience alone, we should think in terms of transforming both the social relations of knowledge production and the type of knowledge produced” (p.7). In other words, however much critical practice needs to be grounded in local action, critical approaches to ELT also need forms of critical theory that can help inform thinking about social structure, knowledge, politics, the individual or language.

A more useful way forward here than to think in terms of theory and practice, as if these were quite different things (an unfortunate dichotomy that is constantly repeated in ELT) is to consider the notion of *praxis*, a term taken up in the paper on the TESOL *praxicum* (Pennycook, 2004a). Praxis may be understood as the mutually constitutive roles of theory grounded in practice and practice grounded in theory, as a way of thinking about critical work that does not dichotomise theory and practice but rather sees theory as a practice and practice as a theory. The papers in this volume therefore engage with a range of theoretical positions in order to discuss critical approaches to ELT. The Critical Theory that often forms the background to critical work — deriving from neo-Marxist thought and often associated with the Frankfurt School — is, as Dean (1994) suggests,

a form of “critical modernism”, a version of critical theory that tends to critique “modernist narratives in terms of the one-sided, pathological, advance of technocratic or instrumental reason they celebrate” only to offer “an alternative, higher version of rationality” in their place (Dean, 1994, p.3).

This touches on the concerns I have already raised about a form of modernist/emancipatory politics that seeks to make people more aware of the “truth” of their condition: there is a problem if critical theory only offers a rationalist account of social conditions that is supposed to supplant a possibly irrationalist account (an understanding obscured by ideology). If all a critical approach claims to do is to “emancipate” people through a greater awareness of their conditions, this is a critical position that is both arrogant and doomed to failure. As the discussion of engagement in the previous section suggested, a more plausible way forward is through a critical engagement with people’s wishes, desires and histories, a way of thinking that pushes us constantly to question rather than to pontificate. Dean (1994) goes on to propose, in place of “critical theory”, what he calls a “problematizing” practice. This, he suggests, is a critical practice because “it is unwilling to accept the taken-for-granted components of our reality and the ‘official’ accounts of how they came to be the way they are” (p.4). Thus, a crucial component of critical work is always turning a skeptical eye towards assumptions, ideas that have become “naturalized”, notions that are no longer questioned, or, in the words of Dean (1994), “the restive problematization of the given” (p.4).

It is, therefore, critical theory as a problematizing practice for which I want to make a case here, a problematizing practice that questions the role of language or discourse in social life, that asks hard questions about social and cultural categories (race, gender, ethnicity and so on) and how they may relate to language learning, and that constantly problematizes the givens of ELT. A common thread across these papers, then, is thinking in terms of “post” theory — poststructuralism (see for example the paper on discourse; Pennycook, 1994) and postmodernism (see, for example, Pennycook, 2006). Among the key thinkers I draw on, Michel Foucault has always been one I return to. The paper on plagiarism (Pennycook, 1996), for example, derived not only from questions I had started to ask while teaching in Hunan Province and Hong Kong successively, but also from my reading of Michel Foucault (*What is an author?*) and Roland Barthes (*The death of the author*).

Other thinkers, such as Judith Butler and Ted Schatzki, have been very significant for notions such as *performativity* and *practice* (Pennycook, 2010), and for informing new ways of thinking about linguistic resources and multilingualism (Pennycook, 2014). It is this questioning, problematizing stance that has led me to ask many questions about what we mean when we talk about language, particularly English. As I continued to explore the questions I raised in my first book (Pennycook, 1994), I started to ask more and more what it means to talk about English as if we are sure of what the object of our discourse is about. Thus a series of articles started to explore not only the many concerns around the global spread of English in terms of its connections to global inequalities and threats to local languages and forms of knowledge (Pennycook, 1995) but also the ways in which English is understood, the many discourses surrounding English (Pennycook, 2004b; 2007a; 2012b). There is no point in looking at critical approaches to ELT without also asking not only what critical means but also what English means.

A final concern: I am also arguing here for a “self-reflexive” stance on critical theory for several reasons. We need to be constantly careful, lest critical theory comes to play an equally unchallenged role as have the ideas it seeks to challenge. It is important that this does not become a static body of knowledge but rather is always open to question. Part of the notion of problematizing practice, therefore, is the capacity to turn a critical eye on one’s own position. Critical approaches to ELT would do well to retain a constant skepticism, a constant questioning about the types of knowledge, theory and practice they operate with, an awareness “of the limits of knowing” (Spivak, 1993, p.25). And as Canagarajah (1996) has also pointed out, critical research needs not only a focus on a critical domain but also a critical approach to the way it gets written. This is one reason why my paper on the TESOL praxicum (2004a) is written in a somewhat unconventional, narrative style, an approach to writing that I have explored at greater length elsewhere (Pennycook, 2012a).

Conclusion

I hope that the papers in this volume show that critical approaches to ELT matter fundamentally. They offer key insights into important domains of research, possibilities of promoting change through education, and an engagement with domains of theory that are rarely given space in an area

such as ELT. What I have been trying to argue for in this introduction is a vision of critical approaches to ELT that does not see these as simple recipes for implementing certain political agendas, but rather as complex clusters of social, cultural, political and pedagogical concerns. Whether in terms of the domain in which they operate, the pedagogies they use, or the theories they engage, I like to see critical approaches to ELT as always in flux, always questioning, restively problematizing the given, aware of the limits of their own knowing, bringing into being new schemas of politicisation.

In the context of the current global position of English, however, there is perhaps an even stronger case to be made for the crucial role played by teachers of English to speakers of other(ed) languages around the world. Given the global and local contexts and discourses with which English is bound up, all of us involved in ELT might do well to consider our work not merely according to the reductive meanings often attached to labels such as “teaching” and “English”, but rather in terms of being located at the very heart of some of the most crucial educational, cultural and political issues of our time. If we can take up such challenges, we can start to envisage that critical approaches to ELT may become more than just an add-on to standard work in the area. We need to develop critical approaches to ELT, since they can both help us understand in much more complex ways the contexts in which ELT occurs and offer the prospect of change. Critical approaches to ELT may help us deal with some of the most critical issues of our times.

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The Concept of Method, Interest,
Knowledge, and the Politics of
Language Teaching

Section 1

Critical Approaches to Language Pedagogy

Chapter I

The Concept of Method, Interested Knowledge, and the Politics of Language Teaching

This chapter is based on an article that first appeared in 1989 in
TESOL Quarterly, 23(4), 589–618.

It is not uncommon in texts on language teaching to find a discussion of methods prefaced with the phrase “so-called” (e.g., H. D. Brown, 1980, p.240), suggesting a certain skepticism toward this concept. This suspicion can be found amongst academics who have looked closely at the idea of teaching methods and found it wanting, and amongst teachers who feel frustration at being told how to teach, sensing that there is little concordance between what the concept purports to describe and what is actually happening in their classrooms. In particular, many teachers in an EFL context question the usefulness of supposed methods to their own teaching contexts and resent their imposition by “experts” from abroad. And yet, despite this dissatisfaction, the concept of Method continues to be used by many of those involved in teacher education. In this paper, I shall try to show not only why there is very good reason to be skeptical about methods, but also to show that the concept reflects a particular view of the world and is articulated in the interests of unequal power relationships. Of particular concern will be the hierarchical nature of the relationship between academic theorizing and teaching practice, both within and beyond the confines of North American or European life. Second Language Education (SLE) is involved in a complex nexus of social, cultural, economic, and political relationships that involve students, teachers, and theorists in differential positions of power. I hope the following discussion will show that we must view critically all of the standard orthodoxies of TESOL and investigate the interests served by such orthodoxies.

INTERESTED KNOWLEDGE AND THE POLITICS OF SECOND LANGUAGE EDUCATION

Let me start by making two very basic claims that are central to the arguments of this article: First, that all education is political, and second, that all knowledge is “interested.” To say that language teaching is in some sense political would seem uncontroversial since it is clear that many decisions about what gets taught, to whom, how, when, and where, are made at high levels of the political hierarchy. Thus a number of models of factors involved in language teaching reflect the fact that we must always take into account the sociopolitical context of education (see, for example, Mackey, 1970; Strevens, 1977). Here, however, I would like to expand this notion of the political from the narrower concerns of governmental or administrative decision-making to include all societal relationships of power. Thus, what is being argued here is that we should avoid reducing the political either to the liberal emphasis on rules and administration or to the conservative emphasis on politics as a private enterprise in defense of a free-market economy and individualist rights and freedom (Giroux, 1988, p.29). Rather, we must see the political as involving all relationships within a society, as concerned with all the fundamental inequalities, particularly those based in class, race, and gender differences. Among others, Foucault (1980) argues that power is not simply something possessed by the dominant group, nor is it a question of prohibition and punishment; rather, power is coextensive with the social body. Relations of power are interwoven with other kinds of relations for which they play both a conditioned and a conditioning role (p.142).

In this view, education is fundamentally political since it is constantly involved in the (re)production of social and cultural inequalities (both within and between nations), and of particular forms of culture and knowledge. Significantly, in the United States and a number of other Western countries, there has been a retreat from this view of education as political. As Giroux (1983) points out, the move in the early 20th century toward scientific management of the curriculum signaled a move away from viewing the school as a political site. Thus, both the conservative view that overtly described schools as training grounds for promoting obedience, punctuality, silence, and industry, and the more radical views of Dewey and the social reconstructionists, that saw the school as a site of democracy and social change, became submerged under a view of

education as a rational and technical operation. As Giroux (1983) explains:

This philosophical shift in the purpose and function of schooling not only abstracted schools from the context of the wider society, it also ushered in a mode of rationality that relegated the political nature of schooling to the anteroom of educational theory and practice. Citizenship education became entwined in a "culture of positivism," one that displayed little interest in the ways in which schools acted as agents of social and cultural reproduction in a society marked by significant inequities in wealth, power, and privilege. (p.170)

The significance of seeing the school as a site of political struggle lies in the need to recognize that those who wish to deny the political nature of schooling are clearly articulating an ideological position in favor of the status quo. Anyone who holds an alternative view of society must first recognize this before looking at the possibilities for producing change in and through the educational system. Paulo Freire, who has probably done more than any other educator in the service of the disenfranchised, points out the ideological implications in the U.S. of this retreat from the political: "It is necessary to negate the political nature of pedagogy to give the superficial appearance that education serves everyone, thus assuring that it continues to function in the interest of the dominant class" (Freire & Macedo, 1987, p.122).

While my argument thus far has been concerned with the politics of all forms of education, I would suggest that these arguments are especially relevant to second language education, since it is centered around the highly political concept of *a language (langue)* and is bound up in the contentious issues of bilingualism, minority education, and internationalism. Again, some might be willing to admit an element of the political in such "sociolinguistic" areas as language planning, but I would argue that since linguistics is forced to work with a concept that is inherently political, it does not seem unreasonable to suggest that linguistics itself is political. There has, however, been a strong tendency to overlook the political dimensions of the concept of language, ignoring the intimate connections between language and the development of the nation state, and the many implications of distinctions between *language* and *dialect*.

An interesting example of the political implications of the notion of *a language* and *a grammar* can be found in Illich's (1981) account of the presentation of the first Castilian grammar to Queen Isabella at the end of the 15th century. Its author, Nebrija, argued that this new grammar would

be a crucial tool in the colonization both of the subjects already within the kingdom and of those in the new lands being discovered. Of fundamental importance was a standardized language for governance and control of the people, a language which, Nebrija argued, would limit the current diversified reading and allow for much stronger centralized control over books. This and the other European grammars were to play a crucial role in the formation of the modern state and its citizens as they were weaned away from the Church. The notion of *a language* and *a grammar* during this period came to take on immense political significance. As R. Harris (1987) argues, “the European post-Renaissance concept of ‘a language’ was from the outset a political concept, and the ‘grammar of a language’ no less so. To insist on the worldwide imposition of these concepts as providing the only scientific approach to linguistic inquiry is, at the very least, to confuse science with cultural imperialism” (p.1373).

There appears to be a strong parallel, then, between attempts to deal with education and language without acknowledging the political. It is important, therefore, to recognize the ahistorical and apolitical stance taken by many linguists as once again an ideological position. It is dangerous to assume, as does Newmeyer (1986), a connection between structuralism and egalitarianism, since as Mey (1985) argues, concepts of equality and democracy in linguistic analysis can easily become tools of linguistic manipulation:

Abstract considerations of “uniform structures” and general postulates about “equal rights” of dialect speakers can easily lead the way to potentially manipulatory notions about “linguistic democracy” and similar things. ... Linguistic models, no matter how innocent and purely theoretical they may seem to be, not only have distinct economical, social, and political presuppositions, but also consequences. ... The veil of linguistic manipulation that is drawn across the consciousness of the underprivileged can only hide, not abolish, the existing state of social inequality. (p.26)

SLE, then, is inscribed in a complex constellation of educational and linguistic relationships that must be considered in any understanding of the context of language teaching. In the English programs run by the U.S. for refugees in camps in Thailand, the Philippines, and Indonesia before their immigration to the U.S., for example, Tollefson (1988) suggests that there is a covert policy to ensure that immigrants will have enough English to perform adequately in minimum-wage jobs while avoiding any welfare

dependency, yet not enough to move beyond these levels of employment:

The RPCs [Refugee Processing Centers], despite their declared aims, can be expected to continue to limit refugees' improvement in English language proficiency, capacity for cultural adaptation, and preemployment skills, thereby contributing to the covert goal of ensuring that most refugees will only be able to compete effectively for minimum-wage employment. (p.39)

With respect to bilingual education in the U.S., Cummins (1989) argues that the "overwhelmingly consistent pattern" in the research data clearly showing the efficacy of bilingual programs has been consistently ignored because its acknowledgment would "effectively eliminate the psychoeducational legitimization for eradicating minority children's language and culture" (1989, p.88). Thus, the reality of domination over minorities could no longer be obscured by appeal to the rhetoric of equality if it were not for the complicity of academics making recommendations "that are absolutely devoid of empirical evidence and logical coherence" (1989, pp.88-89). Cummins suggests that many academics are involved in a disinformation campaign that helps to maintain the "covert racism and psychological violence to which dominated minority students are still subjected" (1989, pp.127-128) and to preserve the political status quo that is being threatened by the changing demographics with the increasing numbers of Spanish-speaking peoples in the U.S.

A similarly intimate relationship between language, language teaching, and power can be seen in the spread of the English language around the world, or as Phillipson (1988) calls it, "the international linguistic hegemony of English." "Linguicism" (cf. racism, sexism, classism), Phillipson argues, has operated during both the colonial and the neocolonial eras to further increase the dependence and subjugation of the Third World. Cooke (1988) and Judd (1983) see the problems posed by the spread of English to be the loss of indigenous languages and the maintenance of social elites. Other writers have emphasized the cultural content that English brings with it: "The spread of English went parallel with the spread of the culture of international business and technological standardization. From there, the jump towards the standardization of international thought becomes easy to make" (Ndebele, 1987, p.4). As Peirce (1989) argues, we must go beyond views of language as "neutral," since "English, like all other languages, is ... a site of struggle over meaning, access, and power" (p.405). The role of language teaching in this process has received little criticism in the West,

so that “ELT is largely perceived ... as being a technical business which is unconnected with cultural imperialism, linguicism, or the global power structure which maintains the Periphery in a state of dependence on the Centre” (Phillipson, 1988, p.348).

Although this outline of the political in language teaching has been far too brief to give credit to a number of extremely important issues, it has, I hope, suggested the way in which language and language teaching are always inscribed in relations of power, and are therefore political issues. I now turn to the second of the basic issues that frame this discussion: the interested nature of knowledge.

In recent years, a growing number of questions have been raised about the paradigms and ideologies of the social sciences. Doubts have arisen about some of their most basic tenets, especially the predominant positivist (or scientist)¹ orientation, that is the tendency of the social sciences to model themselves after the physical sciences through use of the empirical-analytic approach, thus claiming to arrive at objectivity through the development of standardized, quantitative techniques of analysis. As Popkewitz (1984) suggests, this has led in educational research to the superimposition of technique over theory and therefore to the over-adherence to certain techniques of investigation and the narrowing of the scope of theory. Closely connected to claims that the knowledge thereby produced is neutral and objective has been the removal of the personal and the political from the investigation of human issues. Generally speaking — and these same issues emerged from the preceding discussion of education and linguistics — there has been a tendency to validate only one type of knowledge, to affirm that an ahistorical and apolitical approach is more scientifically sound, and to believe in objectivity (in an objective/subjective dichotomy), in the efficacy of investigative procedures that emphasize quantification and prediction, in the linearly progressive cumulation of knowledge, and in the universal applicability of human rationality.

This position has received strong criticism, however, from a diversity of sources. Critical theorists (e.g., Habermas, 1984; Marcuse, 1964), feminists² (e.g., Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger, & Tarule, 1986; Grimshaw, 1986; Harding, 1986; Keller, 1985; de Lauretis, 1986), Third World writers (e.g., Kothari, 1987; Nandy, 1983), postmodernists (e.g., Hebdige, 1986; Lyotard, 1984), philosophers of science (e.g., Feyerabend, 1988; Kuhn, 1970), anthropologists (e.g., Clifford, 1988), sociologists and philosophers of education (e.g., K. Harris, 1979), and critical pedagogues (e.g., Apple,

1986; Giroux, 1988; Giroux & McLaren, 1989; Simon, 1984, 1987) have all, from their different viewpoints, raised fundamental questions about this view of knowledge: They argue that all knowledge is produced within a particular configuration of social, cultural, economic, political, and historical circumstances and therefore always both reflects and helps to (re)produce those conditions. Furthermore, since all claims to knowledge represent the interests of certain individuals or groups, we must always see knowledge as interested.

These criticisms all address the problems of the dominance of one particular type of knowledge (rational-purposive or scientific-technological), its colonization of other forms of knowledge, and its link to patriarchal, positivist, and progressivist modes of thought. Most important, then, is the need to acknowledge the fact that “all knowledge claims are ‘interested’ and are modes of intelligibility grounded in the struggles, tensions, and inequalities that mark history’s bequest to the present” (Simon, 1984, p.381). As Popkewitz (1984) and Silva and Slaughter (1984) have shown, furthermore, we need to examine carefully the role of social scientists as it has been historically constituted, since an analysis of their relationship to society and political structures suggests that “contemporary American university-based social science tends to support vested political economic interests” (Silva & Slaughter, 1984, p.5). For the purpose of our discussion here, the central issues are the roles of positivism and patriarchy, the claims to universality, objectivity, and truth, and the belief in inherent progress, within the domains of linguistics and applied linguistics. What is being argued, then, is that the fundamental challenges being made to the social sciences (questioning the paradigms of research, the roles of intellectuals, and the nature of the knowledge produced) need to be addressed by applied linguists, since they raise serious doubts about TESOL, especially regarding the relationship between the production of academic knowledge and teaching practice, and between central and peripheral institutions in an international context. A number of areas requiring reexamination suggest themselves: an understanding of education and language as fundamentally political; a recognition of the social, cultural, economic, and political forces that inform the problematics and research paradigms of such areas as second language acquisition (for some suggestive work here, see Bourne, 1988; Nayar, 1989); acknowledgment of the serious implications, both pedagogically and politically, of our current use of such concepts as “communicative competence” (see Bourne, 1988;

and Peirce's [1989] distinction between what is normatively appropriate and what is politically desirable); an understanding of the implications of the current tendency to trivialize content in SLE (see Brumfit, 1985; Mukherjee, 1986); and an examination of the concept of Method (which will be discussed at some length in this paper).

I have argued, then, that we must emphasize the political in SLE and always look critically at the interests involved in the production of different types of knowledge. As suggested in the introduction, these issues need to be examined carefully if any form of reciprocal relationship is to be developed between academics and teachers in the West, and between the West and other parts of the world. Yet herein lies a major problem, for as Clarke and Silberstein (1988) point out with respect to relationships between academics and teachers, and as others (e.g., Altbach, 1981) have indicated concerning international relations in general, rather than a reciprocal relationship, there in fact exists a one-way flow of prescriptivist knowledge. The knowledge produced in the central academic institutions is legitimated through a series of political relationships that privilege it over other possible forms of knowledge. Since my principal concern here is the connection between academics and teachers, in the next section I shall consider in some depth the question of the concept of Method. There are a number of problems with the relationship between the knowledge produced in applied linguistics and that produced through classroom practice — as Gregg (1986) points out, much of second language acquisition theory has been unhelpfully antiteacher — but it is in the area of methods that I feel these issues are in most need of being addressed.

METHODS IN LANGUAGE TEACHING

In this section, I closely examine the concept of Method in language teaching, with a view to showing how the dominance of this notion in the conceptualization of teaching has diminished rather than enhanced our understanding of language teaching. I argue further that we need to investigate the interests served by the construction of this concept. Ideally, it would be useful to attempt a genealogy of Method, but this is clearly beyond the scope of this paper. Nevertheless, some general comments may be useful to set this discussion in a broader context. Feyerabend (e.g., 1988) has examined and criticized at some length what he sees as the modern obsession with Method in the natural sciences, tracing it back to a

Cartesian legacy. His attack on Method focuses principally on the serious consequences that it has in limiting the potential of scientific investigation. Similarly, for political science, Wolin (1972) argues that Method “avoids fundamental criticism and fundamental commitment” and that far from being an innocent, epistemological, neutral idea, it is a “proposal for shaping the mind” (pp.23, 38). It is important, then, that we see the concept of Method as a product of early scientism, an attempt to delineate modes of inquiry and define the problematic. While this tendency to use Method has presumably served a purpose in the investigation of scientific questions, it has also tended to limit the scope of investigation and prescribe the problematic.

With regard to language teaching, Stern (1983) has suggested that there is a “fundamental weakness” in the concept of Method. His suggestion, however, that the “conviction has gradually spread that language teaching cannot be satisfactorily conceptualized in terms of teaching method alone” (p.474) has not been supported in light of the continuing emphasis on methods. Indeed, as Stern himself noted later, in a review of Oiler and Richard-Amato’s (1983) *Methods that Work*, “this century-old obsession” was far from dead: “One of the most extraordinary and in some ways totally unexpected phenomena in the recent history of language teaching has been the ‘method boom’ of the seventies” (Stern, 1985, p.249). He goes on to argue that “the prolonged preoccupation with the new methods, useful as it has been to widen our horizon, is becoming increasingly unproductive and misguided” (p.251). Stern’s hope that the last great method debate (audiolingualism vs. cognitive code) was over seems to have been unrealized, given its central role in TESOL orthodoxy and the extent to which the concept of Method is interested knowledge. It is part of this orthodoxy (see, e.g., H. D. Brown, 1980; Clarke, 1982; Larsen-Freeman, 1986; McArthur, 1983; Richards & Rodgers, 1986) that there has been a series of language teaching methods over the years, each being succeeded by a better one until we reach the present. Here we find (a) the best method (or approach) to date, (b) a proliferation of new and exciting methods from which to choose, and (c) the promise of even better things to come. As I hope to show, however, the epistemological presumptiveness of this orthodoxy has serious consequences for language teaching and is supported neither by a diachronic nor synchronic analysis of language teaching. As I suggested earlier, positivist and progressivist thought naturally tends to exclude or to make a very particular reading of history,

and so it is to a historical overview that we shall now turn.

In the preface to his history of language teaching, Kelly (1969) suggests that “nobody really knows what is new or old in present-day language teaching procedures. There has been a vague feeling that modern experts have spent their time in discovering what other men [*sic*] have forgotten” (p.ix). One thing that emerges from Kelly’s comprehensive study is a pattern of cyclical change: The Classical, Renaissance, and Modern periods have been marked by an emphasis on oral communication, while the Middle Ages and Enlightenment placed much more emphasis on analysis of the written text. This cyclic revolution, Kelly argues, is largely based on “alternation between the social and philosophical aims of language teaching with the literary aim acting as a balance” (p.399). It becomes evident that the goals and therefore the procedures of language teaching closely reflect the social, political, cultural, and intellectual climate of the times. The entrenchment of learning in the monastery of the Middle Ages, with the goal of preserving Latin as the language of religion and scholarship, clearly led to a strong emphasis on the text and its analysis. The sudden influx of new ideas and spread of European scholarship during the Renaissance brought about a swing toward a much more oral-based approach. The Enlightenment emphasis on rational thought and coherent theorizing brought about an increased emphasis on formal and rule-based study that appears to have coexisted with other forms until a strong drive at the end of the 19th century once again moved the spoken language to the fore.

Lambley’s (1920) study of the teaching of French in England during Tudor and Stuart times clearly demonstrates how the language taught and the nature of the teaching were affected by sociopolitical changes. In the 15th century, “fluency in speaking French was the chief need of the classes of society in which the demand for instruction was greatest. Correctness in detail was only of secondary importance, and grammar, though desirable, was not considered indispensable” (pp.27–28). Texts from this period contained dialogues for giving directions, obtaining lodging at inns, and buying and selling goods; they were clearly aimed at providing functional oral skills for merchants (some also included models for writing letters, bills, and other such documents). This pragmatic orientation is clearly spelled out by Caxton in an introduction to a text he published around 1483: “Who this booke shall wylle lerne/May well enterprise/Marchandise fro one land to another,/And to know many wares/Which to him shall be good to be bought/Or sold for rich to become” (cited in Lambley, 1920, p.43).

French in the Tudor period, although needed particularly by courtiers and merchants, was also used by travelers and soldiers. The Counter Reformation in late 16th century France brought, on the one hand, a body of native-speaker teachers to England and, on the other, created a need for instruction in English as a second language (Howatt, 1983). In the English teaching of this period, the use of dialogues and situational teaching were common, and Lambley shows that many of the issues debated today were also hotly argued in the late 16th and early 17th centuries: rule-based learning as opposed to learning through practice, formal study as opposed to informal use.

What is most striking in these histories is the constant recurrence of the same teaching techniques and debates about teaching. Arguments for the inductive teaching of grammar, for example, were made by Saint Augustine in the 4th century, Francis Bacon in the 17th century, and Henry Sweet in the early 19th century (Kelly, 1969, pp.35–38; Howatt, 1984b, p.280). In 1415, a treatise entitled *Femina* argued that teaching should follow the natural model provided by mothers with their children (Lambley, 1920), an argument that constantly reappears over the centuries (Kelly, 1969, pp.34–43). Substitution tables, realia, language games, dialogues, and many other parts of the modern scene have been around for centuries. Kelly (1969) concludes that the “total corpus of ideas accessible to language teachers has not changed basically in 2,000 years” (p.363). A slightly more detailed look at the teaching principles advocated by Comenius (1592–1670) should illustrate this point more clearly.³

Not only are the enlightened views of Comenius’ general educational principles — such as universal education and intercurricular teaching — familiar points of educational debate today, but so too are many of his more practical suggestions. In the “sensory principle,” for example, Comenius chides teachers for lecturing too much rather than letting children learn through the direct experience of their senses. The presentation of each new object must be linked to the appropriate sense: As he wrote in 1651, “In our school we follow the rule that everything one needs to know about things should be taught with the help of the things themselves, that is to say that as far as possible, the real objects or pictures of them should be presented so that they can be seen, touched, heard, tasted, etc.” (Caravolas, 1984, p.88). He continually stresses the dictum “you learn by doing” (p.220). His “pleasure principle” stresses the importance of affect, of motivation, and of interesting activity in the classroom. Classrooms, he suggests,

should be “workshops full of ardent activity” (p.94). He outlines seven principles to improve student motivation: (a) The teacher should be lively and interesting, (b) presentations should be brief, (c) examples should be concrete, (d) students should always be active, (e) activities must be useful and relevant, (f) there should be variety in every class, and (g) games should be used. Other suggestions included students working together and sometimes taking the role of the teacher; the integration of language teaching with other parts of the curriculum as part of an interdisciplinary approach; and the use of dialogues and role plays or sketches in language teaching. Clearly, many of these ideas would find support today, especially the emphasis on experiential learning, inductive presentation, motivational techniques, and the use of games and role plays.

It seems evident from these historical surveys that while there certainly are trends and shifts in language teaching, these tend to be a reordering of the same basic options, and to reflect the social, cultural, political, and philosophical environment. This view does not emerge in many discussions of language teaching; overlooked is the fact that much is not as new as is claimed. On this process of forgetting, Caravolas (1984) has this to say: “It should be recognized that this forgetfulness is not always innocent. These days language teaching has become a colossal enterprise which, like any other industry, defends both its overt and covert interests by any means possible, in the name of profit and glory” (p.210). Despite the clear implications of the historical works cited, the reading of history by a number of other authors is quite different and appears to support quite different interests.

Other historical surveys tend not to present the cyclical nature of change that Kelly outlines, preferring a much more linear model. While Titone (1968, pp.1–2) acknowledges that the “so-called ‘traditional method’” in language teaching is neither traditional nor classical but very recent, he goes on to describe the period of its use (dating from the beginning of the 19th century) as a “*deviation* [emphasis added] in teaching method.” He then argues that “this deviation can most probably be explained by the inevitable lack of linguistic and psychological knowledge on the part of the language teachers in those days; and the traditional inertia or routine-addiction of the school practitioners, who did not care for change or improvement of their teaching habits.” This is clearly a very different argument from the ones discussed earlier: Titone is suggesting that there is a definite direction in which language teaching has progressed,

apart from the unfortunate deviation. Interestingly, for Titone writing in the mid-1960s, this progress had led to the development of audiolingualism, a proposition at which the modern reader can warily smile, secure in the knowledge that true progress has in fact led to communicative language teaching, audiolingualism being but a slight deviation from that true path. Titone, then, makes a clearly positivist and progressivist argument: We have continued to make progress in a cumulative fashion toward the present day by the application of scientific principles to teaching.

While making passing reference to the work of Kelly and others, the historical introduction to Richards and Rodgers' (1986) influential book⁴ on methods reflects the positivist and progressivist work of Titone far more than it does a historicist orientation. Thus, a historical view emerges suggesting that although oral approaches were originally employed with Latin, these changed once Latin was no longer used as a language of communication. This, in turn, affected the approach toward teaching modern languages until the 19th century, when these deviations were overcome and the reinstatement of the primacy of the oral over the written led to the opening up of the modern era. Richards and Rodgers (1986) are then able to contrast the older approaches in which "tradition was for many years the guiding principle" (p.14) with the modern era in which there is a "principled approach to language teaching, one based on a scientific approach to the study of language and of language learning" (p.8).

It is clear that the histories that are supportive of the concept of Method also support a historical view that suggests linear development over time, development which has resulted principally from scientific advance, and a view that is therefore clearly supportive of the position of the social scientist/applied linguist. That is to say, these fundamentally ahistorical readings of history and texts rely on a view of knowledge that validates the position of positivist applied linguistics over other forms of possible knowledge. Furthermore, looking in more depth at the claims made by adherents to the concept of Method, it is tempting to conclude with Clarke (1983) that "the term 'method' is a label without substance" (p.109). There are three important aspects to this: First, there is little agreement as to which methods existed when, and in what order; second, there is little agreement and conceptual coherence to the terms used; and third, there is little evidence that methods ever reflected classroom reality.

H. D. Brown (1980) suggests that there has been a new (Kuhnian) paradigm every 25 years of this century, "with each new paradigm a break

from the old but taking with it positive aspects of previous paradigms" (p.244).⁵ Thus, according to Brown, we have had the Direct Method, the Grammar-Translation Method, the Audiolingual Method, and now have available the Interpersonal Approaches (which include the "new methods": Community Language Learning, the Silent Way, Suggestopedia, and Total Physical Response [TPR]). Clarke (1982), somewhat hesitantly, also offers four methods: Grammar/Translation, Structural/Audiolingual, Interactional/Humanistic, and Notional/Functional. According to McArthur (1983), there have been five: Grammar-Translation, Direct, Structural, Situational, and Communicative. Stern (1983) hesitantly suggests seven; Larsen-Freeman (1986) and Richards and Rodgers (1986) propose eight. On these last three lists citing seven or eight methods, only Audiolingualism appears on all three. Stern alone mentions the Reading and Audiovisual Methods, and Cognitive Theory (as a method). What, too, are we to make of Brown's reversal of the more usual sequence by placing Grammar-Translation after the Direct Method?

Regarding the second issue, that there is little agreement and conceptual coherence to the terms used, two principal attempts to provide conceptual cohesion to the field have been made by Anthony (1963) and Richards and Rodgers (1982,1986). Anthony (1963) made a three-part distinction among *approach*, *method*, and *technique*, while Richards and Rodgers (1982) tried to clarify and expand these categories by subsuming *approach*, *design*, and *procedure* under the umbrella term *method*. Reading Richards and Rodgers (1986), however, one is struck by a feeling of strain at attempts to fit disparate concepts into their framework. In many instances, their attempts to demonstrate conceptual unity for methods do not seem justifiable. In their first description, for example, that of the Oral Approach and Situational Language Teaching, we are told that the linguistic theory behind this is "a type of British 'structuralism'," apparently embracing Halliday's work, and that the theory of learning is "a type of behaviorist habit-learning theory" (p.35). If the concept of Method assumes coherent theories of language and of learning, surely these descriptions provide inadequate support. The examples used are also inconsistent; in the introduction to one of the books (Alexander, 1967) listed by Richards and Rodgers as apparently situational, the author himself comments on "situational teaching":

In this method, little structural grading is possible. The situation takes precedence over the structures. The patterns that are included arise naturally

out of the situation itself: they have a thematic significance rather than a structural one. *This system has serious drawbacks* [emphasis added]. The dialogues which the student hears are refreshingly natural, but the teaching of basic patterns inevitably becomes much less controlled. (p.xiii)

Alexander furthermore insists on strict adherence to the axioms common to the audiolingual era: “Nothing should be spoken before it has been heard; nothing should be read before it has been spoken; nothing should be written before it has been read” (p.xii). Again, claims to coherency dissolve under close scrutiny.

Among the so-called methods, audiolingualism appears to provide the best example of coherence;⁶ there are, nevertheless, a number of reasons to question this. Writing in the early 1960s — at the apparent height of audiolingualism — Mackey (1965) lists 15 methods, one of which, the Mimicry-Memorization Method, he tells us, is also known as the Audiolingual Method. For Mackey at least, it seems that it was not so clear that this method predominated at the time.⁷ Bazan (1964), in a strong criticism of the assertions of the time, which, she suggests, “cannot claim any status other than that of assumptions” (p.337), questions not only the claims to empirical validity, but also the fact that this “new methodology” was indeed new, since it bore so many resemblances to previous oral-based approaches. Howatt (1984a) questions the commonly held tenet that the Michigan Oral Approach, out of which audiolingualism is said to have grown, was based on behaviorism. He argues that Fries never mentioned psychology in his earlier papers and that behaviorism was, in fact, rather more complex than the common-sense notions of repetition and practice.

Further confusion surrounds the linguistic base. While it seems reasonable to state that language teaching in North America used structuralist grammars in the 1950s and 1960s, it is surely erroneous to suggest, as do Richards and Rodgers (1986), that “Chomsky rejected the structuralist approach to language description” (p.59). Undoubtedly, Chomsky’s famous attack on Skinner’s work (Chomsky, 1959) marked an important point in linguistic and psychological theory, but his approach to linguistics is surely structuralism *par excellence*. What he rejected were certain particularities of North American structuralism, especially the empiricist method of investigation, in favor of a more rationalist approach. But the claim that the “Chomskyan Revolution” marked the end of structuralism appears to be another myth that has been repeatedly used to demonstrate a positive leap forward in the

progressive path of language teaching.

For a time — and especially before the emergence of *communication* as a term around which a new claim to Method could be built — it was argued that the Audiolingual Method had been replaced by the Cognitive Code Method based on rationalist/deductive procedures and transformational grammar. Looking at Carroll's (1966) paper, usually cited as documenting this change, however, the situation becomes far less clear. Carroll calls "cognitive code learning theory" a "modified, up-to-date grammar-translation theory," and also suggests that "in practice, of course, some teachers act as if they believed in both of these theories, appealing to one of them for some of their teaching procedures and to the other for different aspects" (p.102). What seems ultimately to be implied is that the age-old debate between what Howatt (1984a) calls the "rational" and "natural" approaches to language teaching, or what Rivers (1981, pp.25–27) calls "formalism" and "activism," was indeed alive and well in the 1960s, as it had been for the past 2000 years.

Of course, the hardest orthodoxy to dislodge is that which suggests that what we are doing today is significantly different from all that has gone before. Raimes (1983), however, suggests that the belief in change is frequently founded on superficial views: "All too often scholars look at classroom methodology rather than the underlying intellectual assumptions which generate methods" (p.538). Examining orientations to teaching in the early 1980s, she concludes that "the current emphasis on communication has ... been absorbed neatly into our positivist traditional framework. Far from superceding tradition, it has been assimilated into it" (Raimes, 1983, p.545; see also Swan, 1985). Clarke (1982) also expresses doubts about many of the apparent changes that are claimed to have occurred in language teaching, warning us of the "tyranny of bandwagons" which "effectively constrains professional thought and debate" (p.445). Horowitz (1986) has also recently drawn attention to the problems of designating new methods, approaches, or techniques. He suggests that there is in fact far less than is being claimed to "process writing," which he describes as one of the new buzzwords of TESOL, "the 'communicative competence' of the mid-1980s" (p.141).

Richards and Rodgers (1986) in fact suggest that "communicative language teaching is best considered an approach rather than a method" (p.83) since, despite some theoretical consistency, design and procedure are fairly open to interpretation. Similarly, H. D. Brown (1980, p.240) shows

some general discomfort with the Method concept: “the term *approach* may be more accurately descriptive of these general moods.” He argues that the “Audiolingual Method, for example, would be better termed an approach because there is such variation within the so-called method.” I would also suggest that the Direct Method, which according to Stern (1983) is characterized by the “use of the target language as a means of instruction and communication in the classroom” (p.456), is an equally general orientation or approach. This does not leave much else with the status of Method other than the “so-called new methods” (Richards & Rodgers, 1986). If we examine Larsen-Freeman’s (1986) description of these so-called methods, however, her examples all occur on the opening day of a beginning class (see van Lier, 1987), suggesting they are of a very different order from the other approaches, for which a much greater variety of examples is given. The “new methods” seem to reduce to a constellation of techniques, which is not to say there is nothing valuable to be gained from them. The other methods seem to expand out to broad educational orientations. As regards the conceptual coherence of methods and attempts to better define them, it is worth concluding by quoting Clarke (1983) at some length:

I contend that our traditional three-part distinction of approach, method and technique — as commonly interpreted — is inadequate. Approach, by limiting our perspective of language learning and teaching, serves as a blinder which hampers, rather than encourages, professional growth. Method is so vague that it means just about anything that anyone wants it to mean, with the result that, in fact, it means nothing. And technique, by giving the impression that teaching activities can be understood as abstractions separate from the context in which they occur, obscures the fact that classroom practice is a dynamic interaction of diverse systems. (p.111)

It would seem, then, that despite attempts to clarify the Method concept and to use it analytically, serious doubts exist about its conceptual validity. The third and extremely important doubt exists about whether the claims made in the literature as to the predominance of a certain method at a certain time ever reflected what was actually happening in classrooms. Studies conducted to test the relative efficacies of methods (e.g., Scherer & Wertheimer, 1964; Smith, 1970) remained largely inconclusive, in part because they lacked any element of classroom observation, relying simply on pre- and posttesting. Since, as has been argued, the category of Method

is conceptually weak, any study that claims that teachers are adhering to a certain method, without rigorous definition of that method and classroom observation, is ultimately of little value. More recent studies that have included classroom observation (e.g., Fröhlich, Spada, & Allen, 1985; Long & Sato, 1983) have begun suggesting that there is far less concordance than expected among what teachers claim to be doing, what researchers anticipate to be happening, and what actually appears to be occurring in classes.

While a number of writers, such as Rivers (1981), have emphasized eclecticism in language teaching, suggesting that teachers in fact pick and choose from different methods, this idea, as Stern (1983) points out, still has the serious drawback of implying the conceptual unity of methods (even if teachers do not adhere to them). A clearer understanding of the situation, then, suggests that teachers make a whole series of decisions about teaching based on their own educational experiences, their personalities, their particular institutional, social, cultural, and political circumstances, their understanding of their particular students' collective and individual needs, and so on. Any relationship between these decisions and theories about pedagogy and language learning are highly complex and need to be studied without the use of *a priori* categories, especially when those categories are as clumsy and unspecific as are methods. As any teacher who has taught through any of the alleged upheavals over Method can testify, there is a remarkable disparity between, on the one hand, the dictates of "experts" and teaching textbooks, and on the other, actual classroom practice. This suggests a close relationship between academic thought and textbook publication, but little between these and the knowledge produced by teachers in their daily practice.

Despite the inherent weakness of the concept of Method, extravagant claims have at times been made for different methods. An example of this can clearly be seen in Krashen's use of Asher's evaluation of TPR. Krashen (1982, p.155) claims that "Asher has done a thorough job in putting his method to the empirical test," in which, comparing TPR students to a control group following a "standard" course, he "reported that after only 32 hours of TPR instruction, TPR students outperformed controls, who had had 150 hours of class time, in a test of listening comprehension, and equaled controls in tests of reading and writing. Asher's students progressed nearly five times faster!" Krashen then argues that this provides sound empirical proof that "methods that provide more of the

input necessary for acquisition, and that ‘put grammar in its place,’ are superior to older approaches.” As Beretta (1986) points out, however, there are serious problems both with the evaluation itself, since TPR teaching materials were used as test materials for both experimental and control groups, and with Krashen’s interpretation of the evaluation, since Krashen’s implication that TPR students *equaled* controls who had received 150 hours of instruction on a test of reading and writing is “simply not the case” (1986, p.433).

Krashen’s position can be understood more clearly if we look at this work from the point of view of interested knowledge: Namely that he works within a positivist framework that claims such work is objective; his own beliefs strongly support a view of this type of teaching technique as superior to others; and he has committed himself to these ideas by coauthoring another “method,” the Natural Approach (Krashen & Terrell, 1983). While Krashen and Terrell acknowledge their indebtedness to the earlier Natural Method — “the approach we will present in this book is in many ways the natural, direct method rediscovered” (1983, p.17) — their brief historical overview is similar to Titone’s (1968); they argue that the earlier Natural Method was indeed a positive move away from the long adherence to the misguided Grammar-Translation Method. Their strongest arguments to support their approach, however, rest on their claims to rigorous scientific backing, that the Natural Approach (unlike the Natural Method) is “based on an empirically grounded theory of second language acquisition, which has been supported by a large number of scientific studies in a wide variety of language acquisition and learning contexts” (1983, p.1). Interestingly, comments on this method are divided along the lines we observed previously between the progressivists (Method supporters) and the historicists. Thus, while Richards and Rogers (1986) go to some lengths to outline the differences between Krashen and Terrell’s Natural Approach and the 19th century Natural Method, Howatt (1984b, p.281) skeptically makes the following comparison, commenting that “the similarity [of Sauveur’s Natural Method] to Krashen and Terrell’s ‘Natural Approach’ goes beyond the almost identical labels”:

Let us count the fingers: one, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, ten. We have ten fingers. I have ten fingers; you have ten fingers, mademoiselle. How many fingers have you, madame? (I have ten fingers). And you, monsieur? (And I also). And George? (And George also). Do you see the ten fingers? (Yes).

Let us count the fingers together. (Sauveur, 1874, p.11)

Let us count the number of students with blue eyes. One, two, three, four ... Are there any others? (Jim). Oh, of course, we can't forget Jim. Yes, he has blue eyes. Now, who has brown eyes? Does Martha have brown eyes? (Yes). And what color is her hair? (Brown). Is it light brown or dark brown? (Light). Is she wearing a dress today? (No). A skirt? (Yes). What color is the skirt? (Blue). Yes, it's a blue skirt with white stripes. (Krashen & Terrell, 1983, p.81)

Once again, recourse to historical information starts to erode the claims made by academics in the name of modernism, positivism, progress, and objectivity. Let us, therefore, return to the historicist position and leave the last word of this section to Kelly (1969): "That the expert in language teaching acts with the purity of motive and design expected from a scientist is demonstrably untrue. Discoveries are filtered by social and educational needs, and what suits the circumstances is what is considered proved" (p.407).

KNOWLEDGE, TEXTS, TEACHERS, AND POWER

The construction of the Method concept in language teaching has been a typical example of the attempt to validate current forms of knowledge at the expense of past forms. While it is clear that language teaching has undergone many transformations over the centuries, a thorough examination of the past suggests that these changes have represented different configurations of the same basic options rather than some linear, additive progress toward the present day, and that these changes are due principally to shifts in the social, cultural, political, and philosophical climate. The Method construct that has been the predominant paradigm used to conceptualize teaching not only fails to account adequately for these historical conditions, but also is conceptually inconsistent, conflating categories and types at all levels and failing to demonstrate intellectual rigor. It is also highly questionable whether so-called methods ever reflected what was actually going on in classrooms.

Serious implications arise from this deconstruction of the Method concept, implications which go far beyond the reassessment of an academic issue. Put another way, if the argument has been that all knowledge is interested, we may indeed want to ask what interests are served by particular forms of knowledge. It is therefore important both to understand

the construction of the Method concept within an apolitical, ahistorical, positivist, and progressivist orientation to education, and to investigate the *effects* of the production of that knowledge. This knowledge, then, should be seen within its political context and, more specifically, in its relationship to the political economy of textbook publishing, the hierarchical nature of knowledge production, the gendered issue of teaching practice, and educational imperialism in the teaching of English as an international language.

As I think has been convincingly shown in the previous section, the Method concept is ultimately *prescriptive* rather than *descriptive*. Rather than analyzing what is happening in language classrooms, it is a prescription for classroom behavior. This relationship has been clearly noted by Clarke and Silberstein (1988): "Prescriptions are implicit in virtually all discussions of the relationship between theory and practice" (p.685). What this immediately suggests is a troubling relationship in which methods serve the advancement of academic careers and limit the practice of teachers. When we look at the question of what knowledge is legitimated in schools, it is essential, as Apple's work (e.g., 1986) has cogently demonstrated, that we look at the political economy of textbook publishing. Although this question of knowledge or "content" is an important one, especially as regards the trivialization of content endemic to SLE, it is not an issue with which I shall deal here. The significance of looking at the political economy of textbooks for the discussion here lies in establishing that the definition and academic legitimation of methods is clearly beneficial to the publishing industry. As Richards (1984) argues, "The terms *notional-functional* and *communicative* sell. Many an underpaid academic has consequently succumbed to attractive offers to lightly work over an audiolingual or structural course so that it can be published in a new edition bearing a notional-functional or communicative label" (p.14). The obvious commercial benefits for publishers deriving from methods, the support given for methods by universities and their journals (the example of the involvement of the University of Michigan and its journal, *Language Learning*, in promoting Audiolingualism is significant here), and the pushing of methods through institutions such as the British Council or Berlitz all suggest important political, economic, and ideological reasons for the growth and maintenance of the Method concept.

Defense Department funding for structuralist linguistics and audiolingualism is a strong example of this. Newmeyer (1986) supplies

a telling quotation from Mortimer Graves, the executive secretary of the American Council of Learned Societies, a major source of research funding, who in 1950 argued that

ideological World War III has started and there is no certainty that it is well won yet. In spite of the fact that this is a war for men's [*sic*] minds, there exist no Joint Chiefs of Staff planning such a war, no war production authority concerning itself with material for such a war. These questions are by and large, in our society, left to the private initiative of the type that one sees in the Georgetown Institute of Languages and Linguistics.

In this war for men's [*sic*] minds, obviously the big guns of our armament is [*sic*] competence in languages and linguistics. (p.56)

Another aspect of the "interest" in Method may be seen in the context of the gradual de-skilling of the teacher's role. As Apple (1986) and Giroux (1988) argue, the rise of scientism and the social efficiency movement in the 1920s, the use of management systems in curricula, the development of behavioral objectives, the increasing state intervention in schools, the development of "teacher-proof" materials and prespecified teaching procedures, and the recent moves, especially in the U.K. and U.S., toward more centralized curricula, have led to a de-skilling of the role of teachers and greater institutional control over classroom practice. While this is a significantly troubling observation in itself, there is a further dimension that Apple (1986), in particular, has emphasized: We cannot understand the nature of and reasons for that control unless we understand *who* is controlling and who is teaching, namely "the state, in concert with capital and a largely male academic body of consultants and developers, intervening at the level of practice into the work of a largely female workforce" (1986, pp.36–37). If this is true in education in general, it is surely even more so in SLE, where, as G. Brown has recently observed, "the people at the top tend to be men, whereas the people who do most of the day-to-day teaching work tend to be women" (see "Sitting on a Rocket," 1989, p.171). Thus, as Apple (1986) goes on, "This is not only the history of the control of state employees to bring about efficient teaching, but a rearticulation of the dynamics of patriarchy and class in one site, the school" (p.40). What I am suggesting is that the Method concept has played a major role in maintaining the gendered division of the workforce, a hierarchically organized division between male conceptualizers and female practitioners.⁸

The same unequal relationship is played out in the international context. A recent study by Burnaby and Sun (1989) suggests that we must examine

the teaching context very carefully before promoting communicative approaches, since they may be inappropriate for a number of reasons. Education is always socioculturally embedded; as Hall (1986) argues, "A lifetime's experience has convinced me that no society and no culture should force its educational system on another" (p.168). Yet, given the unequal power relationships that exist between central and peripheral countries, and the "discourse of development" (Escobar, 1984, p.378) within which much contact occurs, it is exactly the type of epistemological presumptiveness of the Method concept that allows such impositions to occur.

Sampson (1984) outlines three major problems in the export of Canadian language teaching methods to China: The first stems from the "fallacy of the unidimensionality of development," i.e., the fallacy that *everything* exported from "developed" to "developing" countries is advanced. The second stems from a "confusion between scientific and educational theories," i.e., extending positivism to educational theory. The third stems from "technocratic imperialism," i.e., the export of supposedly value-free intellectual goods. These attitudes, along with the status accorded foreign teachers abroad, causes considerable conflict: "Perhaps because foreign teachers are referred to as 'experts' in China, some think they are the only ones who possess teaching expertise" (Wu, 1983, p.15). Many Western teachers abroad blithely assume the superiority of their methods. When we consider that, as I have argued, these methods are such loose constellations of techniques that they have little coherence, it suggests that Western teachers and teacher trainers frequently promote whatever techniques they happen to prefer, while supporting their views by recourse to the Method concept and its supposedly scientific and advanced backing. Furthermore, teachers from those countries who have studied in the prestigious institutions in the West and, despite misgivings, have imbibed the TESOL orthodoxies, are faced, on their return, with the serious problem of the contradiction between the need to validate themselves and their newly gained knowledge, and the feeling that it is nevertheless largely inappropriate.⁹

CONCLUSION

I have argued that we must see all knowledge claims as interested, that is to say, that knowledge is socially constructed, represents particular ways of understanding and explaining the world, and, since it therefore

always reflects the interests of certain individuals or groups, is inevitably inscribed in relationships of power. While this view of knowledge has prompted inquiry in a number of areas of the social sciences, it has done little so far to challenge the positivist and progressivist orthodoxies of linguistics and applied linguistics. Since language teaching, and especially English language teaching, has become such a vast concern, it is imperative that we respond to these challenges to the predominant modes of thinking by reexamining some of our most basic beliefs about the nature of language and language teaching and about the ways in which such questions should be investigated. This is of critical importance, I believe, not merely in terms of theoretical questions concerning conceptual paradigms in language teaching, but, far more importantly, with respect to fundamental questions about the shaping forces of our thought and the interests that those shapings serve. The power of the Western male academy in defining and prescribing concepts — whether it be SLA theory (see Nayar, 1989), methods, or any other area of the canon of TESOL orthodoxy — articulates a positivist, progressivist, and patriarchal view that plays an important role in maintaining inequities between, on the one hand, predominantly male academics and, on the other, female teachers and language classrooms on the international power periphery.

For all of us, it is crucial that we see the social and political roles we play and the social and political implications of the theoretical paradigms that inform our work. At a time when all education is threatened by the conservative drive toward standardized curricula, and a move “back to basics,” a move which threatens all openness and diversity in education and ignores questions of class, race, or gender difference, a move which threatens finally to render the teacher as nothing but a technician trained to transmit a fixed canon of knowledge, it is essential that teachers start to oppose those forms of knowledge that are being thrust upon them under the guise of scientific objectivity. As I have argued, Method is one such concept: An analysis of both the history and the present state of language teaching suggests that it has little conceptual validity and yet is a construct central to many teacher education programs, constantly used to legitimate various educational practices as if they were the newest development in a long line of scientific improvement dating back to the last century.

What is needed is perhaps encapsulated in Giroux’s concept of the teacher as “transformative intellectual.” This means seeing ourselves “as professionals who are able and willing to reflect upon the ideological

principles that inform [our] practice, who connect pedagogical theory and practice to wider social issues, and who work together to share ideas, exercise power over the conditions of [our] labor, and embody in [our] teaching a vision of a better and more humane life" (Giroux & McLaren, 1989, p.xxiii). This definition should, of course, include academics as transformative intellectuals; reciprocal relationships can indeed be developed, and we should either see practice and theory as informing each other, or, better still, do away with this distinction all together. Rather than opting for "reductionist descriptions which are easier to understand but which, by definition, are incomplete and inaccurate" (Clarke, 1983, p.107), rather than trying to understand our practice according to some form of totalizing or universal discourse, we need to recognize the complexities of language teaching and its contexts, and strive to validate other, local forms of knowledge about language and teaching.

Notes

1. For a discussion of these terms, see Williams (1976).
2. These categories are not, of course, mutually exclusive. One may be both a feminist and philosopher of science, or both a Third World writer and an anthropologist, for example. This list is also but a tiny selection of these areas of work.
3. The following section on Comenius is based principally on Caravolas (1984). The translations from the French are my own.
4. Its popularity is evidenced by its inclusion in a number of applied linguists' "top ten" books (H. Douglas Brown, Elliot Judd, Joan Morley, Peter Strevens); see Haskell (1987).
5. As one would expect from the foregoing discussion, I take issue with this progressivist description. I would also suggest that this is not quite what Kuhn intended by the concept of *paradigm shift*. In the second edition of his book, H. D. Brown (1987) lays more emphasis on the cyclical nature of change.
6. Indeed, it might be argued that much of the development of the concept of Method was based on the fact that this one period seems to have been fairly homogeneous: Historical commentary since has tried to create a myth of homogeneity for other periods both before and after audiolingualism.
7. It should be observed that Mackey, like Stern, has little faith in the concept of Method. His important work (1965), along with that of Halliday, McIntosh, and Strevens (1964) and the two smaller works by Bosco and Di Pietro (1970) and Krashen and Seliger (1975), all attempt to construct analytic schemata that overcome the limitations of Method.
8. I would like to thank an anonymous *TESOL Quarterly* reviewer for helping me see

the full implications of this point.

9. I do not want to suggest, however, that the largely female workforce, teachers in other countries, or these returned teachers unquestioningly accept these dogmas. There is certainly constant resistance, which in part accounts for the disparity between academics' claims and classroom realities.

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Chapter 2

Critical Pedagogy and Second Language Education

This chapter is based on an article that first appeared in 1990 in *System*, 18(3), 303–314.

If we were to ask a selection of language teachers and applied linguists to identify the questions of principal concern to them, I think we would arrive at a list something along the lines of the following:

What is the relationship between conscious and subconscious learning, and which is more important?

Is there a “logical problem” in second language acquisition that the outcome cannot be explained in terms of the input?

What is the effect on learning of affective and cognitive factors?

What is the relationship between input and acquisition?

What is the best age at which to start learning a second language?

What can one do to improve student motivation?

Should we teach grammar and, if so, how?

What is the relationship between form and function in language?

How does one balance the needs for fluency and accuracy?

What effect does error correction have on the learning process?

How do different question types affect learning?

Are certain learning or communicative strategies more effective than others?

How can one best organize groupwork in the classroom?

How can we balance process and product orientations in writing?

Can we replace discrete-point tests with integrative tests?

What uses do computers have for language learning?

Disparate though they seem, I would suggest that these questions share a common ground, defined perhaps more by what they leave out than what they include. What they appear to share is a common instrumentalist and positivist orientation towards language and teaching. In this view, language becomes an objective system that can more or

less be described by the theorists and transmitted by the practitioners, and teaching becomes a technical process prescribed by the experts and implemented by the teachers. These questions seem to derive on the one hand from researchers' attempts to understand the language learning process according to the positivistic paradigms of the social sciences, or, on the other, from teachers' struggles to relate this often inappropriate knowledge to the daily realities of classroom practice. What is sorely lacking here is a view of the social, cultural, political and historical context and implications of language teaching. Language is reduced to a system for transmitting messages rather than an ideational, signifying system that plays a central role in how we understand ourselves and the world. The social context of teaching and theorizing is not acknowledged and a harmful distinction is maintained between theory and practice that decontextualizes and makes inapplicable academic work and renders the teacher not as an autonomous intellectual but as a classroom technician. It does not concern itself with educational theory and its sociopolitical context and thus fails to make central the most fundamental pedagogical questions regarding student empowerment.

I would like to suggest, then, that while these questions are useful enough within limited areas of second language education (SLE) concern, there are some far more fundamental questions that need to be raised. Before I state what I feel are the central issues in SLE, however, I would like to turn to a discussion first of the tendency in SLE to divorce itself from broader aspects of educational theory, and second of the need to look to critical pedagogy as the most provocative area of educational thought today.

THE DIVORCE OF SLE FROM EDUCATIONAL THEORY

Stern (1983, p.518) suggests that of all the disciplines that inform language teaching, educational theory has been the least dealt with: "A more deliberate interpretation of language teaching in curriculum terms and, more broadly, in terms of educational theory is needed if we want to arrive at a more balanced and more comprehensive view of teaching". What my introductory comments above and Stern's remark suggest, then, is that language teaching has remained strangely isolated from educational theory and the sociopolitical questions that better educational theorists have been more inclined to raise. In trying to understand why this should

be so, it is perhaps first worth considering the particular nature of the language class itself, i.e. that language is both the content and the medium of the class, a relationship which has perhaps led language teaching theory to look in on itself and become overly concerned with the inner workings of language and language learning at the expense of other issues. The move towards technical views of the curriculum earlier this century, the arrival of positivism in sociology, psychology, and educational theory in the 1950s, and the growing specialization of educational subdisciplines within a conceptual-empirical model, laid the ground for the growth of applied linguistics as a scientist discipline divorced from broader social, cultural, political or philosophical issues.

The focus in SLE, as Allen (1984) and Richards (1985) have pointed out, has primarily been on the syllabus — the selection and sequencing of language items to be taught rather than on broader curricular concerns. It is the linguistic sciences and psycholinguistics that have been the principal informing disciplines for SLE, a position typified by Spolsky's (1980, p.72) model of the main contributing disciplines to educational linguistics. Arguing that a theory of language (linguistics) is insufficient, he adds theories of learning (psycholinguistics) and of language use (sociolinguistics), arriving at a model of SLE that nowhere includes educational theory. When one considers the predominance of structuralist paradigms in these areas (especially as adopted by applied linguists), with their claims to asocial, apolitical and ahistorical investigative procedures, it starts to become clearer how SLE's isolation may have come about.

It is also necessary to note the highly political nature of language itself and many issues around SLE. When the notion of a language is so politically based, standing in a difficult relationship to the questions of the status of dialects and standard forms, and intimately connected to the development and maintenance of the nation state, and when much SLE is tied to the contentious issues of bilingualism, minority education and internationalism, it is not surprising that, within an education system that has itself turned its back on political and cultural issues, there has been a reluctance to deal with the full array of social, political and cultural implications that arise within SLE. If we see education as a fundamentally political process, involved in the production and reproduction of social differences, and language learning as an equally contentious political issue, then the reluctance to deal with the fundamental but awkward social, cultural and political questions that surround SLE becomes on the one

hand understandable but on the other reprehensible.

Most work in SLE, then, tends to explore the kinds of questions outlined above, and where attempts *have* been made to relate SLE to educational and curricular theory, these have often been very limited in that they have looked only at the instrumentalist conceptual-empirical models and thus, I would argue, failed once again to deal sufficiently with the social, cultural and political implications of education. While Stern (1983), for example, argues strongly for greater curricular input to SLE and discusses at length important aspects of curriculum theory (philosophy, components and processes), his model ultimately does little more than cross-tabulate content and objectives derived originally from the taxonomy developed by Bloom in the 1950s (Bloom, 1956). Stern argues that a “means-ends view of teaching is unavoidable in language pedagogy” (Stern, 1983, p.501), thus offering little help in going beyond the traditional means-ends views of curriculum that have for so long predominated.

Similarly, while Richards (1985) argues that needs analysis, the setting of objectives, specification of method and content, and evaluation can be integrated in a curriculum model, he, like Stern, fails to consider philosophical and ideological issues and adopts a limited means-ends model that differs little from the classic models of Tyler (1949) and Taba (1962). These conceptual-empirical approaches, while still enjoying some favor in traditional views of the curriculum (e.g. McDiarmid, 1987), have received much criticism for their positivist views of knowledge (see Giroux *et al.*, 1981). Views of education and curricula based on positivist views of knowledge tend to make strong claims to objectivity and the empirical verification of facts without questioning the nature of knowledge or truth, or the social, cultural or political interests of different claims to knowledge.

We may, roughly speaking, divide curricular approaches into two main orientations, what Freire calls “banking” and Barnes “transmission” models on the one hand, and, on the other, process-oriented curricula that emphasize student exploration. For SLE, Tumposky (1984) points out the problems with the proficiency or behavioral objectives typical of the first type of curriculum: they mistakenly assume that language learning can be accomplished by mastering pre-specified, hierarchically arranged, discrete items; that it is possible to “master” a linguistic skill; that knowledge can be translated into observable behavior; that everything taught must be capable of post-instructional assessment; and that poor performance on the students’ part is the result of poor or inefficient management on the

teacher's part. Candlin (1984, p.35) goes one step further and suggests that "there are major objections, ideological, social, psychological and pedagogical, against the imposition of a step-by-step programme on teachers and learners which all must follow". Auerbach (1986), for example, has argued that competency-based curricula play an important role in socializing immigrants into the lowest socioeconomic stratum. There are very basic ideological and practical questions that need to be raised in the implementation of a means-ends view of the curriculum. It is not sufficient merely to look to curricular theory for a model, if the ideological and educational implications of that model are not explored.

More recently, White (1988, 1989) has also argued that English language teaching should pay greater attention to educational theory. Questioning the efficacy of both means-ends and process models, he suggests the adoption of Skilbeck's (1984) "Situational Model". Unfortunately, White's arguments are based on a serious misunderstanding of curricular ideologies, thus undermining support for his adoption of Skilbeck. Since, therefore, White ironically typifies the lack of understanding of issues outside the narrow confines of applied linguistics so common amongst those working in SLE, and since his work was published in this journal (White, 1989), it is worth looking in more detail at White's attempt to locate his work in a broader context. He suggests that there are three broad educational and philosophical orientations to curriculum design: classical humanism (transmission of an esteemed cultural heritage), progressivism (growth and self-realization of the individual), and reconstructionism (education as an instrument of social change). While these categories are rather incomplete, they do at least reflect some of the accepted views on curriculum ideology: Giroux *et al.* (1981) talk of traditionalists, conceptual-empiricists and reconceptualists; Davies (1969) of conservative, revisionist, romantic and democratic orientations; and Scrimshaw (1983) of progressivist, instrumentalist, reconstructionist, classical humanist and liberal humanist. It is when White attempts to relate these categories to SLE, however, that he makes two major errors. First, he draws too close a comparison between ideology and method, thus assuming that the "grammar-translation method" is "an expression of classical-humanism" (1989, p.85). As I have argued at length elsewhere (Pennycook, 1989; Chapter 1), there is little conceptual certitude to "methods" and it is certainly problematic to conflate a teaching approach with a philosophy and then to dismiss both as "traditional". Second, and

more seriously, he then shows little understanding of the philosophical orientations themselves, suggesting that reconstructionism is “associated with a system-behavioral approach... in which the pedagogical procedures are based on Skinner’s application to education of the principles of operant conditioning (Skinner, 1968)” (White, 1988, p.25; 1989, p.85). Thus, while on the one hand correctly identifying Dewey as the father of the reconstructionists (cf. Giroux, 1988), he then claims that they were Skinnerian behaviorists and that presumably behaviorism saw education as a means of radical social change.

Giroux (1988) gives a detailed account of the progressive and radical policies of the reconstructionists in the 1930s amongst whom there was a “common sentiment in their overall dissatisfaction with capitalist society and in their underlying faith in what some have called the principles of militant democracy” (Giroux, 1988, p.86). As the mood turned against all leftist policies in the United States after the war, and as behaviorism and psychometric evaluation increased, one of their members, Harold Rugg, even had his books burned for their leftist tendencies (Carr and Kemmis, 1986, p.14). White’s adoption of Skilbeck’s (1984) “situational model” and rejection of reconstructionist or progressivist orientations, then, is based on the erroneous identification of behaviorism with reconstructionism and then an assumed tension between process (progressivist) and means-ends models. *This is a serious misrepresentation of the views of radical educators*, allowing the rejection of all the implications of education for social change.

Having dismissed all other views, White is then able to adopt Skilbeck’s “somewhat wooden and almost technical ‘model’ of curriculum development” (Carr and Kemmis, 1986, p.19), and to suggest strategies of innovation based on business management. As Carr and Kemmis (1986) point out, and as Skilbeck has apparently acknowledged in private (and cf. Skilbeck, 1984, p.231), his model oversimplifies complex issues to a misleading degree. Furthermore, “where it attempted to provide a framework for practical judgement, it was often used as a framework for legitimation of curriculum ideas — as a formula rather than a sequence of problematic issues to be resolved in practice” (1986, p.19). I would argue, then, that the type of model proposed by Skilbeck is not at all what is needed in curriculum development for SLE. This question should remain open for debate, however. My principal objection is with the disregard for educational theory (especially within work claiming to do the opposite), and the misrepresentation of more radical approaches to education.

These, I believe, are not simply minor misunderstandings but reflect the overall isolation of SLE from educational theory and its broader philosophical underpinnings. For those who have tried to relate SLE to educational theory, there has been little evidence of an understanding of the underlying ideological questions involved, so that either a conceptual-empirical model has been uncritically adopted or the philosophical issues were misunderstood. There are, of course, exceptions to this, most notably in the work of those who have looked to a Freirean model of pedagogy for inspiration (see, for example, Crawford-Lange, 1982; Graman, 1988; Wallerstein, 1983). It is in the work of Freire (e.g. 1970) and others who have come to work under the rubric of critical pedagogy that I think we can find the most useful understandings of the fundamental, social, political and cultural questions in education before readdressing ourselves to the types of questions that I believe need to be raised in SLE.

CRITICAL PEDAGOGY

Essential to the view of most of the critical pedagogy theorists (e.g. Michael Apple, Henry Giroux, Peter McLaren, Roger Simon) are two predominant elements: a notion of critique that also carries with it a sense of possibility for transformation, and an exploration of the nature of and relationship between culture, knowledge and power. Viewing schools as cultural arenas where diverse ideological and social forms are in constant struggle, critical pedagogy examines schools both in their contemporary sociopolitical context and in their historical context. Drawing on various critical traditions — the work of European critical theorists such as Adorno, Horkheimer and Marcuse, the North American tradition from Dewey through the social reconstructionists of the 1930s, and more recent work in the new sociology of education, feminism and post-modernist and post-structuralist thought — these theorists articulate a position strongly opposed to positivistic, ahistorical and depoliticised analyses of politics and power in education.

The strongest and most pressing criticisms have, not surprisingly, been aimed at the conservative discourse on education, especially in its newly resurgent form embodied in the work of writers such as Bloom and Hirsch. These writers, as Aronowitz and Giroux (1988) and Feinberg (1989) point out, link apparent crises in American economic and military power

with a crisis in schooling and suggest that this has in turn been caused by the liberal educational reforms of the 1960s and 1970s. From this human capital perspective, a position is then made for forms of schooling that emphasize monoparadigmatic forms of culture either as a programmatic list of “cultural literacy” or the “Great Books”, and forms of knowledge and skill deemed necessary to produce a labor force that can compete aggressively in the world market. As Giroux (1988) points out — and David (1989) and Apple (1989) suggest that similar trends are occurring under Thatcherism in Britain — this position has led to a stress on extreme authority in the classroom, to curricula that emphasize a narrow selection of both skills and forms of culture and knowledge and to a view of education that ignores all political issues around minority, race, class, or gender issues.

Although the weight of criticism has been aimed at the conservative discourse on education, liberal and more radical views have also been criticized for the limitations of their analyses. Thus while it is acknowledged that liberalism does at least move beyond the reactionary monocultural and technological position outlined above, it is criticized for articulating positions on pluralism and child-centered education that fail to deal adequately with the politics of difference and all too often decline into a romantic and anti-intellectual celebration of individual difference. More radical views of schooling have been criticized for being over-deterministic in seeing schools only as sites of social and cultural reproduction rather than as sites of cultural production and struggle, and thus for not moving beyond a language of criticism to account for student resistance, human agency and a pedagogy of possibility. It is this notion of possibility, of going beyond criticism to take a moral-political stance and define a utopian goal towards which one can struggle, that permits the construction of a link between theory and action or *praxis*, and a view of teachers as transformative intellectuals. Both Simon and Giroux turn to the notion of the Blochian “not-yet” and Bloch’s argument that the only critical theory of value is one that can also articulate the possibility of hope and change. “The project of possibility,” Simon (1987, p.375) argues, “requires an education rooted in a view of human freedom as the *understanding of necessity and the transformation of necessity*”.

Central to this idea of transformative critique is the view that knowledge is socially constructed. Indeed, Simon (1984, p.381) suggests that the “first premise of any form of critical pedagogy” is “that the

knowledge claims are 'interested' and are modes of intelligibility grounded in the struggles, tensions, and inequalities that mark history's bequest to the present". Critical pedagogy, then, starts by recognizing that all knowledge is constructed in a particular social, cultural and historical nexus of relationships and thus that all claims to knowledge are "interested", i.e. reflect the particular concerns of a group or individual and are always thus bound up in relationships of power. The significance of this argument is that it opposes all claims that knowledge can be value-free, objective, ahistorical or universal and, regarding knowing therefore as an ideological process, allows us to see the relationships between knowledge, power, culture and ideology. We can then appreciate how "power relations exist in correlation with forms of school knowledge that both distort the truth and produce it" (Giroux, 1988, p.102). For critical pedagogy, then, the project becomes on the one hand to investigate and make explicit how knowledge is produced and legitimated within schools and society and then, on the other, to confront those forms of knowledge critically in an attempt to legitimate other subjugated forms and to produce new forms.

An important area of work is involved in critical literacy. Following the pioneering work of Paulo Freire, who saw literacy not as some technical skill but as a means for learners to decode and demythologize their own cultural traditions and the inequitable structures of their society, and for whom, therefore, literacy was inherently political, Giroux and others (see, for example, Cook-Gumperz, 1986; Freire and Macedo, 1987; McLaren, 1988; Rockhill, 1987) have developed a notion of critical literacy. In contrast to the more common views of literacy as a functional skill or as acquisition of a fixed body of cultural knowledge, these writers have argued that literacy must be based on a view of knowledge as socially constructed, and thus as an ideological process. In this view, by helping students to decode the ideological dimensions of texts, institutions, social practices and cultural forms, critical literacy aims to develop a critical citizenry capable of analyzing and challenging the oppressive characteristics of the society. Literacy, Giroux (1988) points out, is not emancipatory in itself, but is the precondition for engaging in struggles around relations of meaning and power. Significant aspects of this literacy are the "liberation of remembrance" — exploring past injustices in human history as a form of liberating memory — and literacy as "cultural politics" — viewing the learning and use of literacy in the context of the social, cultural, political, and economic dimensions of everyday life.

A further important aspect of critical pedagogy is the centralizing of a notion of culture as a productive system. It is common in much sociological analysis to relegate culture to a secondary position as a static reflection of the society, an informing spirit or part of the subjective domain. This limited, positivist and structuralist view of culture can also be commonly found in SLE. Where culture has been acknowledged in more than the elitist “high culture” sense as arts, music, literature and so on, it has typically been reduced to a fixed body of artifacts and behaviors that can be transmitted as an adjunct to a language syllabus. For a number of those working around critical pedagogy, however, culture is elevated to a fundamental role in the way we make sense of the world and is taken to be a productive rather than merely a reflective system. Giroux (1988, p.193) and McLaren (1989, p.171) use the term culture to signify “the particular ways in which a social group lives out and makes sense of its ‘given’ circumstances and conditions of life”. From this point, critical pedagogy is then able to outline a project of cultural politics, a project which makes problematic the way in which teachers and students “sustain, resist or accommodate those languages, ideologies, social processes, and myths that position them within existing relations of power and dependency” (Giroux, 1988, p.136). This, then, starts to address questions of student voice, popular culture and difference.

Giroux (1989) has recently argued for a pedagogy of and for difference, a pedagogy that not only respects student voice and difference, using students’ lived experiences both as a narrative for agency and as a reference for critique, but also relates these differences to the wider social order, creating the democratic sense of respect for difference that is essential to any notion of equality in society. Furthermore, critical pedagogy looks to popular culture not in terms of an ideology critique of mass culture but as a significant pedagogical site of struggle that raises important questions about student subjectivity and experience (see Giroux and Simon, 1989). Closely connected to the emphasis on student experience and popular culture is the notion of voice, “the means at our disposal — the discourses available to use — to make ourselves understood and listened to, and to define ourselves as active participants in the world” (Giroux, 1988, p.199). These concepts allow for the exploration of students’ cultures and lives and of the connection between experience and knowledge. They suggest a form of pedagogy that emphasizes, validates and explores the culture, knowledge and experiences that students bring to

school and yet does not sink into the vapid individualism of “humanistic”, “student-centred” approaches.

The criticisms of current educational policy are not only aimed at the current disempowerment of students but also at the disempowerment of teachers, who have become increasingly positioned as classroom technicians employed to transmit a fixed body of knowledge. Essential to critical pedagogy, then, is the realization of the need to empower teachers, to endow them with “emancipatory authority” as “transformative intellectuals”, to view teachers as “professionals who are able and willing to reflect upon the ideological principles that inform their practice, who connect pedagogical theory and practice to wider social issues, and who work together to share ideas, exercise power over the conditions of their labor, and embody in their teaching a vision of a better and more humane life” (Giroux and McLaren, 1989, p.xxiii). Thus teachers are seen not as technicians employed to implement set curricula, but as intellectuals constantly exploring their own and their students’ lives. This view of the empowered and empowering teacher also breaks down the troublesome theory/practice divide and adopts the notion of informed *praxis*.

In this section, in the interests of (I hope) clarity and brevity, I have presented critical pedagogy as something of a canon of thought as found in the works of Henry Giroux. This has had some major drawbacks: not only have I ignored the important work on, for example, the political economy of textbooks and gendered division of the educational workforce (Apple, 1986), and a whole body of work on feminist pedagogy (e.g. Weiler, 1988), but I have also presented critical pedagogy as a far more coherent body of thought than it really is. Weiler’s important work, for example, while drawing on some similar intellectual traditions, brings much more to the fore the fundamental question for many women of the history of their silencing and thus the issue of voice. Important, too, is Ellsworth’s (1989) recent criticism of the “repressive myths” of critical pedagogy. She argues that critical pedagogy is too abstract and utopian, based on rationalist assumptions, and too little grounded in classroom realities. While I think she misrepresents a number of aspects of critical pedagogy (I find little grounds for the accusation of rationalist assumptions, for example), her illustrations of the huge difficulties of teaching critically are important. While I am slightly hesitant in suggesting that we can easily appropriate her criticisms, I think her article adds to the critical debate about education and adds a much-needed

critical voice against any canonization of critical pedagogy.

IMPORTANT QUESTIONS IN SLE REVISITED

What I have suggested, then, is that SLE is in dire need of locating itself within a broader range of educational, social, political, cultural and historical thought. Furthermore, what I am suggesting is that, given the political issues centred around language and language education, SLE would do well to look at educational theory that is critical, politically engaged and has transformative goals. What we must surely be engaged in as teachers is the empowerment of our students. This, however, raises the fundamental question: empowerment for what? As Simon (1987) argues, a project of possibility would have to go beyond seeing empowerment simply in terms of “making it”. Rather, from the point of view of critical pedagogy, empowerment would include not only a critical element that would aim to help students draw upon and investigate their own cultural resources and investigate other knowledge claims, but also a transformative vision that would aim to change the society itself and the possibilities it presents. At this juncture, I would like to return more specifically to SLE and raise the question as to what such a view of empowerment implies for students learning a language.

If we view ourselves as educators whose principal aim is the empowerment of our students and whose transformative project is to go beyond helping students simply to “make it”, then clearly we must do more than teach functional language skills within a competency-based curriculum. Following the notion of empowerment outlined above, our aims in SLE would need to include validating and investigating students’ knowledge and cultural resources and developing language skills within a framework of transformative critique. From this point, we can start to outline some of the questions which I feel we as teachers should be asking about our educational practice:

Under what conditions can induction into a new language and culture be empowering?

What kinds of curricula will allow students to explore critically both the second language and the second culture?

How can one validate and explore students’ own cultures and experiences through the second language?

How can students pose their own problems through the second language?

How can one validate student voice when the means of expression of that voice may be very limited?

How can one work with limited language yet avoid trivializing content and learners?

How does one balance the need to explore critically the forms and implications of standard languages and the need to empower students by teaching that standard language?

What are the interests served by functional proficiency-based language programs?

What would popular multiculturalism actually look like?

What are the implications for other languages, cultures and forms of knowledge, of the worldwide spread of English?

In what ways can educational technology limit and in what ways expand the possibilities of SLE students?

How can teachers (and students) escape the prescriptive force of prespecified content and methods?

How can teachers and students gain control over the evaluation process?

What are the interests served by the knowledge produced by applied linguists?

What are the implications of the use of information-processing and computer metaphors in second language acquisition theories?

What are the effects of the preponderance of second language theory being produced in the particular context of North America?

How does the political economy of textbook publishing affect SLE?

How is the gendered division of the workforce in SLE perpetuated?

I am not, of course, going to try to answer these questions, for that would be both presumptuous and ill-advised. Rather, I have tried to suggest the types of questions which I believe SLE teachers need to be asking themselves if they are to go beyond the narrow definition of SLE concerns implied by the questions at the beginning of this paper. This, I am suggesting, is of great importance if we recognize the political context of SLE and see ourselves as teachers with an emancipatory and transformative mission rather than as classroom technicians. Some of these questions are being addressed in the better work on bilingual education, through which, it has been convincingly argued, silent voices can be raised (Trueba, 1989) and minority students can be empowered (Cummins, 1989). Far less work of this sort has been carried out in SLE, but I would suggest that if we are to be involved in any useful form of education for our students, we must start to consider some of these issues.

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Notes

1. This view he attributes to Crawford-Lange (1982). She, however, is talking about *reconceptualists* (see Giroux *et al.*, 1981), not reconstructionists, and, in any case, is rightly contrasting this approach to behaviourism.

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Chapter 3

Cultural Alternatives and Autonomy

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Introduction

'The fundamental idea in autonomy', suggests Young (1986, p.19), 'is that of authoring one's own world without being subject to the will of others.' Drawn from philosophical debates concerning the notions of autonomy, liberty and free will, this notion of 'authoring one's own world' seems to have particular significance when related to language learning. How, as language educators, can we help students to become authors of their own worlds? In pursuing this challenging notion, I shall look first of all at the general notion of autonomy in philosophy and political science before discussing some of the limitations of the concept of autonomy as it is commonly understood in language education. My principal concerns are that in moving into the mainstream of applied linguistic thinking, autonomy has become a psychologized, technologized and universalized concept. Following a critical discussion of mainstream autonomy, I shall discuss autonomy in language education from a rather different perspective, emphasizing the importance of looking at language learning in terms of 'voice' and the struggle for 'cultural alternatives'.

Autonomy in context

One initial observation worth making is that it is not only in language education that the notion of autonomy has become particularly salient but also in a number of other contexts:

For many years we have been hearing that *autonomy* is important. Immanuel Kant held that autonomy is the foundation of human dignity and the source of all morality; and contemporary philosophers dissatisfied with utilitarianism are developing a variety of new theories that, they often say, are inspired by Kant.

Autonomy has been heralded as an essential aim of education; and feminist philosophers have championed women's rights under the name of autonomy. Oppressive political regimes are opposed on the grounds that they deny individual autonomy; and respect for the autonomy of patients is a recurrent theme in the rapidly expanding literature on medical ethics. Autonomy is a byword for those who oppose conventional and authoritative ethics; and for some existentialists, recognition of individual autonomy is apparently a reason for denying that there are objective moral standards. Both new right theorists and the modern social contract theorists maintain that their theories best affirm autonomy. Finally, and not least in their esteem for autonomy, well known psychologists speak of autonomy as the highest stage of moral development. (Hill, 1991, p.43)

The concept of autonomy is central to western liberal thought. There are two main uses of the term, one referring to group autonomy, particularly in the political context of self-rule, the other referring to the autonomy of the individual. In this chapter, however, it is the second, individual version of autonomy that is of primary interest.

The concept of individual autonomy, as Lindley (1986) points out, has been central to European liberal-democratic and liberal-humanist thought. It refers to a form of self-mastery, both mastery over one's self (an internal, psychological mastery) and freedom from mastery exercised over oneself by others (an external, social and political freedom). Thus it is based on a belief in a developed self — a self-conscious, rational being able to make independent decisions — and an emphasis on freedom from external constraints — a sense of liberty bestowed by social and political structures. The question of autonomy has long intrigued western philosophers, and arguments such as Kant's on rationality have been crucial to this view since autonomy in the Kantian tradition is a product of the rational independence of human beings, the ability of humans to rationally apply moral principles to their daily lives. In this view — to which have been added variations such as J. S. Mill's insistence on the importance of individuals' inclinations being genuinely their own — there is an ideal of autonomy in which the purely rational individual makes independent decisions within a purely democratic state.

Such a view, however, has come under severe critical scrutiny from a number of quarters. As Heller and Wellbery (1986, p.10) suggest:

Much of the intellectual history of the present century can be read in terms of a fundamental tension in the representation of the individual, a dismantling

of the classical figure and a simultaneous effort to reconceive it. For structural analysts from various disciplines, the development of autonomous individuality has passed from its initial categorization as the telos of modernity to become the principle ideology of an illegitimate mass culture.

The questioning of the autonomy of the individual has a long history, from Marxist analyses of ideology to Freudian accounts of the subconscious. Political analyses of the individual within the state have suggested that the notion of the freely acting political agent within a democratic state has been one of the great obfuscatory myths of liberal democracy. Looking at how certain states stress the importance of individual freedoms, for example, Meyer (1988, p.212) emphasizes the need for such states to regulate individual autonomy:

Only in individualist societies is it so important to control what individuals are and how they behave and think. There it is understood that the society's success or failure, its integration or breakdown, is ultimately determined by the competence and conformity of the individual. As a result much of the effort of modern society goes into constructing appropriate individuals.

In a different vein, but still opposing the view of the rational political subject, Castoriadis (1991, p.164) argues that autonomy cannot be conceived as the following of laws discovered by reason but rather must be a more fluid, boundless activity, since autonomy is

the unlimited self-questioning about the law and its foundations as well as the capacity, in light of this interrogation, *to make, to do* and *to institute* (therefore also, *to say*). Autonomy is the reflective activity of a reason creating itself in an endless movement, both as individual and social reason.

Other critiques have suggested that rather than being categories that already exist in nature, the very notions of 'man' or the 'individual' are in fact products of the discourses of modernity (see Foucault, 1970). Post-structuralist critiques of liberal humanism have suggested that far from being autonomous actors, subjectivities are in fact *produced* by discourses. That is to say, rather than being autonomous, rational beings who choose freely how we wish to behave and think, we are all *subjects* of discourses in which we take up subject positions. Whether from a Marxist view of the ideological regulation of classes, a psychoanalytical understanding of the role of the subconscious, or a post-structuralist version of subjectivity as discursively produced, the notion of the free-willed, rational and

autonomous individual has become highly suspect.

Beyond these general critiques of the notion of the autonomous individual, more specific work has looked at the notion of the individual as both a culture-specific and a gender-specific construction. Clearly, if the autonomous individual, making rational decisions on his or her own is a construction of western cultures, this notion may have limited applicability to other cultural contexts. I shall return to this point later since it is crucial to the applied linguistic project of autonomy in language learning. An interesting critique of the gendered nature of the notion of autonomy has come from Gilligan (1988). Criticizing the way psychological theories have constructed the notion of autonomy as a criterion for full psychological development, Gilligan suggests that this view ignores alternative, more communitarian approaches to psychological development:

The values of justice and autonomy, presupposed in current theories of human growth and incorporated into definitions of morality and of the self, imply a view of the individual as separate and of relationships as either hierarchical or contractual, bound by the alternatives of constraint and co-operation. In contrast, the values of care and connection, salient in women's thinking, imply a view of the self and the other as interdependent and of relationships as networks created and sustained by attention and response.

To summarize, the view of the autonomous individual constructed by liberal humanism is a very particular cultural and historical product, emerging from the western model of enlightenment and modernity. Such a notion of the rational individual is open to criticism from a number of quarters. Important questions have been raised about how notions such as the 'individual' or 'rationality' are not so much pre-given, natural categories as they are products of the discourses of European modernity. Other critiques have suggested that as both political and psychological beings, we have far less control over what we do or say than is suggested in the model of the rationally autonomous being. Furthermore, this version of rational autonomy reflects the cultural and gendered origins of its development. Lest this critique seems to leave us only with a version of individuals as passive subjects of social, cultural, psychological and ideological forces, however, I want to argue, by contrast, that such limitations make it all the more imperative to try to understand how forms of autonomy may be sought out. Autonomy in this sense, then, is not something achieved by the handing over of power or by rational reflection; rather, it is the struggle

to become the author of one's own world, to be able to create one's own meanings, to pursue cultural alternatives amid the cultural politics of everyday life.

Mainstream autonomy

It is not an easy task to write critically about learner autonomy in language learning, principally because autonomy seems such an unquestionably desirable goal. Surely the idea of giving students help in becoming more independent language learners is not one that any right-minded liberal-thinking language educator would want to oppose, linked as these ideas are to concepts of democracy in the classroom, learner-centred pedagogy and independence. But it is this very unquestionability that I want to start to question, for once ideas start to become unquestionable givens — whether these ideas are critical or conservative — we need to become more wary than usual. My first concern, then, is that autonomy has moved into one of those areas of ELT theory and practice that seem to claim a moral high ground. Like other common terms such as 'communicative competence', 'authentic materials', or 'student-centred education', it has rapidly achieved a moral status backed by dominant beliefs in liberal, progressive education. By questioning any of these concepts, we apparently betray ourselves as old-fashioned teacher pedagogues interested only in teacher-centred, authoritarian teaching in which students have little or no chance to use the language, where inauthentic language use is the norm, and where the main goal is to hold on to educational power for as long as possible. I would like to suggest, then, that as autonomy attaches itself to the list of 'progressive' forms of education, we should usefully pause to ask ourselves quite how such dichotomies have been constructed and what ends they serve.

Alongside this problem, there are several other concerns I wish to address here that relate to this process of autonomy becoming a mainstream concept. That this is now the case can be seen by the burgeoning number of articles, books and conferences on the topic (including this book). Speaking of self-directed learning in North American adult education, Brookfield (1993) suggests that it 'is now comfortably ensconced in the citadel, firmly part of the conceptual and practical mainstream' (p.227). With respect to language education, Little (1991) points out that autonomy is fast becoming one of the new buzz-words of ELT, the 'communicative' and 'authentic' of the 1990s. Such mainstreaming of the notion of

autonomy presents a number of concerns: first, its reduction from a more radical social and political concept which questions the nature of schooling to become an issue principally of individual development, learner strategies or 'self-access'; secondly, its attachment to other mainstream concepts, particularly learner- or student-centred education, which tends once again to emphasize the liberal-humanist and individualist elements of current language education orientations and to give the notion of autonomy in language learning an underlying normative basis; and thirdly, its position in the globalizing discourses of applied linguistics, which tend to suggest that autonomy is a universally 'good thing' for everyone, irrespective of the social and cultural context in which it is applied.

Turning to the first concern, it is clear that in some ways the concept of autonomy has a fairly radical potential. Little (1991), for example, relates its development to Illich's (1971) book *Deschooling Society*, which argues for informal education outside the institutionalized and conservative frames of formal education systems. For Illich, autonomy in education is liberatory not merely in the sense of self-development but more importantly in the sense of a questioning of the nature of education and a search for alternative forms of knowledge and action. But this more radical concept of autonomy is one from which many language educators shy away. Allwright (1988, p.35), for example, suggests that autonomy is a term 'typically associated with a radical restructuring of our whole conception of language pedagogy, a restructuring that involves the rejection of the traditional classroom and the introduction of wholly new ways of working', and goes in search of forms of autonomy that already exist in traditional classrooms. Little (1991, p.11) too shifts his argument from 'education as an inescapably political process' to the psychological, suggesting that the barriers erected by education, which 'are potentially tools of oppression and manipulation', are nevertheless 'erected in the first instance not by political but by psychological factors'. Thus, even in a text which goes a long way towards trying to maintain a sense of the political within the notion of autonomy in language learning, Little mirrors the broader trend in applied linguistics to shift from the wider social, cultural and political concerns of language education and to focus instead on the psychology of the language learner in cognitive isolation.

The idea of autonomy has therefore moved rapidly from a more marginal and politically engaged concept to one in which questions are less and less commonly asked about the larger social or educational aims

of autonomy. Broader political concerns about autonomy are increasingly replaced by concerns about how to develop strategies for learner autonomy. The political has become the psychological. Wenden (1991, p.15), for example, discusses autonomy in these terms:

In effect, 'successful' or 'expert' or 'intelligent' learners have learned how to learn. They have acquired the learning strategies, the knowledge about learning, and the attitudes that enable them to use these skills and knowledge confidently, flexibly, appropriately and independently of a teacher. Therefore, they are autonomous.

Autonomy in language learning has become increasingly concerned with techniques, strategies and materials. Summarizing criticisms of self-directed learning in adult education, Brookfield (1993, p.28) refers to the 'tendency of humanistic adult educators to collapse all political questions into a narrowly reductionist technical rationality'. In the field of language learning, one of the most common areas where this depoliticizing and technologizing of the notion of autonomy can be seen is in the equation too easily drawn between autonomy, 'self-access' and 'centres' or 'laboratories' of various kinds. In such facilities, autonomy is too often reduced to choices about which video to watch or which tape to listen to.

The second, and closely related, aspect of the mainstreaming of autonomy is its definition according to the dominant concept of student-centred education. This move from a more social to a more individual definition clearly parallels the move from the political to the psychological. A central problem here is that so-called student- or learner-centred education has become firmly tied to a very particular version of 'progressive' education whose origins lie in the romantic individualism of the late eighteenth century and especially in the educational ideals expounded by Rousseau (see Skilbeck, 1976). This view of the natural development of the child — the young child, like the 'noble savage', being in a pure and innocent state uncorrupted by the constraints of society — has come to dominate a great deal of current educational thought, from romantic individualism to Piagetian developmental psychology. While usefully rejecting the traditional, classical humanist version of education, with its emphasis on the teaching of a fixed canon of knowledge, this learner-centred version of education, by laying claim to being 'progressive' and at the same time focusing centrally on the psychological development of the individual, unfortunately allows no place for a more politically orientated

version of education. Thus, recent work on second language curricula (see Clarke, 1987; Nunan, 1988; White, 1988) has dismissed on the one hand forms of education that aim to teach a fixed body of knowledge, but on the other hand also forms of education that have broader transformative goals. Meanwhile, by trumpeting itself as 'progressive', this line of thinking has come to claim that a version of student-centred, individualistic education is the only path to progress.

The problem here, then, is the way in which concern for our students, and thus the notion of student autonomy, has now become firmly ensconced within this liberal-individualist ideology of learner-centredness. If student-centred education is understood as a pedagogy that takes into account students' lives, desires, wishes, cultures, experiences, backgrounds and so on, it may form a very important part of a broader pedagogical initiative, but it is the fervent belief in the tenets of progressivist ideology, which bifurcates the individual and society, that leads to a diminishment of the potential of the concept of student-centred pedagogy and of autonomy. Hammond and Collins (1991, p.15) warn that what they term 'laissez-faire self-directed learning' can be a 'potentially individualistic, even elitist educational approach'. They go on to suggest:

In many cases, self-directed learners pursue narrowly defined personal learning needs, taking no account of broader social issues or the roles of educators and learners as either change agents or perpetrators of the status quo in their society.

It is this narrowing of the possibilities of a more socially and politically orientated version of autonomy that the individualistic orientation of student-centred education has now brought about.

The close connection between the notion of autonomy and student-centred education also leads to a normative basis for the notion of autonomy in language learning. Since the notion of progressive, student-centred education relies on a dichotomy between student-centred and teacher-centred education, there is frequently an assumption that 'teacher-centred' education is inherently bad and student independence from the teacher inherently good. Leaving aside the rather important question of whether so-called 'teacher-centred' education is necessarily such a bad thing, there is a problem in the way that autonomy is framed in terms of observable acts of independence from teacher direction. I emphasize 'observable' because there does not seem to be much space for a consideration of

student independence in terms of how they take up, resist or ignore what a teacher is doing. Is there a space in the concept of learner autonomy for silent, unobserved resistance? I emphasize 'independence from teacher direction' because there does not seem to be much space for the possibility of a student who independently chooses to come to a teacher to learn and would prefer that teacher to teach in a 'teacherly' way. My concern is that such a move on the part of a student might not be considered 'autonomous' if autonomy is only understood in terms of independence from teacher direction.

My third concern is that the universalizing discourses of applied linguistics have not only given sanction to the notion of student autonomy but have also now taken it up as a universal need for all students. One immediate danger here is that the promotion of learner autonomy around the world may become yet another version of the free, enlightened, liberal West bringing one more form of supposed emancipation to the unenlightened, traditional, backward and authoritarian classrooms of the world. Masemann (1986, p.18) discusses how the evolutionary model of development that permeates much educational thinking replicates the traditional/modern dichotomy with its simple assumptions that education passes from 'rote' to 'structural' to 'open'. Within this context, the promotion of another version of 'openness' — after humanist and communicative language learning, there is now an even more libertarian and democratic educational approach: autonomous language learning — needs to proceed with far more humility, sensitivity and caution than is often the case when the supposedly new and best ideas that flow from the applied linguistic centres are vigorously marketed around the world.

The universalizing discourses of applied linguistics also tend to promote ideas regardless of local contexts. Psychologized and individualized, learner autonomy becomes something that can be established independent of cultural, political, social or economic constraints. Clearly, as I suggested earlier, the notions of student-centred education, individualism and autonomy derive from a very particular cultural context. These concepts will be structured and valued differently in other cultural contexts. As Riley (1988a) argues, there are serious concerns that the principles and practices of autonomous or self-directed learning may be ethnocentric. While the work that Riley uses to support his argument — such as Hofstede's (1983) global model of cultural differences in educational orientations — operate with rather simplistic dichotomies (individualism versus collectivism,

for example) and run the risk of being over-deterministic, his point is nevertheless well made that the ways in which autonomy is theorized and practised may be very much based on an ethnocentric western view of education. This is not to say that autonomy as a concept or an educational goal does not exist elsewhere, but rather that a notion of autonomy will be very different in different educational contexts. To encourage 'learner autonomy' universally, without first becoming acutely aware of the social, cultural and political context in which one is working, may lead at best to inappropriate pedagogies and at worst to cultural impositions.

Voice and autonomy

Having expressed these doubts about the notion of autonomy in language learning, I now want to return to the question of how we might be able to help our students become authors of their own worlds, of how a notion of autonomy may nevertheless be usefully taken up. The concerns I have expressed above relate particularly to the way I see learner autonomy developing within current theories and practices of language teaching, a notion based very much on developing strategies, techniques or materials (indeed vast and expensive 'self-access centres') in order to promote individual self-development. As my criticisms above have probably made clear, the version of autonomy that interests me is one that relates far more clearly to the social, cultural and political contexts of education. To become the author of one's world, to become an autonomous language learner and user, is not so much a question of learning how to learn as it is a question of learning how to struggle for cultural alternatives.

When similar questions emerge in educational contexts, it is common to take them up in terms of 'empowerment'. Indeed, Hammond and Collins' (1991, p.14) version of 'critical self-directed learning' operates with the understanding that while the immediate goal of critical self-directed learning is 'to help learners take greater control of their learning', the ultimate goal is to 'empower learners to use their learning to improve the conditions under which they and those around them live and work'. Yet there are a number of problems with the notion of empowerment as it is commonly used, a brief discussion of which can help highlight the argument I want to make here. First, of course, empowerment has suffered the same fate as autonomy by moving from its more radical origins to a more mainstream concept, even becoming linked these days to the same

discourses of liberal individualism that inform student-centred pedagogy. But it is to two other aspects of the notion of empowerment, particularly when applied to language learning, that I want to draw attention. Ruiz (1991) points to these problems when he argues that empowerment is frequently used in a transitive sense as if it is something done to students, and that 'language' is frequently used when the term 'voice' would be far more appropriate.

This first problem was addressed long ago by Paulo Freire (1970, p.53) when he argued that 'not even the best-intentioned leadership can bestow independence as a gift'. That is to say, if our goal is to bestow a degree of autonomy on our students, we cannot do so by trying to hand it over as if we as teachers hold power in our hands and can simply turn it over to students. Too often, versions of autonomy that start to deal with questions of power still do so from a position that understands power simply in terms of control. Thus, to develop student autonomy in language learning is merely a matter of handing over the reins, of giving students greater control over the curriculum, of giving them greater control over or access to resources, of letting them negotiate what, when and how they want to learn. Of course, such concessions may be very valuable moves but they still seem to operate on the one hand with a version of autonomy that does not encourage students to question the status quo and on the other with a reductive version of power as something that can simply be handed over. As Freire (1970) suggests, a critical pedagogy that aims to emancipate students must aim to help students to develop the tools to engage in the struggle themselves. According to Ruiz (1991, p.223): 'The radical educator who treats empowerment as a gift is not yet radical.' We need, therefore, to incorporate an idea of struggle into any notion of empowerment, and to have ways of thinking about both the limitations and the possibilities that confront students.

Earlier in this chapter, I pointed to the inadequacy of the liberal-democratic and liberal-humanist versions of choice and autonomy, and suggested that it can never be possible to achieve more than partial cultural or ideological autonomy. We can never step completely outside the cultural and ideological worlds around us. But we can learn to question, to become aware of those worlds, to search out other possibilities and to pursue cultural alternatives. Thus, a critical version of autonomy must have not merely a language of critique but also a vision of possibility and alternatives. In trying to pursue a form of education that both acknowledges the

cultural and ideological frames that limit our lives and avoids the pessimism of deterministic positions on education as social and cultural reproduction, Roger Simon (1987, p.372) has developed the idea of a 'pedagogy of possibility'. He proposes that 'as educators both our current problem and our future project should be an educational practice whose fundamental purpose is to expand what it is to be human and contribute to the establishment of a just and compassionate community within which a project of possibility becomes the guiding principle of social order'. Such an educational project, he argues must be 'rooted in a view of human freedom as the *understanding of necessity and the transformation of necessity*' (p.375). A lot of work in critical pedagogy tends to talk rather grandiosely in terms of 'social transformation' as if our teaching could and should aim to dramatically transform the social structure. What Simon is getting at here is the importance of aiming primarily not at the transformation of society in the first instance but the transformation of the cultural, of how society is understood. A pedagogy of possibility, he suggests, must pay attention to 'the "social imaginary", the way of naming, ordering and representing social and physical reality whose effects simultaneously enable and constrain a set of options for practical action in the world' (Simon, 1992, p.37).

Like Simon, I am interested in the cultural domain as a site of pedagogical intervention. By 'culture' here I do not of course mean culture in the sense of artistic endeavour, or 'high' and 'low' culture, or culture as defined according only to national or ethnic boundaries. Rather, this is culture in the broader sense of how we make sense of our lives. In my view, too, culture is not some secondary domain, some superstructural response to the socio-economic infrastructure, or certain beliefs and behaviours that take second place to the realities of social life. Rather, culture determines how social reality is understood; it is a site of primary importance. This is not to deny the importance of a material world, of social or economic relations, but to emphasize that these have no meaning outside their cultural interpretations. What I want to pursue here, then, is the notion of a *pedagogy of cultural alternatives*, an educational project that seeks to open up alternative ways of thinking and being in the world. It is in the development of such alternatives that a useful notion of autonomy (or perhaps heteronomy) can be understood.

Refocusing attention more clearly on the question of autonomy in language learning, I want to suggest that it is important, as Ruiz (1991)

points out, to consider ourselves to be concerned with *voice* rather than language. Versions of autonomy in language learning that operate with a reductive notion of power as something a teacher can hand over to students and a reductive sense of language learning as the acquisition of a system miss an important site of pedagogical intervention. My understanding of language and language learning suggests that language cannot be isolated from the particular contexts in which it is used. I have elsewhere (Pennycook, 1994) referred to this as the 'worldliness' of English, arguing that English needs to be understood not only in terms of its global position but also in terms of the specific social, cultural, economic and political contexts of use. Thus, in the particular contexts in which we teach, the notion of being an autonomous language learner cannot be considered merely within the psychological and individualistic frame of 'language acquisition' but must start to pose questions about what it means to be an autonomous user of language. Such a notion is centrally concerned with voice, with how a language user can come to express cultural alternatives, with becoming the author of one's own world.

The notion of voice is intended to suggest that language use and language learning are about finding means of articulation and that this is inevitably a struggle amid the cultural politics of language. Voice here is not being used to refer simply to nonsilence, a mouthing of words, or a mastery of lexis, pronunciation or syntax; neither is it being used to describe an individual phenomenon in isolation, a question of merely using language, or enunciating a 'true self' or a cultural essence (cf. hooks, 1988). Rather, I am using voice here to refer to a contested space of language use as social practice, as language users struggle to negotiate meanings between subjectivities, language and discourse. This, then, is a notion of 'voice' that emphasizes the political nature of the subject and searches for ways in which students can come to voice that are not so much celebrations of individual narration as they are critical explorations of how we are speaking subjects. The notion of voice, therefore, suggests a pedagogy that starts with the concerns of the students, not along the lines of 'humanist' or 'student-centred' concerns with the 'inner feelings' of students, as if this were a sufficient end-product in itself, but rather through an exploration of students' histories and cultural locations, of the limitations and possibilities presented by languages and discourses. For Giroux (1988, p.199), voice refers to 'the means at our disposal — the discourses available to use — to make ourselves understood and listened to and to define ourselves as

active participants in the world'. As Walsh (1991) suggests, voice can be understood as the place where the past, collective memories, experiences, subjectivities and meanings intersect. It is a site of struggle where the subjectivity of the language user confronts the conditions of possibility formulated between language and discourse. The notion of voice, therefore, is not one that implies *any* language use, such as the often empty babble of the communicative language class, but rather must be tied to an understanding that to use language is not so much a question of mastering a system as it is a question of struggling to find means of articulation amid the cultures, discourses and ideologies within which we live our lives. Within a pedagogy of cultural alternatives, then, the voices that we are seeking to help students to find and create are *insurgent* voices, voices that speak in opposition to the local and global discourses that limit and produce the possibilities that frame their lives.

Let me try to pull the different strands of this argument together. I have been arguing for a more socially, culturally and politically engaged version of language education than that commonly assumed by what I see as the mainstream version of learner autonomy. I have been suggesting that the question of what it means to be an autonomous language user is more important than dealing with autonomy only in terms of helping students to take charge of their own learning. If as language educators we start to see our goal in terms of helping students to find a voice, and if we understand the notion of voice as I have described it above as a site of struggle between language, subjectivity and discourse, then the goal of autonomy in language learning becomes one of helping students in a struggle towards alternative cultural definitions of their lives. In this view, language is no longer taken as a given, a code that students need to learn, but rather as a major aspect of the cultural domain in which our lives are constructed and reconstructed. Thus, while accepting the partiality of all autonomies, our goal as language educators becomes an attempt to teach language in a way that opens up cultural alternatives for our students, that allows them to become authors of at least part of their worlds.

Teaching culturally alternative Englishes

A version of autonomy that focuses on the cultural contexts of language use will emphasize voice as a struggle towards partial cultural autonomy rather than the psychological processes of learning or

techniques to promote independence. If we focus only on the learner as individual and on language as a code to be acquired, we may as teachers be avoiding the responsibility we owe our students to help them to become voiced language users. Unlike the more universalized concept of learner autonomy, which as a psychologized and individualized concept is assumed to have global applicability, the version of autonomy that I am putting forward can only be understood in terms of the specific context of the language user. In this final section, therefore, I shall endeavour to clarify my argument by discussing how I understand language learner autonomy in specific contexts.

Earlier in this chapter I suggested that a key aspect of the liberal-humanist idea of autonomy was the idea of self-mastery. The possibility of such mastery seems highly questionable, however, from a point of view that questions the versions of the Human and the Rational that were developed during the age of European Self-importance ('Enlightenment'). A similarly problematic notion of mastery is often used in language education, suggesting that the ultimate goal of language learning is to 'master' the language. Searle (1983, p.68) raises concerns about this notion of mastery, arguing that 'when we talk of "mastery" of the Standard English, we must be conscious of the terrible irony of the word, that the English language itself was the language of the master, the carrier of his arrogance and brutality.' English, Searle suggests,

has been a monumental force and institution of oppression and rabid exploitation throughout 400 years of imperialist history. ... It was made to scorn the languages it sought to replace, and told the colonized peoples that mimicry of its primacy among languages was a necessary badge of their social mobility as well as their continued humiliation and subjection.

The challenge for us as teachers, Searle argues, is 'to grasp that same language and give it a new content, to de-colonize its words, to de-mystify its meaning, ... to rip out its class assumptions, its racism and appalling degradation of women, to make it truly *common*, to recreate it as a weapon for the freedom and understanding of our people'. Searle is not altogether clear on where such 'class assumptions, ... racism and appalling degradation of women' lie in relationship to English: are they somehow part of the language itself or are they outside the language? The arguments I have made above, however, suggest that it is not predominantly in the language system per se that relations of class, race and gender can be found but

rather in the relationship between English and its contexts of use, between English and the cultures and discourses it is used to express. Developing a voice in English, therefore, needs to be seen as a struggle for cultural alternatives.

In Hong Kong, for example, where I taught from 1992 to 1995, a central concern for me became how the discourses and cultures of colonialism silenced our students. This was nicely articulated by a first year Arts faculty student, who argued in an essay that,

the compulsory learning of English in schools is one of the British government's political strategies. ... By enforcing the compulsory education, more people in Hong Kong are ready to accept the British culture, customs and of course, the government policy. And if the majority of the English speakers in Hong Kong regard the language as superior to Chinese, it is reasonable or rational for them to support the government policy. In other words, the teaching of English is a kind of cultural intrusion in Hong Kong and may be regarded as a political weapon. (Ma Waiyin, Hong Kong University, 1993)

It is, I believe, the colonial context of English that presents the greatest obstacle to students' finding a voice in English in Hong Kong. While on the one hand it is clearly the language of social and economic prestige, the gatekeeper to tertiary education, it is also the language of a colonial government, the language in which 150 years of colonial exclusivism have been articulated.

The effects of English as a colonial language have been noted in many other contexts. Discussing American colonization of Puerto Rico, for example, Walsh (1991, p.5) argues that,

it is partially through the battle for voice that the war of colonization is waged; it is through language imposition and practices in schools that colonization is, in part, effectuated ... Through the social and linguistic policies of English imposition, deculturation, and the implantation of American values, schools have attempted to refashion the voices of the Puerto Rican masses, debilitating their history and national identity and promoting a dependence on and an alliance with imperialist rule.

As Walsh suggests, it is not merely a question of two languages in competition with each other 'but the taking over of both the public and personal functions of language, that is, the means of communication and the consciousness behind this communication, including self-concepts,

identities, and voices' (p.43). This should not be seen in terms of some simple cultural imposition (a view that is often more insulting to the colonized than to the colonizers) but rather a closing down of the choices available. According to Clignet (1978), 'the colonized is deprived of the choices that he should have in terms of his relation to his past and his present, to himself, to his peers, and to the outside world' (p.128).

As Searle (1983) suggests, however, as teachers our struggle is to decolonize the language, to change its class, race and gendered assumptions. While the discourses and cultures associated with English may close down the possibilities of our students to articulate the world differently, it is also possible to struggle against this. As Walsh (1991) observes, 'While colonialism has exercised the power of language to suppress cultural (and national) unity, language, as a dynamic and dialectic force, has also stimulated antagonism and opposition' (p.4). The struggle for a voice in English can indeed be fought but it must be acknowledged as a struggle, an attempt to create new spaces in an insurgent, post-colonial English.

A similar argument applies to discourse of gender. An important site of struggle for women's equality is not only for socially and politically determined rights but also for different cultural definitions of women and men. Women need to redefine not only the social, political and legal definitions of their lives but also the *cultural* definitions of who they are (matched by a concomitant need for men to redefine the cultural definitions of masculinity). Women have had to struggle against what Coser (1991, p.135) calls their 'cultural mandate':

the cultural mandate for women to be committed to the family first has not changed much in its manifestations — from watching mother in the kitchen to being excluded from boys' games to being told that mathematics is not for girls and that girls must stay close to home.

For women to achieve some sense of autonomy, therefore, the significant struggle is not only for equal pay, access to jobs, day care, and so on, but also for a form of cultural autonomy, a freedom from 'women's cultural mandate'. Equality and autonomy for women is a struggle amid the cultural politics of gender to find cultural alternatives for how our lives can be lived. A pedagogy of cultural alternatives in English would need to address not only issues of colonialism and gender but a broad range of cultural representations of Third World people, lesbians and gays, people with disabilities, working-class people, and many other groups. Indeed, it

must be concerned with how any of us come to be represented, and how those representations can be changed.

As a language educator, therefore, my attempts to help my students to achieve more autonomy, to find a voice in English, involves an understanding that they confront a range of cultural constructions as they learn English. I hope to help my students to find cultural alternatives, to find meanings in English that run against the class, gender, race and cultural assumptions linked to different contexts of language use. Promoting autonomy in language learning, therefore, needs to take into account the cultural contexts of the language learners, to open up spaces for those learners to deal differently with the world, to become authors of their own worlds. If language educators take up the notion of autonomy in language learning merely in terms of developing strategies for self-directed learning, or, in its most reductionist version, sending students to a self-access centre to study on their own, they may be denying their responsibilities as language educators to help students to find the cultural alternatives they deserve.

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Chapter 4

Vulgar Pragmatism, Critical Pragmatism, and EAP

This chapter is based on an article that first appeared in 1997 in
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Introduction: In Defense of Pragmatism

In a recent article in this journal (*English for Specific Purposes*), Allison (1996) pleaded that pragmatism should not be dismissed as a significant element in the teaching of English for Academic Purposes (EAP). Allison's article is largely a response to the challenge — attributed to Benesch (1993) and myself (Pennycook, 1994a, 1994b) — that pragmatism in ESL, applied linguistics, and teaching EAP constitutes “a dominant and largely unquestioned discourse or ideology in itself” and that EAP pragmatism assumes “a conservative stance towards dominant academic and sociopolitical orders” and thus ultimately a position that seeks to “change students to fit them into existing structures, thereby perpetuating mainstream academic culture” (Allison, 1996, pp.85–86). Allison responds to these challenges with an argument that stresses the need to avoid such sweeping generalisations in favour of contextual and empirical investigation. According to this argument, rather than viewing pragmatism as a “single coherent ideology or discourse”, we should view these claims as “matters for enquiry in particular instances”. Instead of trying to label EAP as pragmatic and therefore conformist, we need “to consider any relationship between pragmatism and conformism as contingent, and not essential”. We must not assume that “a discourse or an educational status quo seeks to maintain itself by suppressing dissenting voices” (p.86).

Allison is clearly making an important point here in his defense of pragmatism in terms of “understanding that is related to action in context”. In this sense, he goes on, “pragmatic approaches take account of contextual possibilities and constraints that affect what can be achieved and at what cost. Pragmatic approaches can be adopted in pursuit of quite diverse educational and ideological goals, some of which will promote

change" (p.86). Indeed, I think it would be foolish to argue against Allison's insistence on the importance of pragmatic approaches to EAP as "sensitive to contexts of discourse and of action" (p.87). Despite such agreement, however, I nevertheless feel that we understand the issues here in fundamentally different ways. This may indeed be an excellent example of what I have elsewhere (Pennycook, 1994a; Chapter 10) characterised as the "incommensurable discourses" of applied linguistics. Leaving aside for the moment our possible political differences — and the concomitant differences in how we understand the nature of education, the "status quo", "academic culture", conformity, and the need for opposition — it seems to me that we are operating here with very different understandings of the relationship between ideology/ discourse and teaching.

Beyond his call for contextualised research, Allison's position seems to hinge on two main arguments: first, that some EAP teachers indeed are concerned with larger social and political concerns, and, second, that, in any case, it has not been demonstrated "how broad sociopolitical perspectives may usefully illuminate the specifics of teaching and learning that are likely to concern many EAP teachers and researchers" (p.98). In response to these points I would suggest, first, Allison's argument that various "ESL or EAP pragmatists refer directly to ideology" (p.86), and the examples he provides of more politically motivated work in EAP, miss the point in two ways. On the one hand, it is not being argued here that EAP teachers or theorists never look at broader concerns: the issue is that there is a discourse of pragmatism available that makes it easy not to do so. This is not intended in any way to be a criticism of teachers and their daily concerns but rather an exposition of discourses that allow certain positions to be taken up. The issue is not that to deal with local concerns is inherently conservative, but rather that there is a discourse available to EAP practitioners and theorists that EAP is inherently a pragmatic concern, that it is always to do with the everyday, and therefore to ask broader political and cultural questions is not part of its scope. The interesting examples of EAP projects working for change that Allison provides, therefore, only serve to show (quite rightly) that EAP is not monolithic. On the other hand, the fact that some people "refer directly to ideology" does not seem to reveal a great deal: it rather depends on what you mean by ideology. And this, of course, touches a central difficulty here: just as it is hard to discuss discourse when we may mean quite different things by it, so it is equally difficult to talk of ideology, politics and pragmatism when we appear to be

operating within different discourses.

Second, Allison suggests “the main issue emerging from current criticisms of pragmatism is whether a pragmatic view of EAP serves to reinforce the status quo in academia and society” (p.90). As he argues, we need ways of researching such questions, and we need clear understandings of what is meant by terms such as “status quo”, but it is crucial, it seems to me, to start such investigations with a critical framework that would allow for such explorations, rather than a tendency towards a belief that the local and everyday define what we do. Various researchers (e.g. Benesch, 1996; Canagarajah, 1993; Peirce & Stein, 1995) have clearly demonstrated how relationships between English classrooms and broader sociopolitical orders operate, how the “day-to-day decisions that practitioners make inside the classroom both shape and are shaped by the social order outside the classroom” (Auerbach, 1995, p.9).

My contention, then, is that while EAP should indeed be contextually sensitive, our understandings of this are going to depend very much on how we understand context. As I argued (Pennycook, 1994a; Chapter 10) with respect to different approaches to discourse analysis, it is crucial to establish what is actually meant by such terms as “context” since the applied linguistic use of such a term is often a “decontextualised” notion of context (see also Benesch, 1996). If it is assumed that we cannot adequately conceptualise relationships between classrooms, materials, teaching practices and the broader cultural, political, social and ideological contexts in which these occur, and if it is assumed that this therefore necessitates a focus only on “local” contexts, then I believe this call for pragmatism as contextually sensitive may remain unhelpfully narrow. While noting, therefore, the significance of Allison’s call for contextually sensitive understandings of EAP, and while agreeing with his insistence that “appeals to pragmatic necessity” should neither be “invoked or accepted without scrutiny” nor “summarily dismissed” (p. 88) what I wish to do in this article is to develop the argument of how and why EAP has readily available a discourse of pragmatism, and why it is important to distinguish between vulgar and critical pragmatism.

Vulgar and Critical Pragmatism

The notion of pragmatism is a difficult and variously used concept. As Williams (1983) points out, it is “an interesting example of the very

complex linguistic cluster around the notions of theory and practice” (p.240). Unfortunately, there is no space to discuss at any length the relationships between pragmatism as I intend to use it here and pragmatism as a philosophical position, or in its relationships to notions of theory or practice. Instead I want to draw attention to two very particular concerns: First that the ideology of pragmatism works, in effect, “to reduce all human problems to the level of technical difficulties and solutions” (Chua, 1983, p.39), and second that because of its tendency to deny its own ideological base, pragmatism becomes defined “as the only rational choice and therefore non-ideological” (Chua, 1985, p.37).

Pragmatism, therefore, needs to be understood as an ideology in itself (despite its claims to the contrary); and both the positions it supports and the denials of ideological content inevitably contribute to the maintenance of current social, cultural and political relations. Cherryholmes (1988), however, draws a useful distinction between what he terms “vulgar pragmatism” and “critical pragmatism”. The first he characterises as valuing “functional efficiency” premised on “unreflective acceptance of explicit and implicit standards, conventions, rules and discourse-practices that we find around us”. Vulgar pragmatism, he goes on, “is socially reproductive, instrumentally and functionally reproducing accepted meanings and conventional organisations, institutions, and ways of doing things for good or ill” (p.151). Such vulgar pragmatism results when “efficiency is pursued in the absence of criticism, when actions are privileged over thought, when practice is valued and theory disparaged, when practice is divorced from theory (as if that were possible) for the sake of making things work ‘better’” (p.152). By contrast, critical pragmatism results when “a sense of crisis is brought to our choices, when it is accepted that our standards, beliefs, values, guiding texts, and discourse-practices themselves require evaluation and appraisal” (p.151).

Cherryholmes describes vulgar pragmatism as “cheerfully parasitic on unexamined as well as examined texts and discourse-practices, even though nothing ever *seems* to remain unexamined... Vulgar pragmatists ... promote local ideologies as global and past ideologies as those of the present and future” (pp.178–179). Critical pragmatism, by contrast, “continually involves making epistemological, ethical, and aesthetic choices (not necessarily in serial order or this order) and translating them into discourse-practices. Criticisms and judgments about good and bad, beautiful and ugly, and truth (small *t*) and falsity are made in the context

of our communities and our attempts to build them anew. They are not decided by reference to universal norms that produce ‘definitive’ and ‘objective’ decisions” (p.179). My concern, then, is that the pragmatism of EAP, to the extent that it is almost always a vulgar rather than a critical pragmatism, is indeed likely “to reinforce the status quo in academia and society” (Allison, 1996, p.90). In the next section I shall try to show that within EAP there are available discourses that help construct it as a neutral activity and thereby enhance the possibilities of resorting to vulgar pragmatism.

Pragmatism and Discourses of Neutrality

My argument, then, is that a position that we might characterise as “vulgar pragmatism”, a position that runs the danger of reinforcing norms, beliefs and ideologies that maintain inequitable social and cultural relations — a position that I unashamedly believe is ethically unacceptable — is made particularly available by certain “discourses of neutrality” which construct EAP as a neutral activity, and therefore allow for a position that a pragmatist stance is an ethically viable one and that EAP is an activity for which a critical pragmatism would not have much relevance. It is these discourses, I am suggesting, that give meaning to Allison’s (1996) defence of pragmatism or to Johns’ (1993) argument that EAP should distance itself from the ideological stance taken in much LI composition theory, since among other things, we already have, as her title puts it, “too much on our plates”.

I should emphasise here that I am not trying to construct EAP as some monolithic and inherently vulgar/pragmatist enterprise. Neither is this intended in any way as a criticism of particular individuals. Rather, the point of my argument is to illuminate what I see as particular discursive positions that are readily available and what I see as a strong and unhelpful tendency amid the diversity of EAP work to opt for the pragmatic option. I am interested in the availability of a constellation of discourses around EAP that allow for the possibility of taking up a particular stance. I base these observations on my own experiences over a number of years as an EAP teacher and on my research into underlying assumptions and ideologies in English Language Teaching (ELT). These discourses focus, first, on the neutrality of language — neutral in general, neutral as a global commodity and neutral in the international domain. Next, they focus on issues of

science and technology as universal and neutral rather than cultural and political; on “issues” or “content” as neutral with respect to the lives of our students, and on universities as sites of neutral educational exchange. Since I have dealt with the first three of these discourses in relationship to ELT more generally in greater length elsewhere (Pennycook, 1994a, 1994b, 1994c), I shall summarise these discourses briefly before looking at the others in more depth.

The Neutrality of English as an International Language

I want to suggest, first of all, then, that EAP occurs within the broader domain of the teaching of English as an international language, and that this broad context provides discourses of neutrality that help construct EAP as a pragmatic enterprise. This is based, first of all, in a view of language as neutral. This first discourse of neutrality is revealed in the very phrase English *for* academic purposes. While on one level this seemingly innocent phrase appears to do little more than articulate a sense of functionality (this is what English is being used for in this particular context), I want to argue that it also presents a particular view of language as a neutral medium through which meanings pass. This functionalist approach to language tends to construct an unproblematic relationship between “English” and the “academic purposes” for which it is used. As I have argued elsewhere (Pennycook, 1994b), however, a poststructuralist conception of language would suggest that we need to look more critically at the contexts of language use and to view language as social practice. From this point of view, it cannot be isolated from its social, cultural and ideological contexts, so to write, speak, read, or listen can never be acts performed neutrally through some linguistic medium. Thus, in contrast to the humanist version of language, which emphasises the centrality of human rationality in social relations and therefore considers language to be a medium through which rational, conscious subjects convey their meanings back and forth, this view suggests that meaning, and ultimately subjectivity, are produced through language, “that meaning is constituted within language and is not guaranteed by the subject which speaks it” (Weedon, 1987, p.22). For EAP classes this would mean looking beyond language simply as structure and representation in favour of a view of language as always engaged in the construction of how we understand the world.

Secondly, this view of language in general as neutral is coupled to a belief in the particular neutrality of English as an international language. This view of English as neutral derives particularly from the belief that the international is more neutral than the local, the partisan or the national. Thus Kachru (1986) argues that English “has acquired a *neutrality* in a linguistic context where native languages, dialects, and styles sometimes have acquired undesirable connotations” (p.8). And Lee Kuan Yew (1978) argued that “For all of us, let us press on with English. It is our common working language. It cuts across all racial and linguistic groups. It provides a neutral medium, giving no one any advantage in the competition for knowledge and jobs”. Or Platt, Weber & Ho (1984) suggest that “in multilingual nations [English] can be considered a neutral language of communication” (pp.13–14). The problem with this view, of course, is that it ignores the problem that English is no more neutral simply because it is no longer tied to a particular cultural context. English is deeply bound up with international capitalism and tourism, the spread of particular forms of culture and knowledge, global media, and so on. To the extent that it is almost inevitably tied to various class interests, and that in most multilingual nations this also means a certain relationship to various ethnic interests, English becomes a very unlikely candidate for neutrality.

Third, this neutral language English is frequently then constructed as a global commodity to be bought and sold on the world market. Two interesting discourses intersect here: on the one hand a view of global markets as idealised places for equitable trading (a view strongly opposed by any critical analysis of international economic dependency), and on the other, a view of the English language and its teachers as something freely traded within this global free market economy. This discourse has implications not only for private educational institutions but also more generally as an understanding of the role of English in the world. From this position, English and English teaching are best seen as products and factories. Yorio (1986) suggests students can be seen as consumers, language schools as corporations and English as the product to be traded. According to Bamforth (1993, p.2), “It is usual nowadays to refer to the EFL ‘industry’”. Language schools, the article suggests, “are not set up in order to further learning but rather to ensure an adequate profit margin ... [and] are no different from other service businesses such as banks, airlines, restaurants or office cleaning companies”. According to White (1987), “ELT is a service industry, supplying people with a service — English language

teaching — and a commodity — the English language” (p.221). Thus, a view of the global marketplace as a context of free trading and a view of ELT as a marketable commodity, helps construct EAP as nothing more than a service to the academy and thus once again as a neutral activity.

Universalism and Culture

If these broad discourses that construct ELT as neutral are, at least in part, a frame within which EAP is constructed, there are also more specific ways in which EAP constructs its pragmatic neutrality. The first of these is the tendency to construct itself as part of a universal scientific enterprise and therefore as acultural. Reviewing 10 years of articles in *English for Specific Purposes*, Barron (1991) could find only one article that made any reference to culture, and even this referred generally to British or American “target” cultures. This lack of interest in culture Barron attributes amongst other things, first, to the attempt to construct neutral textbooks in order to promote worldwide sales. Second, as Barron suggests, there is a belief that science and technology constitute a supra-cultural domain unconnected to local contexts. The view that science is culturally neutral has been an important belief of ESP since its inception. Barron (1991, p.175–176) traces this view to Widdowson (1979, p.51) who argued that

the concepts and procedures of scientific inquiry constitute a secondary cultural system which is independent of primary cultural systems associated with different societies. So although, for example, a Japanese, and a Frenchman, have very different ways of life, beliefs, preoccupations, preconceptions, and so on deriving from the primary cultures of the societies they are members of, as scientists they have a common culture. In the same way, I take it that the discourse conventions which are used to communicate this common culture are independent of the particular linguistic means which are used to realise them.

As Barron goes on to argue, this view is at odds with many anthropological understandings of the relationship between culture and technology, in which these are seen as integral to each other rather than separate.

Barron’s (1991) concern here is with how technology in “nonliterate societies” is “intimately bound up with the social, economic, and religious life of the people” (p.176), and how ESP courses need to acknowledge and work with this connection rather than ignoring it as they currently

tend to do. Barron gives an example of an ESP project at the Papua New Guinea University of Technology which sought to help students connect traditional, pre-colonial forms of engineering to the types of engineering knowledge currently being taught in standard engineering courses. There is also a need, however, to go beyond viewing culture as tradition or as the way of life of some national or ethnic group. Drawing on the lessons from cultural studies, we can start to see cultures as ways of making sense of the world that are in competition with each other. From this point of view, we need to deal with cultural politics since cultures are always connected to struggles over meaning, values and subjectivities (see Jordan & Weedon, 1995).

For EAP, then, I am suggesting that this view of academic work as somehow scientifically neutral and disconnected from cultural contexts needs to be rethought. Barron's (1991) work shows how EAP courses can start to bridge the divide between the culture of, say, university engineering courses, and the traditional cultures of engineering that students bring with them. Such an approach can help show students how indigenous knowledge of, for example, bridge-building is differently formulated within different cultural domains. This view would acknowledge that the scientific and the technological are not some acultural domain without connections to how lives are lived and understood. More generally, EAP can reintroduce a notion of culture into its courses, so that it is not just student culture that is conceived of as a source of difference, but rather many sites of culture — academic, traditional, modern, local, international — are critically explored as they relate to the world of English and academic knowledge. I shall discuss the implications of this view later.

Neutral Knowledges

Another domain in which EAP constructs itself as neutral relates to the difficult relationship between EAP courses and the need for “content”. There are a number of different options available to EAP course designers and teachers: courses taught by subject specialists but aimed at students who need language assistance, courses developed by language teachers in conjunction with subject specialists, courses taught by language teachers but using specific subject content, courses that work with a more general set of supposedly academic “issues”, or courses that focus on a general set of “academic” genres, discourse types, lexical items, or organisational and

language features. Of these, the types of course that work closely with relevant faculties can be very successful but also time-consuming and difficult to maintain. Moreover, they tend to leave the EAP teacher in a secondary position with respect to the academic content of the course. The same problem emerges in courses with subject-specific content taught by EAP teachers, where, as Spack (1988) has pointed out, they may “find themselves in the uncomfortable position of being less knowledgeable than their students” (p.37). In both these cases, the EAP teacher is forced into an uncritical position relative to the academic content of the course, unable to do more than take a neutral position on the course knowledges.

For those courses that aim to deal with “social issues” as course content, there would appear to be more scope for taking a less neutral stance. While this approach avoids some of the obstacles suggested above to discipline-based work and can also deal with the problem of students having varied disciplinary backgrounds, it runs into a number of other difficulties. Although the object of the course is to teach academic English, there is a need to deal in educational terms with the reasons for and the effects of basing a course on “social issues” such as abortion, homosexuality, euthanasia and so on. Such issues are constructed to stimulate interest and thus language use, and are akin to what Schenke (1996), discussing feminist approaches to TESL, describes as “the tired treatment of gender and ‘women’s lib’ in many of our ESL textbooks as well as the often infantilising approach to learning activities, personal storytelling, and high-interest topics” (p.156). One of the problems here is that on the one hand it is being argued that English is a medium for academic work and on the other that such content is a medium for learning English. We end up with two media, each supposedly a medium for the other. Thus, in order to teach English as a medium for academic purposes, issues and themes are discussed and written about as a means to promote the acquisition of that medium. But the focus of attention seems to be neither on the language nor on the pedagogical implications of the substantive content introduced through the issues.

The topics, although sometimes reasonably interesting, remain tangential both to students’ lives and the pedagogical rationale for the courses. The problem here, then, is that while teachers trying to use discipline-based materials may end up knowing less than their students, there is a similar problem with issue- or theme-based content in that language teachers set themselves up as informed knowers on a diverse

range of topics. Thus, among the possibly fruitful engagements with interesting topics, the lack of educational rationale for such social issues also leads not only to rather shallow discussions and essays on the particular topics, but also, because teachers cannot be expected to be able to deal critically and comprehensively with such a broad range of topics, to an uncritical liberalism whereby, in the worst cases, topics are framed between simple and, I would argue pernicious, dichotomies (Should prostitution be legalised? Is homosexuality normal? Is capital punishment justified? and so on). Framed as many issues-based courses are between a series of liberal dichotomies, they tend once again to reproduce an uncritical approach to knowledge. Since teachers can rarely deal critically with academic subject matter and cannot justify to themselves a moral or political agenda that seeks to go beyond the liberal discussion of reductive dichotomies, EAP reproduces itself once again as a neutral enterprise. Again, I shall discuss alternative possibilities later.

Universities as Neutral Sites

Yet another conception that leads to the construction of EAP as a neutral activity is the understanding of the general context of tertiary education. This issue concerns the role of universities in the transmission and creation of forms of culture and knowledge. One way of viewing educational institutions is as independent arenas of education, as institutions isolated from their social, cultural and political environments, in which professors and students work together in a collaborative effort to push forward the frontiers of knowledge. Another view suggests that universities are part of an inter-connected system of global knowledge transfer, through which ever more accurate knowledge about the world is dispersed to an ever greater number of students. It is these views which I think underlie the educational neutrality which seems to be a significant part of much of EAP. From this perspective, EAP is concerned with giving students linguistic access to the knowledge they need. If, however, as I have suggested above, there are questions to be raised about the supposed neutrality of the medium of English, there are also questions to be raised about the cultures and knowledges of the university (Pennycook, 1996b).

A more critical view of the global context of tertiary education suggests that universities are key sites of cultural and epistemological invasion, where inappropriate and irrelevant forms of Western culture

and knowledge are thrust upon an unwitting student population. Altbach (1981), relating Galtung's (1971) theory of structural imperialism to universities, argues that the current intellectual centers have a massive influence over the international academic system, providing educational models, publishing academic books and journals, setting the research agenda, and so on. The peripheral universities, while often playing extremely important roles in their own countries as central institutions, are often, according to Altbach (1981, p.602), little more than "distributors of knowledge" from the center. He highlights five particular aspects of this process: first, the models of research and the forms of education are often inappropriate to the local conditions; second, the common use of Western languages (especially English) has particular implications since "universities are automatically cut off from the majority of the population" (p.608); third, these universities become consumers not producers of knowledge; fourth, the means of communication — journals, books, etc. — are in the hands of the industrial nations; and finally, many well-trained people leave the peripheral nations in what is commonly termed the "brain drain". Similarly, Masemann (1986, p.22) suggests that "it is not difficult to view the diffusion of Western education internationally as part of a massive deskilling process of Third World populations in terms of indigenous systems of language, symbols, art, folklore, music, and knowledge itself".

Such a description of education as the imposition of knowledge and cultural forms, however, allows little or no space for interpretation, opposition, or resistance (see Pennycook, 1994c, 1996b). On the other hand, it does point to the concern that education is never neutral. A preferable conception of this is to see universities as a key site of struggle, where local knowledges meet global knowledges in a battle to represent different worlds in different ways. Rather than seeing schools as sites of necessary imposition of culture and knowledge, we need to understand that they are significant sites of struggle over different representations of the world. Schooling has more to do with cultural politics than knowledge transfer (see, for example, Simon, 1992). "The main responsibility of a university", then, as Nandy (1996) argues, is "to pluralise the future by pluralising knowledge in the present. Universities can do this only by producing a better, more honest, and wider range of options — material, ideational, and normative — from which human beings can choose" (p.306).

This discourse of neutrality, then, allows for a view that EAP

operates as a service industry to provide students with access to a neutral body of knowledge. The position that I have been arguing for here, by contrast, suggests that EAP work needs to become directly engaged with the knowledge bases of university curricula. Furthermore, as I have also argued (Pennycook, 1996b), since English is once again bound up with such questions about the creation and limitation of knowledge, it is crucial to see English classes not as mere adjuncts to the knowledge curricula but rather as important sites of change and resistance. I am therefore urging that EAP gets itself engaged in critical explorations of academic knowledge, that we need to ask whose version of sociology, engineering, medicine and so forth is being taught. EAP needs to become directly involved with *the pluralisation of knowledge in the present*. It is to such possibilities that I turn in the next section.

Critical EAP and the Pluralisation of Knowledge

I have already signalled in the discussion above many objections to the view of EAP as a neutral service industry to the academy, distanced from social, cultural, political and ideological concerns. These concerns point to the need for EAP to develop a more critical approach, which, if I am to concede Allison's (1996) call for an acknowledgment of pragmatism, I will nevertheless insist must be a critical pragmatism. Rather than apparently meeting the "needs" of the students (as is often claimed after applying some form of "needs analysis"), a belief in the educational neutrality of EAP may do a pedagogical disservice to the students. Indeed, Benesch (1996) has recently argued for the need for a critical approach to needs analysis in EAP. A curricular focus on providing students only with academic-linguistic skills for dealing with academic work in other disciplines misses a crucial opportunity to help students to develop forms of linguistic, social and cultural criticism that would be of much greater benefit to them for understanding and questioning how language works both within and outside educational institutions. By denying the political and ideological contexts of language education, a pragmatist stance adopts a conservative approach to education which at least needs to be acknowledged and justified, if not challenged. This stance leads to a self-defeating position for EAP classes. If one of the difficulties faced by EAP practitioners is marginalisation and displacement into a secondary role compared to the other disciplines, this problem cannot be overcome by

accepting a role as a service department providing what other departments feel they need.

The sort of critical approach I am advocating here has some affinities with work in critical language awareness (see Fairclough, 1992), which in turn is part of the larger focus on critical language study and critical discourse analysis (e.g. Fairclough, 1995). The principal focus of this work is to show how discourse is both constituted by and constitutive of social relations, how any language use is determined by broader social and ideological relations and in turn reinforces those relations. Arguing for a view of discourse as social practice, Clark (1992), for example, suggests that “in order to account satisfactorily for both the production and interpretation of text” one needs an integrated analysis of text, interpretive processes and sociohistorical context (p.123). Clark’s interest is in the need for work in EAP to question the academic norms that it so often seems to support with unquestioning acquiescence. In her discussion of critical language awareness in an academic writing program, Clark (1992) argues for the need to “critically explore with the students the notion of academic discourse community and how it is that certain forms of knowledge and ways of telling that knowledge have evolved in the way they have” (p.118).

Interestingly, however, Clark herself seems to draw back from confronting some of the toughest challenges in this domain. Despite her challenge to investigate areas of academic discourse, Clark (1992) nevertheless provides a list of four conventions that she feels students cannot flout: substantiating arguments, making arguments relevant to stated aims, following a recognised referencing convention, and avoiding plagiarism. I have elsewhere (Pennycook, 1996a; Chapter 11) argued, however, that plagiarism is a notion that we should treat with far more circumspection. The different ways of taking-from-texts that students bring to class, the different practices of memory, and the different cultural and educational backgrounds of students, as well as the hypocrisies within Western claims to originality, and current shifting textual practices in a postmodern age, all suggest that the notion of plagiarism should indeed be subjected to critical scrutiny. And if this is so for plagiarism, it may also apply to the other elements in Clark’s academic hagiography. What I am suggesting, therefore, is that all aspects of form in academic writing should be open to critical analysis and to the possibility of pluralisation.

Alongside the possible pluralisation of academic writing norms, we also need to consider the possibilities of the pluralisation of knowledge.

If we want to give space to our students' cultures and histories, and if we want to challenge some of the standard formulations of academic knowledge, then we can start to see EAP as having a significant role in the pluralisation of our students' future knowledge. This is akin to what I have elsewhere called a "pedagogy of cultural alternatives" (Pennycook, 1997; Chapter 3), a view of language education that stresses our need as teachers to help students to create and become aware of alternative ways of envisioning the world. Different ways of approaching such questions in EAP would include work such as Schenke's (1996) "practice in historical engagement", an approach to teaching that focuses on "the struggle over histories (and forgetting) in relation both to the cultures of English and to the cultures students bring with them to the classroom already-knowing" (p.156). For EAP, this would imply developing course content that sought to critically examine the discourses that construct our and our students' understandings of our worlds. Another way forward is to develop a curricular focus on particular relationships between English and certain discourses. As I have suggested elsewhere (Pennycook, 1994b, 1994c), a focus on what I have called the "worldliness of English" opens up a crucial site for the investigation of the role of English in the context in which it is being taught. A critical understanding of English and its relationship to discourses of science, technology and education, as well as its role as national and international gatekeeper to these domains therefore becomes an integral part of an EAP curriculum.

One of the most common objections to suggesting such a critical programme is that it may deny students access to the language and discourses they need. Clark (1992) frames her discussion within the tensions between students' obligations and rights, the need on the one hand to adhere to the norms of the academic community, and on the other to challenge those norms. Thus, for example, she points to the tension between "the ethnocentricity of demanding western-style structuring of an argument and the right of the student to include moral lessons in his writing on nuclear weapons, which he feels very strongly about" (p.135). This tension lies at the heart of EAP: on the one hand we need to help our students gain access to those forms of language and culture that matter while on the other we need to help challenge those norms. On the one hand we need to help our students develop critical awarenesses of academic norms and practices, while on the other we need to understand and promote culturally diverse ways of thinking, working and writing.

This tension between the need to acknowledge cultural difference and the need at the same time to give people access to the cultural, linguistic and discursive conventions that matter is, of course, a classic tension in critical approaches to education. In work on critical literacy, for example, this tension emerges in the differences between those who primarily emphasise *access* to the cultures of power, and those who emphasise the exploration of difference. The former argument can be seen in the genre-oriented stance taken by Cope & Kalantzis (1993) when they argue that “genre literacy” is a “strategy for equity in education, to give social groups historically marginalised in one way or another better access to social mobility through education” (p.2). A view which explicitly emphasises a primary concern with diversity, on the other hand, can be seen in postmodern critical literacy as espoused by Giroux (1994), who argues that “literacy as an emancipatory practice requires people to read, speak, and listen in the language of difference, a language in which meaning becomes multiaccidental and dispersed, and resists permanent closure” (p.369). However, it is important to observe two points here: First, we do not need to see this as a dichotomous choice between two approaches to education, but instead can work with both. Second, as Luke (1996) has shown, we need far more complex theories about language and power than those offered by the “genres of power” argument, since this ultimately “runs the risk of becoming an institutional technology principally engaged in self-reproduction of the status and privilege of a particular field of disciplinary knowledge” (p.334).

Conclusion

What I have been arguing for, then, is a way of thinking about and doing EAP that avoids the pragmatic stance so often advocated, and instead moves towards a critical *praxis*, “that continuous reflexive integration of thought, desire, and action” (Simon, 1992, p.49). In opposition to the discourses of neutrality described above, I would like to see an EAP that sees language, both locally and internationally, as political, that starts to take on board an understanding of the ways in which our lives are discursively constructed through language; an EAP that sees content, whether academic university content or more general “serious issues” as always political; an EAP that acknowledges that the way we teach and what we teach is always a question of cultural politics, that language, knowledge and culture form a

complex tangle that cannot be avoided; an EAP that seeks to do more than just tolerate difference, but moves towards a more direct engagement with the confrontation between the cultural, educational and linguistic practices of the students and the practices of the academy.

Allison (1996) concludes his article by suggesting that “resolutely pragmatic approaches towards academic enquiry will continue to assist teachers and researchers of many ideological persuasions to contextualise and investigate the questions of purpose and value that matter to them, throughout and beyond the domain of EAP teaching and learning” (p.100). As I have suggested, how we are to take such statements depends very much on how we understand the relationships among language, discourse and education. Allison suggests that there is plenty of useful critical work going on in EAP and that we can therefore afford to continue to take pragmatism as our defining goal. His argument, however, does not accord with the work of researchers such as Benesch (1996), who still maintains that “EAP has not critically analyzed academic content and teaching” (p.730).

Thus, while I am in agreement on the need for understandings of the contexts of EAP, of the particular discourses and practices that operate in different contexts, I remain uneasy about what the phrase “throughout and beyond the domain of EAP teaching and learning” will cover. If we are to encourage research that is pragmatic in the sense of looking at the everyday contexts of teaching, I would argue that this should be a critical, rather than a vulgar, pragmatism, a position that is deeply concerned about efforts to maintain the status quo, and insists that while we do have to get on with our teaching, we also have to think very seriously about the broader implications of everything we do. Benesch (1996) suggests that “EAP classes can be agencies for social change, both in and outside the academy” (p.736). I believe we need not only to understand the contexts in which we work but also at the same time to keep our eyes on such horizons as well.

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Chapter 5

The Social Politics and the Cultural Politics of Language Classrooms

This chapter is based on an article that first appeared in J. K. Hall and W. Eggington (Eds.)(2000), *The sociopolitics of English language teaching* (pp.89–103). Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.

When we think of language classrooms, of language teaching and learning, it is often in terms of methods, competencies, strategies, grammar, tasks, exercises, drills, activities, and so on. Although it might already seem that such a list implies a wide diversity of ideas and approaches, I want to suggest by contrast that such a list in fact is part of a very particular view of classrooms. This perspective tends to view the classroom as something of a closed box, an educational context separated from society. Inside this box, teachers try to help their students learn a language. The language is a set of structures, pronunciations, or communicative acts that students need to master. The main concern, therefore, is how teachers can encourage the students to learn, to remember, internalize, and use the necessary pieces of language. And the main research questions have to do with how learners learn to communicate: In what order do students acquire certain structures? What kinds of communicative strategies may help learning? Does task-based learning help students more than grammar-focused learning? Is it helpful to teach generic text structures to students?

I do not want to suggest that these questions do not matter. Rather I want to argue that they form only a small part of what we need to understand in terms of what matters in language education. The problem is that so much of what we read about in TESOL and Applied Linguistics, or hear in teacher education classes, tends to view classes as closed boxes. I would like to consider an alternative view — that classrooms, both in themselves and in their relationship to the world beyond their walls, are complex social and cultural spaces. In order to do this, I shall introduce briefly two English classrooms in different parts of the world, one in Canada, another in South Asia. Although these classrooms may seem

different from one's own context of work, I would suggest that there are many connections here that we need to understand.

The first classroom I discuss is Suresh Canagarajah's (1993) classroom, consisting of 22 first-year students doing a mandatory English class at the University of Jaffna in Sri Lanka. They are using *American Kernel Lessons: Intermediate* as a core text. The 13 female and 9 male Tamil students are mainly from rural communities and the poorest economic groups. Few of their parents have much education. English has "limited currency" in their lives outside the class and the university. The university's academic year began late because of "renewed hostilities between the Sinhala government and Tamil nationalists" (1993, p.612). These tensions provide a backdrop to the classes, with government planes bombing the vicinity of the university during placement tests.

In his critical ethnography of this class, Canagarajah shows how anything from student annotations in textbooks to preferred learning styles and resistance to his own preferred teaching approaches are connected in complex ways to the social and cultural worlds both inside and outside the classroom. Despite the dramatic urgency of the real dangers outside this classroom, Canagarajah goes on to argue for an understanding of the relative autonomy of classrooms, suggesting both that they are social and cultural domains unto themselves and that they are interlinked with the world outside.

Before discussing this point further, however, I will describe briefly another classroom, an ESL class in a Chinese community center on a leafy street in Toronto, Canada (Morgan, 1997). The program has continuous intake, mixed-streaming, and no compulsory testing: "Some students have been in my class for several years, others for only a few months" (1997, p.437). In the particular lesson he describes, all 15 students "claim Chinese ethnicity," 13 being from Hong Kong, China with 2 from Malaysia and Taiwan, China; 11 were women, and 12 were over fifty. Morgan goes on to describe a "high-intermediate" lesson to practice oral and written English. The important questions for this chapter are concerned with how we relate these classrooms and the students in terms of social class (mixed in one, more homogeneous in the other), age (two rather different populations), ethnicity (in both classes a fairly homogeneous ethnic group), gender (one class fairly equally split, the other with predominantly women), and location (Toronto and Jaffna) to broader social, cultural, and political contexts.

Classrooms and the “Real World”

As I suggested above, there is often a tendency to view classrooms as isolated spaces; classrooms are “just classrooms.” I want to suggest, by contrast, that classrooms are sociopolitical spaces that exist in a complex relationship to the world outside. I use the term “sociopolitical” here to address a further important dimension of how I want to approach these questions. The term political in both “sociopolitical” and “cultural political” is used not to address a formal domain of politics or policy but rather to suggest that I view questions of social and cultural relations from a critical perspective. Earlier chapters of this book have already shown the importance of understanding language teaching in relation to language policy: how, for example, choices we make in the classroom between using “English only” or several languages must also be seen in the context of broader language policies. But the notion of politics I am working with here is a different one. In his discussion of approaches to learner autonomy, Phil Benson (1997) has made this distinction nicely:

We are inclined to think of the politics of language teaching in terms of language planning and educational policy while neglecting the political content of everyday language and language learning practices. In proposing a political orientation for learner autonomy, therefore, we need a considerably expanded notion of the political which would embrace issues such as the societal context in which learning takes place, roles and relationships in the classroom and outside, kinds of learning tasks, and the content of the language that is learned. (p.32)

It is this political understanding of the language classroom that will be the primary focus of this chapter. By this I mean that I view social and cultural relations not as casual contexts of consensus but rather as sites of struggle over preferred social and cultural worlds, as domains imbued with relations of power. From this perspective, an understanding of the social politics and cultural politics of classrooms is not just about describing what is going on; it is about making critical interpretations and suggesting possible alternatives.

Initially, two main dimensions in understanding classes as sociopolitical spaces may be suggested: on the one hand, classrooms themselves are social spaces; on the other hand, the larger social context of the classroom determines social relations in the classroom. This first view suggests concerns

about “democracy” in the classroom and power relations between students and teachers. Although some arguments for student autonomy or independence are based purely on a view of the psychological benefits of “independent learning,” others are based on this more social understanding of classrooms and therefore are based more on a concern for social equality in learning and teaching relationships (see Benson and Voller, 1997). This approach to sociopolitical classroom relationships, however, remains rather limited if it operates simply in terms of teachers having power and students not having power, and with a belief that “democratic” classrooms involve “handing over” power to students. Such a view, I suggest, is a simplistic understanding of social relations and “power sharing,” ending up with little more than an argument for group work or student input to the curriculum. This view fails to relate social relations in the classroom to the larger social context.

The second approach, which suggests that the social world outside classrooms determines what happens inside them, offers a broader scope. From this perspective it matters fundamentally what is going on outside Canagarajah’s classroom. Students do not leave their social relations, their rural upbringings, or their relationships to their parents at the classroom door; instead, they bring them in with them. And the screaming of the government jets over the classroom reminds us, if admittedly in an extreme way, that the outside world is never far away. Similarly, in Brian Morgan’s classroom, it matters that this is a Chinese community center, that it is close to Toronto’s China Town, that each segment of that Chinese community has a different socioeconomic status, and that older members of this community who attend ESL classes will not likely be part of the wealthier sections of that community. It matters that one of his students describes herself as an “astronaut’s widow,” referring to the Hong Kong term (*astronaut*) for those who have gained citizenship outside Hong Kong, China and then returned there to work.

But it is important to note also that Canagarajah argues that classrooms are “relatively autonomous” spaces. This is an important argument because it suggests that the view sketched above — that the social world outside classrooms determines what happens in them — is too deterministic. That is to say, it maps too dependent a relationship between social relations outside classrooms and social relations in classes. What we need to understand is that there is a complex interplay between classrooms and the outside world, or rather that classrooms are not so much a reflection of the outside world, but rather part of the outside world, and in fact play

a role in how that outside world operates. From this perspective, the walls of classrooms become permeable, with social relations outside classrooms affecting what goes on inside, and social relations inside affecting what goes on outside. Indeed, we need to reject the common but unhelpful terminology that contrasts the “real world” with our classrooms: our classrooms are part of the real world. This last perspective has significance for understanding the implications of pedagogy.

Social Relations: The Micro and the Macro

Elsa Auerbach (1995) has explained that she sees language classrooms as socially located: “Pedagogical choices about curriculum development, content, materials, classroom processes, and language use, although appearing to be informed by apolitical professional considerations, are, in fact, inherently ideological in nature, with significant implications for learners’ socioeconomic roles” (1995, p.9). From this point of view, “the classroom functions as a kind of microcosm of the broader social order” (*ibid.*), that is to say, the political relationships in the world outside the classroom are reproduced within the classroom. From this perspective, then, everything we do in the classroom can be understood socially and politically. And, furthermore, we need to have some notion of ideology (or discourse) that suggests not only that social relations are reproduced inside classrooms but that social relations are linked to ideologies and thus to the way we think.

A key issue in a critical social view of education concerns the tension between, on the one hand, large-scale analyses of how inequitable social relations are reproduced and, on the other hand, an understanding of how people confront such social and ideological forces. If we see small-scale action, the micro-politics of the classroom, as reflecting large-scale social structure, we can start to see how social relations are reproduced in daily classroom interactions. I have also been suggesting that we need to understand ways that people can act against and resist such forces. In this section, therefore, I shall look in more detail at social reproduction in the context of education, before discussing the concepts of cultural reproduction, cultural politics, and resistance.

An optimistic liberal view of education is that it provides opportunity for all: anyone can go to school, receive equal treatment, and come out at the end as whatever they want. Yet it does not take a very sophisticated

critical analysis to suggest that this is far from what actually happens. Crudely put, rich kids tend to go to private schools and get good jobs, while working-class kids tend to go to poorer state schools and work in the same social and economic positions as their parents. One might simply account for this in terms of good and bad schools: wealthy families can afford good schools, while poorer families have to send their children to schools that provide an education of lower quality. Such a solution, however, fails to look at the broader functioning of society. What we need, instead, is an understanding of how schools operate within the larger field of social relations, and a realization that schools, as a key institution within society, ultimately serve to maintain the social, economic, cultural, and political status quo rather than upset it. Indeed, Bowles and Gintis (1976) have shown that schools in the U.S. operate to reproduce the labor relations necessary for the functioning of capitalism, suggesting that social relationships outside the classroom are mirrored and reproduced in the classroom.

From this perspective, two principal dimensions explain language classrooms and their relationship to the social and political context. First, language classrooms are part of a much larger social world. As Tollefson (1991) and Auerbach (1995) argue, for example, education for Indochinese refugees, either in resettlement camps in Southeast Asia or in ESL classrooms in the U.S., needs to be understood as part of a larger social and economic policy. As Tollefson (1991) explains, "Refugees are educated for work as janitors, waiters in restaurants, assemblers in electronic plants, and other low-paying jobs offering little opportunity for advancement, regardless of whether the refugees have skills ... suitable for higher paying jobs. Thus refugee ESL classes emphasize language competencies considered appropriate for minimum-wage work: following orders, asking questions, confirming understanding, and apologizing for mistakes" (p.108). Similarly, Auerbach points out that

work-oriented content often is geared, on the one hand, toward specific job-related vocabulary and literacy tasks (reading time cards or pay stubs) and, on the other, toward 'appropriate' attitudes and behaviors and their concomitant language functions or competencies (learning how to call in sick, request clarification of job instructions, make small talk, follow safety regulations). (1995, p.17)

From this perspective, then, we can see ESL in the U.S. as part of a social system that positions people of non-English speaking background into a

particular socioeconomic niche.

Second, we need to understand the classroom itself as a social domain, not merely a reflection of the larger society beyond the classroom walls but also as a place where social relations are played out. As Auerbach points out, such relations between the society and the classroom can be seen at many levels, including curriculum, instructional content, materials, and language choice. For Auerbach (1995) these concerns point in two directions: on the one hand, classrooms need to “include explicit analysis of the social context” outside the classroom, and, on the other hand, “students must be involved in making pedagogical choices inside the classroom” (p.28). Thus we can see how classrooms need to turn outwards to the broader social worlds as well as inwards to their own social world. But we should be wary of viewing this as only a two-dimensional relationship: we also need to consider the relationships between classrooms and schools or community centers, between these and local communities, between communities and larger social institutions, and between classrooms and global relations.

What emerges most clearly from this perspective is that it is impossible to believe any longer in the myth that teaching English can be reduced to helping people gain access to social and economic power. Rather, we are part of complex social, economic, and political relations that flow back and forth through our classroom walls. Thus, the social relations inside Canagarajah’s class must be seen in relation to class and ethnic relations in Jaffna and Sri Lanka. Likewise, we need to understand that the gender, age, ethnicity, and social class of Brian Morgan’s “Chinese” students are inextricably linked to English and their communities and, more generally, to immigration and other policies of Canada, China, and Malaysia.

Cultural Reproduction, Resistance, and Cultural Politics

Giroux (1983) argues that theories of cultural reproduction take up where theories of social reproduction leave off: they focus much more closely on the means by which schooling reproduces social relations. One important figure whose work has become well known in this area is Pierre Bourdieu, a sociologist perhaps best known for his introduction of the now widely used term, “cultural capital.” The development of the notion of cultural capital was an attempt to theorize the systems by which certain children brought certain valued attributes to school that could be exchanged for other forms of capital (e.g. social connections or school

certificates), while other students' capital was not valued or exchangeable. Cultural capital, Bourdieu explains, was first developed

as a theoretical hypothesis which made it possible to explain the unequal scholastic achievement of children originating from the different social classes by relating academic success, i.e. the specific profits which children from the different classes and class fractions can obtain in the academic market, the distribution of cultural capital between the classes and class fractions. (1986, p.243)

Shirley Brice Heath's (1983) ethnography of how different communities in the Carolinas in the U.S. socialize their children into different ways of "taking from books," and how the language and literacy skills of these children were valued differently in school, fleshes out how such cultural capital is developed, valued, or devalued. In comparison to Heath's more subtle analysis of different community cultures — the Black community of Trackton and the White community of Roadville were both working-class communities — Bourdieu's more critical social analysis tends to equate forms of cultural capital with a rather overgeneralized and static notion of class. Thus, although Bourdieu provides some useful tools for thinking about how schools reproduce social inequality, his view tends to be rather closed and deterministic. As Jenkins (1992) explains, Bourdieu's view of cultural reproduction does not allow for change and does not explain how people take up and resist cultural capital.

These critical understandings of social reproduction in education locate schooling in the context of social class and inequality, showing how schools are precisely part of society, both reflecting and reproducing social relations. Yet, as Giroux (1983) and Canagarajah (1993) argue, there is a danger that this view of reproduction allows no understanding of opposition and resistance, of the complex ways students and teachers act within the context of schooling. Canagarajah (1993) describes how his students resisted many aspects of the English course: "On the one hand, they oppose the alien discourses behind the language and textbook. On the other hand, they oppose a process-oriented pedagogy and desire a product-oriented one" (p.617). Thus, we also need to account for ways students and teachers act with a degree of autonomy within these broader social and cultural relations.

What is needed, then, is a way of understanding resistance and change, a better understanding of what actually goes on in classrooms, and a sense that we, as educators, can do something. We need to escape over-

deterministic, over-totalizing critical analyses to show how education may make a difference. For these reasons Giroux (1988) talks of the need to develop a language of both critique and hope in critical educational theory, and Roger Simon (1992) talks of a “pedagogy of possibility.”

Nevertheless, it has been useful to look at culture as the means by which social inequality is reproduced, because this view insists that we understand culture in political terms. One of the difficulties in talking about culture in a TESOL context is the tendency for culture to be reduced to different behaviors of our students. This is a deterministic view of culture, whereby students “belong” to certain cultures (Chinese, Japanese, or Spanish) that determine the way they behave (see Kubota, 1999; Pennycook, 1998). On the one hand culture is a determining factor in one’s behavior; on the other hand, culture tends to deal only with the “exotic” and superficial of cultural behavior: food, dress, and religious festivals. But if we start from the premise that cultures are not static frameworks but competing ways of framing the world, we can start to understand the cultural politics of classrooms. Thus, in both Canagarajah’s and Morgan’s classrooms, the Tamil and Chinese backgrounds of their students are not reduced to learning styles or food preferences but instead are part of a complex world that students bring to the classroom, a world in which culture and ethnicity is bound up with other political domains such as social class, gender, and age.

Cultural politics, then, gives us a more open way of addressing questions of struggles over difference, such as whose versions of reality gain legitimacy and whose representations of the world gain sway over others (see Jordan & Weedon, 1995). It is clear that representations of the world that are given credence tend to be the views of powerful and influential groups. And the official sanctioning of such knowledge and culture, particularly in institutions such as schools through set curricula, reinforce the position and the worldview of those groups. From this perspective we can see the ideologies that operate in our classrooms and the social relations that they produce. This view of cultural politics allows us to see classrooms as sites where different worldviews or discourses come into dynamic contact.

The Cultural Politics of ELT

Once we open up this perspective of the cultural politics of classrooms,

we can start to see that everything we do in the classroom is related to broader concerns. This relationship of classrooms to the outside world is a reciprocal one: the classroom is not determined by the outside world, but the classroom is part of the world, both affected by what happens outside its walls and affecting what happens there. As I suggested earlier, the very fact that we are teaching English needs to be understood in terms beyond those of national language policy. As Robert Phillipson (1992) and I (Pennycook, 1994) have argued, this global spread of English is bound up with many cultural, economic, and political forces: the dominance of U.S. media, the role of international corporations, the spread of particular forms of culture and knowledge, and the development of a very particular "world order."

As English teachers, whether we are working in a so-called English-speaking country or not, we cannot escape the implications of these global connections. As Benson (1997) observes, teachers of English "are more often than not engaged in political processes of a distinctive kind." On the one hand, the "acceptance of English as a second language very often implies the acceptance of the global economic and political order for which English serves as the 'international language.'" To understand English teaching in an international context, then, we need to be able to understand how English is connected to other global forces. On the other hand, "learning foreign languages (and again English in particular) is more often than not premised upon inequalities between learner and target communities" (Benson, 1997, p.27). This is part of the social and cultural context of our teaching. It matters that Canagarajah is teaching English to his students in Sri Lanka, because of its colonial and current history in Sri Lanka and India, and because of its current role in the world. It matters that Brian Morgan is teaching English to students of Chinese background, students who live in complex relations to families in Hong Kong or Taiwan, China, and to the Toronto community in which they now live.

What we do in classrooms also needs to be seen in similar terms. Not only are there social relations in the classroom in terms of who speaks and who sets the agenda, but the very ways we run classes need to be seen in terms of cultural politics. Assumptions about "active" and "passive" students, about the use of group work and pair work, about self-interest as a key to motivation ("tell us about yourself"), about memorization being an outmoded learning strategy, about oral communication as the goal and means of instruction, about an informal atmosphere in the class being

most conducive to language learning, about learning activities being fun, about games being an appropriate way of teaching and learning — all these, despite the claims by some researchers that they are empirically preferable, are cultural preferences. And this means that the classroom becomes a site of cultural struggle over preferred modes of learning and teaching.

As Canagarajah observes, his students started to resist his more Westernized teaching approach and opted instead for an approach to learning with which they were more familiar. Such cultural preferences cannot be mapped simply onto cultural bodies: Canagarajah is, like his students, a Tamil Lankan; but he is also a “young (in my early 30s), male, ‘progressive,’ Christian, culturally Westernized, middle class, native Tamil, bilingual, director of English language teaching at the university” (p.620). Similarly, Morgan argues that what might look a fairly homogenous label of “Chinese in Toronto” covers a vast range of diversity. We bring mixed cultural identities to teaching moments. But to say that students may have different preferences does not mean that we should just do what students want; Canagarajah feels that the students did themselves little good by pursuing this route. What it does mean, however, is that we need to understand the cultural politics of these moments.

One of Canagarajah’s interests is in the ways that students react to and reinterpret the textbooks, *Kernel Lessons*, used for the class. Since these valuable foreign texts were handed out and taken in again at the beginning and end of each class, he was able to see the annotations and comments the students made in their textbooks. These comments varied from the Tamilization of the characters, the addition of phrases (in English) such as “I love you darling,” and dialogues, to the inclusion of references to the struggle for Tamil independence. Students also had difficulties interpreting some pictures, being confused, for example, by a picture of a character in prison, when he was pictured alone in his cell with a uniform and shoes (all unlikely in a Lankan context). The important point to take from this, however, is that all textbooks, all teaching materials carry cultural and ideological messages. The pictures, the lifestyles, the stories, and the dialogues are full of cultural content; all may potentially be in disaccord with the cultural worlds of the students. Everything we use in class is laden with meanings from outside and interpretations from inside.

Once we start to look at classrooms as an intersection of different ideologies and cultures, we can start to see that language learning is not an abstract cognitive process where bits of language become lodged in the

brain. Rather, it is a highly complex social and cultural process. Once we start to understand that cultural politics happen not only in the classroom and the world but also, inevitably, in the heads of our students, then we have to see classrooms as sites where identities are produced and changed. We need to understand that these identities are multiple and shifting and tied to language and language learning.

Brian Morgan illustrates this well by showing how a simple class on intonation, in fact, has a great deal to do with social and cultural relations, history, community, and identity. As we are taken through various stages of this class, Morgan shows how questions of social identity are constantly being reworked in classrooms: “Each ESL classroom is a unique, complex, and dynamic social environment ...: Each classroom ... becomes a resource for community development, where students re-evaluate the past (i.e. the rules of identity) in the context of the present and, through classroom reflection and interaction, forge new cultural traditions, histories, and solidarities that potentially improve their life chances for the future” (pp.432–433). Morgan discusses how the students’ exploration of different possibilities of intonation in dialogues — some more acquiescent, some more aggressive — raised questions of social and gender relations in the Chinese community. Such possibilities have major significance for the relationship between the classroom and the broader social context, as well as for our understandings of ESL methodology and research:

ESL teachers should pay close if not equal attention to the historical and local conditions that influence identity formation when contextualizing language activities in the classroom. A far more difficult challenge for teachers, however, will be to address their own sociopolitical assumptions inscribed within TESOL’s theories and technologies of language acquisition, methodology, and research. (1997, p.447)

Towards Resistance, Change, and Engagement

A number of teachers and researchers have met the demands of this sociopolitical and cultural political understanding of language classrooms and have developed relevant pedagogical or research strategies. I chose to discuss Morgan’s and Canagarajah’s classrooms not only because they show these relations but also because their articles are written as teacher/researchers. They write both as teachers teaching English and

researchers trying to relate their classrooms to a broader social world. This raises further pedagogical and research-oriented questions. In order to be pedagogically more effective, we need not only better theoretical understandings of classrooms but better researched classrooms as well. As Canagarajah (1993) argues, what we are lacking at present is critical ethnographies of language classrooms, which he defines as

an ideologically sensitive orientation to the study of culture that can penetrate the noncommittal objectivity and scientism encouraged by the positivistic empirical attitude behind descriptive ethnography and can demystify the interests served by particular cultures to unravel their relation to issues of power. (p.605)

That is to say, the perspective on the classroom outlined here demands a response in terms of research that keeps one eye on the workings of the classroom and another eye on the broader social and political context.

We can approach such study in a number of ways, from inclusivity, to issues, to engagement. An inclusivity focus points to the importance of making sure that people of different backgrounds are represented in our texts and our classroom possibilities. Many ESL textbooks still work with a 1970s Kellogg's® Cornflakes vision of the family: a blond, white, heterosexual family, with one daughter and one son (all of whom clearly visit the dentist regularly). An argument for greater inclusivity acknowledges that both inside and outside the classroom we live in a world different from Kellogg's®. Arguments for the inclusion, for example, of women in occupations other than at the kitchen sink, have more recently included arguments for alternative lifestyles, of gay and lesbian couples, gay and lesbian parents, single parents, people of color, people with disabilities, and so on.

A different focus (though by no means incompatible) looks to include issues of identity and difference in the language teaching curriculum. This I shall call the issues focus. It is an attempt not just to have difference as a background possibility in the textbooks but also to raise more overtly such issues as a content focus in class. Thus, we may find textbooks or curricula include sections on "gay marriages" or "women in the workforce." While this does seem to put issues of difference on the agenda, there are often also problems here, since at least from within the textbook world, we tend to get a very sanitized version of difference. Much of what is presented occurs within an overarching liberal agenda that works with a bland notion of alternatives and social issues. Fundamental questions of identity get

slotted into a framework of issues, so that one week we may be dealing with the environment or animal rights and another with issues of gender or sexuality. There is also a tendency to deal with a fixed set of dichotomous possibilities (e.g. nature or nurture; is homosexuality normal? etc.) (see Pennycook, 1997; Chapter 4).

A third possibility is what I term an engagement focus. This is an approach to language education that sees such issues as gender, race, class, sexuality, postcolonialism, and so on as so fundamental to identity and language that they need to form the basis of curricular organization and pedagogy. Arleen Schenke (1996) has strongly criticized what she calls “the tired treatment of gender and ‘women’s lib’ in many of our ESL textbooks” (p.156). In place of these tired liberal, issues-based approaches, she proposes what she calls a “practice in historical engagement,” a focus on “the struggle over histories (and forgetting) in relation to the cultures of English and to the cultures students bring with them to the classroom already-knowing” (p.156). From this point of view, then, questions of difference, identity, and culture are not merely issues to be discussed but are about understanding fully how discourses structure our lives. Questions of gender or race are not themes to be discussed but make up the underlying rationale for the course. “Feminism,” Schenke argues, “like antiracism, is thus not simply one more social issue in ESL but a way of thinking, a way of teaching, and, most importantly, a way of learning” (p.158). Such a view also informs the thinking of Canagarajah and Morgan. Understanding the social and cultural politics of classrooms ultimately has to do with a way of thinking, teaching, and learning.

Auerbach deals with the social politics and cultural politics of classrooms through what she terms “participatory action research.” This research aims to do two things: (1) to give students control of the curriculum so that they start to research questions regarding language and the community that are important to them; and (2) to bring the outside community into the classroom to make it a focus of classroom work and discussion. An extensive explanation of this is given elsewhere in this volume. Similarly, Norton Peirce (1995), following Heath’s (1983) suggestions for involving students and teachers in researching the literacy practices of their communities, argues for “classroom based social research” in order to “engage the social identities of students in ways that will improve their language learning outside the classroom and help them claim the right to speak” (1995, p.26). Once we view classrooms as both

social sites in themselves and as part of the larger social world, the types of materials we use and the activities we engage in become open to a range of questions of difference and identity with which it becomes impossible not to engage. Thus, it is not enough to acknowledge the social and cultural dimensions of our classrooms: we also need to engage students with the implications.

Conclusion: The Heart of the Crucial Issues of Our Time

A typical applied linguistic view of the classroom has tended to see it as some sort of quasi-laboratory in which languages are learned and teaching methods performed (with possibly some connection between the two). This chapter, by contrast, has argued for the importance of seeing the classroom as a social and cultural space. This sense of the social and cultural, furthermore, is not the liberal dream of equitable social relations and celebratory multiculturalism, but a view always concerned with questions of power. From this sociopolitical and cultural political viewpoint, the language classroom becomes a site of contestation, where different codes, different visions of the world, and different pedagogies are in competition and conflict. Auerbach suggests:

Once we begin looking at classrooms through an ideological lens, dynamics of power and inequality show up in every aspect of classroom life. ... We are forced to ask questions about the most natural seeming practices: Where is the class located? Where does the teacher stand or sit? Who asks questions? What kinds of questions are asked? Who chooses the learning materials? How is progress evaluated? Who evaluates it? (Auerbach, 1995, p.12)

The classroom is a microcosm of the larger social and cultural world, reflecting, reproducing and changing that world. This should not be seen, however, as a pessimistic view of language teaching but as a necessary understanding of the competing demands we face as teachers. Everything outside the classroom, from language policies to cultural contexts of schooling, may have an impact on what happens in the classroom. And everything in the classroom, from how we teach, what we teach, and how we respond to students, to the materials we use, and the ways we assess the students, needs to be seen as social and cultural practices with broad implications. The challenge is to understand these relationships and to find ways of always focusing on the local while at the same time keeping an eye

on the broader horizons. The view of our classroom walls as permeable means that what we do in our classrooms is about changing the worlds we live in. As James Gee notes:

English teachers can cooperate in their own marginalization by seeing themselves as "language teachers" with no connection to such social and political issues. Or they ... accept their role as persons who socialize students into a world view that, given its power here and abroad, must be looked at critically, comparatively, and with a constant sense of the possibilities for change. Like it or not, English teachers stand at the very heart of the most crucial educational, cultural, and political issues of our time. (Gee, 1994, p.190)

Along with the difficulties and dangers such a view brings, it also presents us with exciting challenges, and it can help us see that once we take the social politics and cultural politics of our classrooms seriously, what we do as English teachers matters, for we indeed stand at the very heart of the most crucial educational, cultural, and political issues of our time.

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Chapter 6

Critical Moments in a TESOL Praxicum

This chapter is based on an article that first appeared in B. Norton and K. Toohey (Eds.)(2004), *Critical pedagogies and language learning* (pp.327–346).

Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Departures

The two-level suburban train clanks out of Central Station. Heading away from the city, it's not as crowded as the incoming trains, but I still find myself having to stand by the doors. We creak and rattle across several sets of points before finding our suburban heading, passing through increasingly unfamiliar station names. Outside, it's an achingly clear blue morning; the air is chilly, but the sun is starting to warm the day. It's June, which means the start of winter and the end of the semester just round the corner. Essay marking and clear blue skies. And that end-of-semester exhaustion. It's been another long semester: conferences in Manila, Vancouver, Singapore, Abu Dhabi; I was teaching from 7 to 9 last night; and here I am on a Friday morning, heading off to find a small language school somewhere in the suburbs whose address I fortunately remembered to print off from my e-mail late last night.

The TESOL (teaching English to speakers of other languages) practicum. For many of us involved in teacher education, the teaching practicum holds, I think, a certain ambivalence: It's hard work; it's disruptive; it involves lots of traveling; it's too time consuming; it demands that we show expertise in a domain from which we are often increasingly distanced in our current work. And yet, it's also a welcome break from offices, meetings, seminars, corridors; it takes us back to the classrooms where, in moments of unlikely nostalgia, we often seem to place our happiest and most successful teaching moments; it gives us a chance to engage directly with the "real work" of teaching (the classroom, the "chalkface," the "real world" — all those metaphors that construct both us and the classroom in ways we may want to both acknowledge and avoid), a chance to forget the books, the theories, the papers, the articles, the

paradigms, the concepts, the need to keep up. It gives us the chance to get back to something that, at least for those of us who've taught English for many years, we may feel we really know how to do: A dozen or so years of practice and knowledge written onto our teacherly bodies.

The train pauses at another station and I gaze out, trying to remember when I've been through this part of the city before. Nearly all the people on the platform look Southeast Asian. Vietnamese? Chinese? Korean? I find myself trying to catch what people are speaking as they get on the train. Cantonese. Then Vietnamese, I think. Not sure about the next two. Vietnamese again. Another of those complexly mixed suburbs whose daily linguistic and cultural negotiations remain largely a mystery to most of us from mainstream Anglo life. I make a mental note that this looks like an interesting area to come back and explore. But I suspect I won't be back out this way for a while. And I start to wonder about this way of looking at suburbs and the possibility of interesting restaurants and shops. What kind of center-periphery/center-suburbs relationship is this, with its fascination with the suburban high-street display of ethnic difference? The train pulls out of the station and I glance up at the route map above the door. Three more stations to go.

I'm traveling light — a briefcase with some papers for a midday meeting elsewhere slung over my shoulder — but at the same time, as with all journeys, there's a lot of other baggage with me too. The notion of embodied teacher knowledge also makes me feel uncomfortable: I'm not very sure about how my embodied knowledge of teaching relates to the curriculum the students have been following. Embodied knowledge may have an element of conservatism about it. And I haven't been teaching any of the subjects that the students take as part of the foundation for this teaching, the practicum subject itself, or the courses on curriculum design and methodology and language in social context that go with it. Indeed, rather guiltily I realize that I don't really know what's taught in those courses. Do I really know what I'm supposed to be looking for? Will I start to question precisely what this learner teacher has just been taught to do? I recall a practicum observation from last year when I asked the teacher why she didn't make use of the students' languages in the class. She was puzzled. Weren't we supposed to be using only English? But then again, we don't promote an English-only ideology (see Auerbach, 1993) in our courses either, so it's not exactly clear what the relationship is between the curriculum, the practice of each teacher, and the knowledge brought by

the observer.¹

Two more stations to go. In addition to the bag hanging over one shoulder, full of concerns about my own knowledge relative to what this teacher will know and want to know, there is a heavy bag over my other shoulder weighted down with concerns about how I will be able to introduce a critical element into this process. My aim is also to be a bit disruptive. I've been thinking and writing a lot recently about how we can understand the various meanings of the notion "critical" (see Pennycook, 2001), and I run over these ideas as we approach my destination. There's the sense of *critical* used in critical thinking. Unfortunately, this is both the weakest and most common version of the critical in many domains of education. This view of being critical sees the issue as only one of rational questioning procedures, as a way of trying to create objective distance, of identifying bias or lack of logic. This is all very well as far as it goes, but it is what I would call *liberal ostrichism* in that it buries its head in the sands of objectivism (ostrichism) and fails to link its questioning to a broader social agenda (and by so doing, of course, reproduces its own rational and liberal social agendas). Another sense of critical is concerned mainly with making things socially relevant: a reaction to the abstract objectivism (cf. Vološinov, 1973) of many domains of applied linguistics. Such a view is more promising, but without a larger vision of social critique, it remains only a version of the critical that attempts to correlate language with social context.

One more station to go. We pass through an area of brick warehouses and low factories, the drab industrial structures of a passing era. A third approach to being critical is to incorporate explicit social critique and to see one's work as overtly aimed toward trying to change inequitable social conditions and people's understanding of them. This is what I term *emancipatory modernism*. Its strengths are its clearly articulated social critique and explicit agenda for change; its weaknesses are its static assumptions about social and political relations and its belief in awareness of inequality as a step toward rationalist emancipation. It is this version of critical work that has come to dominate critical work in TESOL and applied linguistics, as found in critical discourse analysis (for example, Fairclough, 1995; Wodak, 1996), critical pedagogy (Giroux, 1988; Kanpol, 1994), critical literacy (Clark and Ivanič, 1997), or critical views on language policy (Phillipson, 1992). While crucially putting questions of power, inequality, rights, and injustice to the fore, this focus tends also to reaffirm concepts such as emancipation, awareness, rationality, objectivity, equality,

democracy, and transformation, which, from another perspective, may be viewed as products of the same system that gives rise to those very problems that this framework aims to critique. Thus, it both critiques and reproduces at the same time.

The train pulls into the station and I walk down the platform toward the exit sign. It is this dilemma that has given rise to the postmodern, postcolonial, or post-Occidental (see Mignolo, 2000) concern that we need not only a critical domain of investigation but also a reappraisal of the frames of knowledge that are applied to those domains. A final way of viewing the notion of critical, then, is as a form of *problematizing practice* (see Dean, 1994; Pennycook, 2001), a perspective that insists on casting far more doubt on the categories we employ to understand the social world and on assumptions about awareness, rationality, emancipation, and so forth. This position has its weaknesses: in particular, its sometimes obfuscatory views on language, discourse, subjectivity, and difference, and its difficulty, because of its constant self-questioning and the resultant pull toward the vortex of relativity, in establishing firm enough ground to be able to articulate any clear political stance. But its strengths are also significant. As Foucault (1980) put it, “the problem is not so much one of defining a political ‘position’ (which is to choose from a pre-existing set of possibilities) but to imagine and to bring into being new schemas of politicisation” (p.190). From this perspective, it is then possible to embark on the ethical task not only of seeking to understand different forms of politics but also of provincializing those European frames of knowledge that have come to dominate what counts as the critical (see Chakrabarty, 2000). At the very least, viewing the critical in terms of *problematizing practice* gives us a way of working in language education that doesn’t reduce critical work either to the domain of critical thinking or to crude dialectics between micro and macro relations and, at the same time, keeps questions of language, discourse, power, and identity to the fore.

As I climb the stairs toward the bridge over the tracks, I start to feel weighed down by all this baggage. Hadn’t I been told that all I had to do was watch the learner teacher give her lesson, discuss any particular concerns, and give her some comments as a basis for writing in her reflective journal? And yet, there’s another sense of the notion critical that seems important here, too: critical as in a critical moment, a point of significance, an instant when things change. It seems to me that in the practicum observation, and, come to think of it, our teaching more

generally, this is what we're looking for — those critical moments when we seize the chance to do something different, when we realize that some new understanding is coming about. This is perhaps a rather neglected notion in general approaches to teaching, discussions of teacher education, and critical approaches to education. It is perhaps inevitable that we tend to look at education in terms of the syllabus (the readings, the course materials) and the curriculum more broadly (the teaching methodology, the assignments, the discussions, the activities). But how do we capture those critical moments where something changes, where someone “gets it,” where someone throws out a comment that shifts the discourse? A tough question for all teachers is how we manage to pick up on those moments of potential transformation and turn them into critical moments in both senses. And given the limited input I have to this part of the teacher education program, it is this sense of the critical that will, indeed, be critical here.

Destinations

Next to the station, I cut down a small back street to the main road. I'm trying to figure out the area. Certainly Chinese and Korean, but also some Eastern European. There's a bustle of different local businesses that suggests this suburb is doing well enough. Once across the busy main road, I head past a mixed variety of shops until I find the solid dark brick of the church. It stands close to the road, a large imposing structure surrounded by a low wall. Quite strikingly, it is surrounded by notices. One announces in English and Korean its Presbyterian orientation and the times of the services; another asks in English, “What good is it to gain the whole world and lose your soul? (Mark 8: 36)”;

three more announce the presence of the English Language School, one claiming, “We can help you speak better English — ENROL NOW,” another “Improve your listening, speaking, reading and pronunciation skills.” Classes are on Monday, Wednesday and Friday, 9:30–12:30, with “Child care available” (“Women only” has been whited out), or Tuesday and Thursday, 7:00–9:00 P.M. for “Men and women.” I start trying to recreate the history behind that white-out and the relationships between these layerings of signs. Part of one of the signs has been covered by a poster — a sign of important local concerns — urging people “It's time to have your say! ON BROTHELS ... Brothels will affect you, your children, your life” But the sign I linger over longest, in

English and Chinese, announces:

Easy English Church
 For New English Speakers
 Sundays 9:00 a.m. – 9:45 a.m.
 Come and join us — Everyone welcome

I'm intrigued by this idea of an "easy English church" and the long history of connections between churches and language teaching. Following Mignolo (2000), we can crudely describe four principal phases of globalization: the Christian mission to convert the world, the European mission to civilize the world, the wealthy nations' mission to develop the world, and the transnational mission to capitalize the world. According to Mignolo, these did not replace each other, but rather can be understood in terms of "the coexistence of successive global designs that are part of the imaginary of the modern/colonial world system" (p.280). The missionary relationship to different languages has been a complex one and certainly has not been predominantly concerned with promoting European languages. The crucial issue was always getting the knowledge of the Bible to the heathen (along with various other Christian concepts of discipline, order, cleanliness, and decency), and the best way to do that was usually by describing and then translating into local languages. Indeed, the contemporary descendants of missionary zeal may be descriptive linguists rather than English-promoting capitalists. But as global relations shifted through the second, third, and fourth phases, the relationship to European languages, and especially English, shifted. Now English had become a marketable commodity, with Christianity riding on its back. From the waves of born-again teachers from the American Midwest heading off to China and the former Soviet Union as English teacher-missionaries, to the Bible-clutching Seventh Day Adventists offering free English lessons at the corner of Hyde Park in Sydney, English has become the hook (see Pennycook and Coutand-Marin, 2003). Easy English Church for New English Speakers. I make a note to find out more about the connections here between English, Presbyterianism, Korea, and China. But I've got enough baggage with me already and I'm almost late, so I hurry round the back of the church to the church hall.

This is old-style community English as a second language (ESL), a long way from the brave new world of whiteboards, colored marker pens, and plastic chairs with fold-down desks. Upstairs in the hall there's a large

main room with a couple of tables covered with assorted chipped teacups and chairs gathered in a circle. Leading off from the main room with its worn floorboards, threadbare carpet, high wooden ceiling and tall church windows, there are several smaller rooms that also serve as classrooms. A brief wave of nostalgia comes over me. It's been a while since I was in a place like this, and it reminds me of some of my first teaching jobs twenty years ago. I find Liz, the student teacher, and her cooperating teacher, Barbara, and start talking about the upcoming lesson. How will Liz's lesson today fit into the broader program? What level are the students? What kind of backgrounds? What will the main focus be today? Why? Soon, the students start arriving, so I settle myself in a corner to observe. It's a small class — about ten students — at a lower intermediate level. The majority are under twenty and Korean — apparently, a number of them have come from Korea to stay with relatives here and learn English. Some connection through the church.

The teacher has chosen to do a lesson focusing on practical language for what to do when something is broken at home: vocabulary for describing various problems (my sink is blocked, the fuse has blown, etc.); practice dialogues for talking to plumbers, electricians, and so forth; and ways of asking a landlord/lady to get something fixed for you. There's a good mix of activities: a bit of grammar, plenty of vocabulary, practicing dialogues, doing free dialogues, some reading. The blackboard is used well, there are pictures to elicit and explain vocabulary items, and there's a tape for a short listening activity. It's going to be followed up by a writing task in which they will write a letter requesting for various items to be fixed. The students participate fairly actively: There's clearly quite a variety of levels in this class, but they all seem to find something useful. The main difficulty is a student of Italian background who wants to talk and to keep the teacher's attention. It's fun for a while — he's amusing and very active — but soon it becomes too much — his English is hard to follow and the others tune out when he's talking; he tends to go off on tangents and keeps demanding the teacher's attention. But how to stop him? I make a note — clearly this is something to talk about afterward. But what else? What else can I find that could be deemed critical?

Connections

Afterward, we find a quiet space in another of the small rooms off the

central hall and sit down to discuss the lesson. The general process here is for the observer to give the teacher-learner a copy of the notes written during the class and to discuss various points. For the student, one goal is to pick up on a particular point of interest and to write up reflections on that point in the reflective journal, which will later be handed in to the teacher supervising the practicum. This focus on reflection fits closely with current thinking on teacher education. Summarizing recent trends, Freeman and Johnson (1998) point out several emergent reconceptualizations of teacher education in TESOL. Most significant is the recognition that "much of what teachers know about teaching comes from their memories as students, as language learners, and as students of language teaching" (p.401). Thus, we have to take into account our students' embodied histories of learning and teaching, the memories, pains, and desires that have been written onto their educated bodies. Learning to teach is not just about learning a body of knowledge and techniques; it is also about learning to work in a complex sociopolitical and cultural political space (see Liston & Zeichner, 1991; Pennycook, 2000; Chapter 5) and negotiating ways of doing this with our past histories, fears, and desires; our own knowledges and cultures; our students' wishes and preferences; and the institutional constraints and collaborations.

In addition to this broader literature on teacher education, a number of educators have also addressed the teaching practicum in TESOL (Freeman, 1990; Johnson, 1996; Richards & Crookes, 1988). The central focus of this work has been on questions such as how teachers cope with the real world of the classroom or how they start to change and learn to be more independent. Johnson (1996), for example, discusses the mismatch between a student teacher's vision of what teaching should be and her discovery of the realities of high school classrooms. Johnson concludes that preservice teacher education needs to move away from its prepackaged bits of knowledge delivered in a series of courses and instead provide preservice teachers "with realistic expectations about what the practicum teaching experience will be like and what they can expect to gain from it" (p.48). Others, such as Gebhard (1990), have focused more on the processes of change during the practicum and, in particular, how interactions between participants can be arranged "so that student teachers have opportunities to change their teaching behavior" (p.129).

My own interest, however, is in how, as educators, we can intervene in the process of the practicum observation in order to bring about potential

change. In addition, as already discussed, this concern is constrained by the requirement that such intervention be critical (as defined above) and by the need to work through critical moments. If such interests seem obscure and oddly constrained, I would also suggest (as I have tried to illustrate above) that they emerge from the practical concern from my own context of fitting a practicum observation into an overfull schedule (which is probably not so uncommon) and from a more general interest in how we can seize critical moments. Looking at the process of intervening in the practicum, Freeman (1990) discusses various modes of intervention: the *directive* — where the purpose is to “improve the student teacher’s performance according to the educator’s criteria” (p.108); the *alternatives* option, in which the aim is to “develop the student teacher’s awareness of the choices involved in deciding what and how to teach, and, more importantly, to develop the ability to establish and articulate the criteria that inform those decisions” (p.109); and, finally, the *nondirective* option, the purpose of which is to “provide the student teacher with a forum to clarify perceptions of what he or she is doing in teaching and for the educator to fully understand, although not necessarily to accept or agree with, those perceptions” (p.112).

All of this is well and good as far as it goes. My own conception of finding critical moments fits in with this broad orientation. On the one hand, like Johnson (1996), I do not believe that the teacher practicum should be viewed as a period in which teacher-learners practice the techniques they have learned in their university courses; rather, this is a time for teacher-learners to try to reconcile three competing domains: the knowledge and ideas gained through their formal study; the history, beliefs, and embodied practices they bring with them; and the constraints and possibilities presented by the particular teaching context. For this reason, it is in some ways quite useful that, as an occasional practicum observer, I do not come to the teaching practicum with a checklist of things I want to ensure are being done, though it might also be argued that if practicum observation is no more than setting one set of teacher values and beliefs (my own) against another’s (the teacher-learner), we are only dealing here with a clash of potentially incommensurable teacher histories. On the other hand, my approach to teacher education is oriented toward change. For Freeman (1990), the goal of the educator is “to help the student teacher move towards an understanding of effective teaching and independence in teaching” (pp.116–117). I would describe my own goals, however, more

in terms of helping teachers to develop a critical practice in their teaching or “that continuous reflexive integration of thought, desire and action sometimes referred to as ‘praxis’” (Simon, 1992, p.49). Indeed, it might be useful to talk not only of critical praxis but also of the *praxicum*. This might help us think not so much in terms of the practicum, in which teacher-learners get to practice what they have learned in their theory courses, but rather in terms of the praxicum, in which teacher-learners develop the continuous reflexive integration of thought, desire, and action.

The question, then, is how to open up a critical agenda through the pursuit of critical moments. Critical approaches to language education, particularly critical pedagogy, have been critiqued for their bombastic posturing, for creating their own regime of truth, and for developing forms of language and knowledge that do not seem helpful for teachers (see Gore, 1993; Johnston, 1999). At the same time, mainstream approaches to teacher education in TESOL have frequently lacked a social or political dimension that helps locate English and English language teaching within the complex social, cultural, economic, and political environments in which it occurs (Auerbach, 1995; Canagarajah, 1999; Pennycook, 2000; Chapter 5). What I’m looking for here, then, is a way of doing critical teacher education that does not put all its eggs in a critical syllabus basket (a critical-directive option) but rather seeks ways of probing, discussing, and negotiating in these moments of teacher reflection. Of course, ideally, the critical education curriculum might work along lines such as those described in Brutt-Griffler and Samimy’s (1999) account of a critical teacher education program that used reflective diaries over an extended period to explore the construction of the native-nonnative speaker divide. But my interest here is in the smaller, unplanned micromoments when possibilities for critical reflection come and go. Rather than a critical-directive framework in which the ideas and issues have been laid out beforehand, then, I am looking for a critical alternatives or a critical nondirective option, one in which other possibilities come to the fore as we discuss choices that were made in the class. This is a search to find alternatives to the *orthopraxy* of the standard practicum and instead to develop a notion of *critical heteropraxy* within a reconceptualized teacher praxicum.²

Two other recent practicum observations have provided small examples of this. In the first, I was talking to two teachers, Sarah, whose first language was English, and Christian, for whom English was a second/third language, after their cotaught class. We got onto the topic of

grammar and knowledge of language and out of this discussion emerged a shift of power. Whereas the so-called nonnative speaker of English (for a critique and discussion of this concept, see, for example, Brutt-Griffler & Samimy, 1999; Singh, 1998), Christian, had, until then, always been the disadvantaged one of these two teachers — worried about his command of English, deferring to Sarah's judgments, overpreparing materials to compensate for this presumed deficiency — as we talked our way through this, the tide started to turn: Christian was proficient in at least one other language; he had been an extremely successful learner of English; he had traveled, learned languages, engaged with other cultures; and he had, at his fingertips, a broad and formal knowledge of the language and how it worked. As we talked, Sarah, as a monolingual Anglo-teacher, started to become aware of her monolingualism and monoculturalism as well as the fact that it was she who was more out of place in the multilingual, multicultural context of the ESL classroom, not her “nonnative speaker” coteacher. This shift in power and moment for reflection, then, came from a small opening in the feedback session after class.

Soon after this, I was observing Bob, a teacher in a lower intermediate reading class. The text was “Charlie Two Shoes,” a simplified newspaper article telling the story of a young Chinese boy who had been exchanging fresh eggs for canned food with U.S. soldiers in Southern China in 1948. Eventually, after establishing a close relationship with them and having been given the name Charlie Two Shoes as the soldiers' closest approximation to his Chinese name, the boy had been left behind when the army pulled out. In the 1980s, one of them had received a letter from Charlie and had invited him to the United States. After various visa problems, he and his family had been granted permission to stay, and thus we see a smiling Charlie Two Shoes now living in Ohio close to his old American friends. Why this text? I wanted to know, when we discussed the lesson afterward. Well, basically, it turned out, because they hadn't done it before. But did Bob have any problems with it?

One of the first things that came up is the problem with the name. Yes, he didn't much like this idea of changing the name. He's always objected to this practice and feels Australians should learn other names. So here we started to touch on an odd disparity between Bob's own beliefs and his use of this text. I kept pushing. Why an American text? How might this text about an immigrant arriving happily in the United States relate to the lives of these students, most of whom were recent arrivals in Australia?

What about the war background and the U.S. military (and the silences about what the United States was doing supporting the Guomindang in 1948)? As we talked on, the text, and its potential relationship to these students, and the silences about all of this in the reading lesson (with its nicely presented vocabulary and well-conducted discussion of grammar and meaning) became increasingly problematic. Why were we presenting stories of the happinesses of migration, with the home country only as a place to be left behind and the new country as a friendly accommodating place that will bend visa rules to secure a happy ending (around the same time a recent immigrant to Australia had burned himself to death when he had heard that his family would not be allowed to join him; more recently, Australia has developed a “Pacific Solution” in which potential immigrants are kept in camps on Pacific islands and an internal policy in which new arrivals are detained for long periods in appalling conditions in detention camps)? If nothing else, after this long discussion, we walked away from this feedback session very aware that no text is ever innocent.

Ruptures³

So we start talking about the class. Liz has got a thirty-minute break between classes, Barbara can join us for the first fifteen minutes, and I have a meeting to get back to. There’s never enough time. And the small wooden chairs aren’t the most comfortable things to sit on. The most obvious issue was how to manage the one Italian male in the class. He wants to talk; he’s happy to fill the space with hard-to-understand Italian English; he wants the teacher’s attention and he’s not so interested in the other students. And the other students find his English difficult to follow. They tune out and do other things when he’s talking. We talk about this for a while; it’s clearly the most overtly difficult aspect of the class. And, of course, both Liz and Barbara are very aware of it. They’ve discussed it before. Perhaps someone needs to talk to him outside the class. But are we being fair? After all, he’s an active and motivated student, behaving in what may be a culturally appropriate manner for him. But there are gender politics at play here, too, and cultural appropriacy needs to be negotiated, not just accepted. And his right to behave as he wants clearly impinges on other students’ rights. So as we move from a discussion of a student who talks too much to questions of gender, culture, and rights, more critical questions start to emerge. There are bigger issues here than just concerns

over an individual student; questions of power have started to emerge. But we've used up almost half the time talking about this one issue. We try and come up with strategies for dealing with him, but I can't see much scope here for further critical exploration. Barbara has to go back to the class.

I take up a couple of other issues with Liz. I liked the practicality of the lesson, the clear focus on helping students to get things done. But I wonder how many people it was relevant for. The younger Korean students are living with relatives and are unlikely to have to call a plumber to get something fixed; others also didn't appear to be relating to the situation easily; few appear to be in rented accommodation where they see themselves as likely to have to deal with these sorts of situations. Though on the other hand, for one woman, parts of the class seemed to be exactly what she wanted; she asked urgent questions, checked answers, brought in other situations, wrote careful notes. To the extent that this sort of language practice may give people more possibilities to get things done and more power in interactions, this lesson certainly might be seen as critical in terms of helping to provide access to domains that are often denied. Perhaps that's enough to justify the lesson. Certainly, the class got some good concentrated language practice and some useful vocabulary. But we discuss ways in which she might tailor it more for the class. I don't want to be too critical here: This sort of contextually relevant language class is exactly what I'd like to see more of. How contextually relevant are we supposed to be?

I want to push the issue of the dialogues. I felt they were too cooperative. There's a long history of this problem in ESL. On the one hand, we might take this up in terms of the debate over authenticity: Should ESL classes aim to be "authentic," or should we accept them as inevitably inauthentic learning spaces? The extremes at either end of this debate seem problematic: classes that try completely to replicate the world outside might be very unproductive learning spaces, but classes that see themselves as wholly separate might be unhelpfully detached. On the other hand, we might take this up in more political terms as reflecting consensual versus conflictual views of society. From a liberal point of view, the social world is generally one in which we have common goals, and although these may at times be in conflict, and although we may need laws, regulations, and police forces to limit "antisocial behavior," civil society should generally be able to proceed as a cooperative venture. From a more critical point of view, however, society is seen as inherently

conflictual, riven either by mutually exclusive class interests or by other gender, ethnic, or race divisions. From the one perspective, cooperative dialogues are the norm, and it is only antisocial or other abnormal behaviors that prevent them from happening. From the other perspective, there are no relations without power, and thus any dialogue reproduces relations of power and may be seen as ideologically normalized (see Fairclough, 1995). Given the dominance of liberal ostrichism in applied linguistics (and for a discussion of the problem that sociolinguistics has tended to operate with a liberal view of consensuality, see Williams, 1992), it is not surprising that cooperative dialogues have always been the norm. And it can therefore be argued not only that consensual dialogues are inauthentic, but also that they provide passively cooperative subject positions for language learners.⁴

The students were given semiscripted dialogues into which they were supposed to interject different details. The topic was calling plumbers and electricians to get things fixed. Again, nice contextual work, but I would have liked them to be more conflictual. When I call a plumber, they don't say, "Yes certainly, I'll be there at 6:00." Rather, they're busy for the next few days. They may be able to squeeze it in on Tuesday at 7:00 A.M. on the way to another job. Or, if not, they'll try to come around at lunch on Friday. Will I be home? They'll call if they can make it. Yes, they may be able to send someone today if it's a real emergency, but it'll cost extra. They don't understand what you're talking about: What did you say was broken? Perhaps you should try a builder. They don't do that sort of work. Sure they could come and have a look at it next week, but it sounds like a big job. (In fact, as I write this, I've been putting off calling a plumber for the last two weeks because blockages can be easier to deal with than plumbers.)

I suggest that for these students with their limited English skills, it'll be twice as hard. So they need tougher dialogues. A number of people have developed materials based on a more difficult world than the insipid vision of collaborative ESL texts (see Auerbach and Wallerstein, 1987; Goldstein, 1994). We talk about this possibility for a while and agree that it might be useful to try to make dialogues a bit harder, less collaborative. But I'm also a bit uncomfortable that this has been a bit critical-directive (see above discussion), that I've imposed my own agenda too much. There are some good critical possibilities here that raise questions of language, gender, power, and discrimination. But it's also not clear how relevant it is to most

of these students now.

Finally, we move on to a few language points. I ask Liz what she thinks about having accepted “Close the tap” to her question about what to do when water is pouring from a tap. She’s surprised. I explain that when a student offered this solution, she took it up: “Yes, you could close the tap, you could close the tap. But what if you can’t close the tap?” I ask if this was a strategic move to accept this form; she says she hadn’t noticed it. What did she think about having, in a sense, modeled a nonstandard form for the students? This idea worries her. Did it matter? We talk about this some more and consider different ways of understanding it. Modeling this apparently nonstandard form might be considered as (a) an inappropriate act that would have misled the students (but a reasonable knowledge of second language development suggests that we should not be too concerned about such risks), (b) an irrelevant act (we have to make our choices about what to focus on and what not to), and (c) a locally appropriate act, not just in terms of student development, but, more interestingly, in terms of what language forms will get the job done.

While *turn on* and *turn off* are considered more standard, they are also more opaque than *open* and *close*, which are widely used in many varieties of English. According to Platt, Weber, and Ho (1984),

The use of *open* and *close* for electric switches is common in many of the new Englishes, e.g., East African English, Hawaiian English, Hong Kong English, Malaysian English, Philippine English and Singapore English. It is possible to *open* or *close* lights, fans, radios and the TV. (p.111)

And, presumably, taps. Perhaps, then, there is a reasonable argument, if not to teach these forms, at the very least to accept them. But as we push on with our discussion of this, another issue emerges. In multilingual cities like Sydney, what is the language background of the plumber likely to be? Of course, there’s the whole issue that many communities use services from within that community with the result that a lot of service encounters are done in languages other than English anyway. But just as forms such as *open* and *close* are widely used in Englishes around the world, so they also develop within urban Englishes in cities such as Sydney. (I mention a sign I had seen recently in a washroom telling people not to “open the tap” in the sink.) On reflection, *open* and *close* may indeed be the best terms to teach. And we might then ask whether the students’ use of the terms reflected first language influence, a guessed or generalized term, or was it perhaps a term they had

already heard used? This intrigues Liz and we use up our allotted time, and a bit more, talking about the possible Englishes of Sydney.

Reflections

But it's time to go. That's it. Back to the station. Just time for a quick stand-up espresso on the way. What can we learn from this? There's quite a lot to think about on the ride back into the city (the train's fairly empty, and I get a seat). I'd like to find out more about Chinese/Korean/English Presbyterian churches. How does all this fit together? What kind of hybrid cultural mix is this? But that's for another time, another paper. Having finished our talk and wished Liz well in the rest of her teaching, I reflect that we seem to have covered three critical moments: turning the discussion of the difficult student into a broader consideration of gender, culture, power, and rights; looking at how consensual dialogues not only fail to prepare students for the world outside but also potentially construct passive, consensual roles for them in the face of more powerful others; and the notion that it may not be the so-called standard versions of English that are the most common or useful for students. And out of these moments comes a further lesson for me: The first issue might be seen as critical-alternative (adapting Freeman's [1990] categorization of interventions; see above discussion) in that it provided Liz with a forum for clarifying the broader background issues involved in dealing with a difficult student; the second as critical-directive, in that I pushed my own concerns about consensuality and conflict; and the third as a critical-nondirective option in that it helped develop Liz's ability to see potential choices and to become more aware of the politics of language and standardization.

So which mattered most? Which was most critical? I have written this paper in this way in part to point to the very contingency of any answer to this question. This is also related to Canagarajah's (1996) observation that critical work that remains in standard form may reproduce as much as it resists. It is also to try to introduce more time and space and bodies into such texts. We teach and we do our teacher education in particular locations and in particular time frames. I wrote this in this manner not merely as a piece of experimental quasi-ethnography, but also to try to capture the contingencies of the moment that more standard ethnographic writing may start to sanitize.⁵ It is akin, in some ways, to Cynthia Nelson's (1999) attempt to describe a moment in a class she was observing in all its

complexities and fleeting moments. And it is also a preliminary attempt to take up the challenge posed by Dorothy Smith's (1999) notion of "writing the social" by taking

one step back before the Cartesian shift that forgets the body. The body isn't forgotten; hence, the actual local site of the body isn't forgotten. Inquiry starts with the knower who is actually located; she is active; she is at work; she is connected up with other people in various ways; she thinks, eats, sleeps, laughs, desires, sorrows, sings, curses, loves, just here; she reads here; she watches television (p.4)

I have tried here to recreate the everydayness of doing critical education and the frustration at coming up against that nagging question: Am I being critical (enough)? We can write our grand abstractions about pedagogy, resistance, hidden curricula, multiliteracies, or dialogism, and we can present our examples of the ideal critical lesson, the critical curriculum, the comments from transformed students, the empowerment that came about. But it seems to me that trying to be a critical educator is more often about seeking and seizing small moments to open the door on a more critical perspective. It may be about rethinking the notion of the praxicum, but it is also about all those unplanned moments when possibilities of critical heteropraxy come and go.

Another reason for writing this is to explore a moment of practice that seems to have received little attention. How do we seek out critical moments as an ongoing process of reaction, resistance? And how do we do it on a Friday morning when we're tired? I also decided to include this interlude as an example of neither particular failure nor success. It was a good class. Liz was clearly skilled and innovative. In terms of the different ways of being critical discussed earlier, her agenda would seem to fall into the second type — social relevance. She was trying to teach socially relevant and functionally useful language items for the students. My own agenda might then be seen as trying to move from this second type to the fourth type — problematizing practice. Thus, my interest was not so much in raising "big" critical issues but in working toward a way of questioning some as yet unexplored issues with critical consequences. If we want to be able to make less opaque the practices of critical language education, we can do so by reporting on our successful critical classes or observations of successful classes. But such reporting misses the way in which seeking to be critical is an ongoing, moment-by-moment process of slowly prodding

for possibilities. And this, of course, touches on one of the dilemmas of trying to define critical educational practice: All those moments become packaged and frozen and start to look like solutions rather than contingent possibilities. Being a critical educator, I would suggest, has less to do with the ponderous pronouncements of emancipatory modernism and more to do with the unbearable lightness of problematizing praxis.

And so one of the lessons I have learned here is that while all three modes of intervention — critical-directive, critical-alternatives, critical-nondirective — may be successful, it may have been the latter that was the most important, at least in this instance. Our discussion afterward didn't raise any great moments of enlightenment, empowerment, or emancipation. But the significant lesson for me here was that the potential critical moment needed to emerge not only from the specific context of the class and our jointly constructed understanding of it, but also from Liz's particular interests and concerns. The point that seemed to be of most importance — at least in its potential for further consideration — did not emerge from the agenda I tried to take up, but rather from a seemingly inconsequential issue to do with language form (close the tap). It wasn't something that I would have seen as a critical issue before the class, but it emerged as a point of some significance in our discussion (this is what it seemed to me that Liz got most out of), raising questions about standards and varieties, local norms, and language use.

So the challenge was *to make it critical in that moment*. Underlying this question of language form is a range of issues to do with what forms we model as teachers, how and in whose interests standard varieties are constructed and maintained, what language varieties our students may need, what forms of what varieties may be used in what communities, how language forms may be related to local configurations of power, and how notions of correctness may need to be put on hold. These are small moments of critical language education, critical moments embedded in the process of discussing teaching, and these have affected both Liz's and my own thinking about apparently minor issues in English language teaching. Society hasn't been transformed. Ideological obfuscation hasn't been removed. But in many ways, this is what critical language education is all about. It's the quiet seeking out of potential moments, the results of which we don't always know. It's about the everyday. The train pulls back into Central Station, and I hurry off through the clear sun-filled streets to my midday meeting.

Notes

1. When I discussed some of this in a colloquium at the annual TESOL (Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages) conference in 2001 and talked about issues of pedagogical engagement, Sarah Benesch pointed out from the audience that I was lacking institutional engagement here (see Benesch, 2001) and that it was not enough to report this estrangement from parts of the pedagogical process as if these were inevitable. I take her point, though I would also reply that my point here is to ask what can still be done when the moments of engagement can be so peripheral.
2. I am using the notion of orthopraxy here in a slightly different way than Scott's (1990) conception. For Scott, the important distinction is between orthodoxy — in which we take on hegemonic beliefs — and orthopraxy — in which we act out hegemonic practices without necessarily believing them (a useful distinction, particularly in colonial contexts). I am not, however, suggesting here that orthopraxy implies the acting out of hegemonic teaching techniques without believing in their rationales (though investigating this might be a productive research project), but rather that in a context (teacher education) in which we might be seen to be teaching behaviors as well as ideas, there is a tendency toward orthopractic behaviors as well as orthodox beliefs. My main contrast, therefore, is between orthopraxy and heteropraxy.
3. The observant reader may have noticed the echoes of a well-known English as a foreign language book series in my subtitles up to this point. At a recent conference in the Philippines subtitled "Ruptures and Departures," I speculated briefly on why *Departures*, *Connections*, and *Destinations* were possible book titles but not a more challenging concept such as *Ruptures*. If anyone would like to update that series with the additional *Ruptures* and *Reflections* books, they are welcome to the titles.
4. Of course, it would be dangerous to suggest that such dialogues construct the totality of language and discourse resources of students since clearly many language learners will find resistant ways of dealing with others in conversations. Nevertheless, a good case can be made that such dialogues limit discursive possibilities for students.
5. This paper is what we might call a narrativized quasi-ethnography. Some time sequences and events have been shifted in order to make a cleaner story. Thus, although everything here is based on real events (though certain locations and names have been changed, and pseudonyms have been used), not everything happened quite in this way. For a parallel approach, see Goldstein's (2000) discussion of performed ethnography — writing plays based on ethnographic data (and see also Nelson, 2002). There are, of course, risks with this sort of approach: While I do believe that more experimental writing like this may be useful, it is also worth recalling that, as Watson-Gegeo (1988) pointed out some years ago, the field of TESOL has, for too long, been prepared to accept weak, blitzkrieg ethnographies that caricature rather than characterize. I am therefore wary of some of the problems that arise when attempting new ways to write critically.

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Chapter 7

Teaching with the Flow: Fixity and Fluidity in Education

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Summarising work on popular culture and education, Norton and Vanderheyden (2004) argue that “if educators do not take seriously the social and cultural texts that are authorized by youth — which may simultaneously empower them — they run the risk of negating and silencing their students” (pp.204–205). This critical pedagogical approach to popular culture “seeks to *validate the knowledge* that students bring with them to the classroom, knowledge that is constructed within the practices of students’ everyday lives outside the classroom” (italics added) (p.205). Norton and Vanderheyden go on to suggest that in the Canadian context of their study, lack of knowledge of popular culture may also be part of the marginalization of students from non-mainstream language and cultural backgrounds. That is to say, since such students often lack the means and social networks to engage in forms of locally valued popular culture, they are left out of both formal (classroom references to cultural knowledge) and informal (youth culture) social, linguistic and cultural networks. Thus, they argue, popular cultural knowledges need curricular validation.

Looking at global hip-hop, I intend to take a slightly different tack in this paper, arguing that we need to go beyond this focus on validation of popular culture in order to develop a more dynamic concept of teaching in the transcultural contact zone, of pedagogies aimed not so much at the bland psychological zone of proximal development as at the cultural “zone of occult instability where the people dwell” (Fanon, 1967, p.183). A model of validation of popular culture has a number of limitations, based as it is primarily on a functional account of how the inclusion of popular culture in education may enhance literacy skills and allow for greater and more varied student voice. This overlooks the central role of popular culture in identity formation, the fluidity and location of engagement

with popular culture, and the need for pedagogies to engage rather than just include. "The real question before us," suggests Scott (1999, p.215), "is whether or not we take the vernacular voices of the popular and their modes of self-fashioning seriously, and if we do, how we think through their implications."

It is ideas such as self-fashioning that I think we have to take very seriously. While an important first step in dealing with popular culture may be to get beyond the dismissive hierarchies of high and low culture, and the tendencies to view popular culture as only commercial, as "mere entertainment," it is equally important to understand it as much more than a bank of knowledge to be validated and incorporated into a school curriculum: popular culture has to do with desire, mobility and multiple identifications: the ways in which people relate to style (clothing, music, looking cool), to community (friends, enemies, in-groups, out-groups), to pleasure (listening, watching, feeling, being liked), to images of how to be in the world (sexy, sporty, smart). It has to do with complex ways in which we construct our identities both on a level of choice to associate with certain people, sounds, images and lifestyles, and with more basic preferences and desires. At the very least, then, popular culture needs to be understood as part of a way of life, a bodily orientation, a habitus, rather than curricular knowledge. To orient schooling practices towards popular culture takes a bigger leap than mere knowledge validation; it is also about the production of identity.

As McCarthy et al. note, "Contemporary curriculum and educational researchers writing on the topic of schooling have tended to ignore the critical role played by popular culture in the production of the differential social identities of school youth" (1999, p.1). While conservative discourses have eschewed any engagement with popular culture, decrying it as corruptive of young minds, and attempting to ban it from any educational context, more inclusive educationalists have overlooked ways in which popular music is "at the epicenter of practices of discursive identity formation for the young" (1999, p.2). Popular culture also links students across time and space: music, as Connell and Gibson (2003, p.271) suggest, forms "transnational networks of affiliation, and of material and symbolic interdependence ... Music nourishes imagined communities, traces links to distant and past places." The fluidity and (downloadable) availability of music, its link to place and to imagined community, the possibilities it presents for diverse identifications, make it an ideal form of

the translocal.

By making the central move one of inclusion into the curriculum, a validity approach therefore overlooks the fluidity and location of popular culture. As Dimitriadis points out, “contemporary youth are increasingly fashioning notions of self and community outside of school in ways that educators have largely ignored” (2001, p.xi). Ibrahim’s (1999) research on the ways in which African students studying in a Franco-Ontarian school in Canada identify with forms of hip-hop, shows that it is their identification outside the classroom with forms of African American culture that drives their identifications through English. As these students enter the racialized world of North America, they “become Black”, starting to redefine their identities in terms of the available social and cultural categories on the new continent. In doing so, they increasingly start to identify with forms of Black culture and Black language, particularly hip-hop and Black English. Rap and hip-hop, he shows, are “influential sites in African students’ processes of becoming Black, which in turn affected what and how the students learned” (p.364). The choice of these cultural forms and the position on the margins associated with being Black was “simultaneously an act of investment, an expression of desire, and a deliberate counterhegemonic undertaking” (p.365).

Thus, what is learned in students’ engagement with popular culture in and around school may have significant implications for the rest of the curriculum. As Preisler (1999) points out in the Danish context, and as Ibrahim’s example of African youths in Canada suggests, English may be learned as much through informal domains of popular culture as formal classroom domains. Thus “informal use of English — especially in the form of code-switching — has become an inherent, indeed a defining, aspect of the many Anglo-American-oriented youth subcultures which directly or indirectly influence the language and other behavioural patterns of young people generally” (Preisler, 1999, p.244). And such English, as Preisler shows in the case of Danish Hip-hoppers “Out of Control,” may contain a vocabulary including break-dancing styles (boogie, windmills, back spin, head spin, turtle, cracking, waves, isolation, backspreads, locking, skeets, etc.), graffiti (tag, bomb, jams, cipher, burn-off, wild-style, straight-letters, piece, throw-up, etc.), MC-ing and DJ-ing (ragamuffin, scratch, mixer, cut-backs, cross-fader, break-beat, etc.), and the broader hip-hop culture (battle, biting, wanne-be, dope, pusher, graffiti-trip, hang-out, low-life, riot, stick-up) (Preisler, 1999).

We therefore need other ways of thinking about popular cultural forms such as hip-hop than inclusion and validation in the curriculum: hip-hop culture presents a much broader cultural challenge to how we think about language, identity, location and authorship. In the next section I shall look in more detail at the idea of transcultural flows, arguing that notions of fixity, fluidity and flow may help us think more usefully about global cultural relations than do rather static global/local frameworks. Following this, I shall look in more depth at global appropriations of hip-hop in urban centres of East and South East Asia (Malaysia, Japan, Korea) in an attempt to illustrate ways in which English and hip-hop are perceived as part of new forms of fluid, global identification. In the final section, I return to pedagogical concerns, making a case for a form of engagement with global hip-hop that takes us into more dynamic relations than inclusion.

Popular Transcultural Flows

While not ignoring the many detrimental effects of globalization on economies and ecologies across the world — increased exploitation of workers, forced migration, global “wars” to serve particular interests, destruction of the environment — I am interested centrally here in the cultural implications of globalization, and in particular the notion of transcultural flows. Critiquing static definitions of cultural identity in ethnography, Clifford (1997) argues that rather than using localizing strategies by which people are considered to exist culturally in a specific location, a more useful image is one of *travel*, with its emphasis on movement, encounter and change, for “once the representational challenge is seen to be the portrayal and understanding of local/global historical encounters, co-productions, dominations, and resistances, then one needs to focus on hybrid, cosmopolitan experiences as much as on rooted, native ones” (p.24). From this point of view, locality is produced, not given, a result of particular ways of constructing identity, “a phenomenological property of social life, a structure of feeling that is produced by particular forms of intentional activity and that yields particular sorts of material effects” (Appadurai, 1996, p.182).

Unlike Phillipson (1999), therefore, who views the global spread of English as indelibly linked to “an uncritical endorsement of capitalism, its science and technology, a modernisation ideology, monolingualism as a norm, ideological globalisation and internationalization, transnationalization, the

Americanization and homogenisation of world culture, linguistic, culture and media imperialism" (p.274), I am interested here in the ways in which the flows of cultural forms produce new forms of localization, and the use of global Englishes produce new forms of global identification. As Levy (2001, p.134) suggests, hip-hop constitutes

a global urban subculture that has entered people's lives and become a universal practice among youth the world over ... From a local fad among black youth in the Bronx, it has gone on to become a global, postindustrial signifying practice, giving new parameters of meaning to otherwise locally or nationally diverse identities.

While it is worth sounding a notion of caution here — both in terms of the need to see global hip-hop as always to some extent defined within the global commodification of culture, and in terms of the dangers of talking of a "universal practice among youth the world over" as if global hip-hop affected everyone everywhere irrespective of classes, economies and localities — it is nevertheless useful to see this "postindustrial signifying practice" in terms of new parameters of meaning.

As Appadurai (2001) notes, "we are functioning in a world fundamentally characterized by objects in motion. These objects include ideas and ideologies, people and goods, images and messages, technologies and techniques. This is a world of flows" (p.5). A crucial part of Appadurai's argument is that rather than globalization being "the story of cultural homogenization" (1996, p.11), it is better understood as a "deeply historical, uneven and even *localizing* process. Globalization does not necessarily or even frequently imply homogenization or Americanization," since "different societies appropriate the materials of modernity differently" (p.17). Thus, while remaining attentive to the deeply historical and uneven aspects of globalization, I am interested here in cultural and linguistic flows not so much as processes of homogenization but as part of a reorganization of the local. In talking of transcultural flows, therefore, my focus is not merely on the movement of cultural forms across the globe but of the local take-up of such forms. Transculturation may be understood as a "phenomenon of the contact zone" describing how "subordinated or marginal groups select and invent from materials transmitted to them by a dominant or metropolitan culture" (Pratt, 1992, p.6).

Connell and Gibson (2003) look at music in terms of "fluidity," which refers to the movement and flows of music across time and space,

and “fixity,” which refers to ways in which music is about location, tradition, cultural expression. As they argue, a focus on fluidity and fixity takes us beyond the static dialectic of the global and the local, or the rather trite “glocal,” reflecting “more dynamic ways of describing and understanding processes that move across, while becoming embedded in, the materiality of localities and social relations” (p.17). Working with this contrast between the fluidity of cultural and linguistic scapes and the fixity of place, I am interested in how music and language—with a particular focus on hip-hop and English — are simultaneously fluid and fixed, move across space, borders, communities, nations but also become localised, indigenised, recreated in the local. Caught between fluidity and fixity, then, cultural and linguistic forms are always in a state of flux, always changing, always part of a process of the refashioning of identity.

While rap and hip-hop is only one site amongst many forms of popular culture that we might explore here, it is one of particular interest for a number of reasons: It has become a global subculture that has been taken up and localized in many diverse parts of the world; as a multimodal cultural formation which includes MC-ing (rapping), break dancing, graffiti, and DJ-ing, it presents a diverse set of practices of which language is only a part; and yet the highly skilled oral performance of MC-ing/rap nevertheless make this aspect of hip-hop culture of great interest to those interested in issues of language. Responding to challenges that rap/hip-hop is on the one hand indelibly tied to African American culture and, on the other, nothing but a reflection of the imperialism of US media, Mitchell (2001, pp.1–2) argues that “Hip-hop and rap cannot be viewed simply as an expression of African-American culture; it has become a vehicle for global youth affiliations and a tool for reworking local identity all over the world,” or what Potter (1995) calls “a transnational, global artform capable of mobilizing diverse disenfranchised groups” (p.10). According to Condry (2001, p.222), “Japanese hip-hop and other versions around the world are interesting in part because they help us understand the significance of what seems to be an emerging global popular culture.” Of particular interest here is the question of how the global spread of hip-hop relates to its localizations: does the global refer to the expansion of a coherent form or does it encompass the proliferation of local appropriations (Pennycook, 2003b)? As a Japanese “Nip Hop” website (2004) puts it, “Hip-hop is a culture without a nation. Hip-hop culture is international. Each country has its own spin on hip-hop. Japan has one of the most intense hip-hop

cultures in the world ... Japanese Hip-Hop has its own culture, but a culture that has many similar aspects of Hip-Hop around the world. These aspects include the DJ, MC, dancers and urban artists (taggers, spray paint art)". In talking of flows, however, one might ask whether this is nevertheless still a one-way flow, from the centre (particularly the US) to the periphery. As Pennay (2001, p.128) comments in his discussion of rap in Germany, "Regrettably, the flow of new ideas and stylistic innovations in popular music is nearly always from the English-speaking market, and not to it." Similarly, in her discussion of the Basque rap group *Negu Gorriak* (featuring the *Mugurza* brothers) Jacqueline Urla points out that "unequal relations between the United States record industry and Basque radical music mean that Public Enemy's message reaches the *Mugurza* brothers in Irun, and not vice versa" (2001, p.189). But there is another side to this question: while it is certainly true that the global rap/hip-hop scene has little effect on the dominant US scene, it is also true that there are many other circles of influence. Drawing on Gilroy's (1993) analysis of the "stereophonic, bilingual, or bifocal cultural forms originated by, but no longer the exclusive property of, blacks dispersed within the structures of feeling, producing, communicating, and remembering that I have heuristically called the black Atlantic world" (p.3), we can start to think of alternative frames of analysis by analogy with the Black Atlantic, from the hip-hop Pacific to "Chopstick hip hop." Hawaiian hip-hoppers Sudden Rush, for example, who "have borrowed hip hop as a counter-hegemonic transcript that challenges tourism and Western imperialism" (Akindes, 2001, p.95), have been influenced not only by US rap but also by other Pacific Islander and Aotearoa-New Zealand hip-hop that constitutes a "Pacific Island hip-hop diaspora" and a "pan-Pacific hip-hop network that has bypassed the borders and restrictions of the popular music distribution industry" (Mitchell, 2001, p.31).

Thus, not only is there "now scarcely a country in the world that does not feature some form or mutation of rap music, from the venerable and sophisticated hip-hop and rap scenes of France, to the 'swa-rap' of Tanzania and Surinamese rap of Holland" (Krimis, 2000, p.5), but many of these local scenes participate in complex orbits of influence. One of the most influential is the French language scene, producing an intricate flow of influences between the vibrant music scenes in Paris and Marseille in France; Dakar, Abidjan, and Libreville in West Africa; and Montreal in Quebec. And like many urban popular cultures, French language rap

is also mixed with many other languages and influences; thus the urban French rap scene is infused with Caribbean and North African languages and cultures; in Quebec, as Sarkar, Winer, and Sarkar (2003) show, rappers draw on standard and non-standard English and French, Haitian Creole, Spanish, and Arabic to make statements about ethnic, racial and linguistic identity, using multilingual code-switching to produce new, hybrid identities. And in Libreville, Gabon, “rappers are inserted into large networks of communication that confer on them a plurality of identities” using a wide “diversity of languages with their variants, along with their functioning as markers of identity (of being Gabonese, African, or an urbanite)” (Auzanneau, 2002, p.120):¹

Libreville’s relexified French is the product of exogenous and endogenous influences that manifest themselves in the form of borrowings from Gabonese languages, languages of migration, and English (standard and non-standard, but especially slang). It also results from the use of a non-standard lexicon rich in argot forms (*verlan*,² metaplasm by addition or subtraction, etc) and of Libreville popular speech and neologisms. (Auzanneau, 2002, p.116)

And across East/Southeast Asia, numerous cross-influences and collaborations are also emerging, mixing English and local languages. Thus Hong Kong DJ Tommy’s compilation, “Respect for Da Chopstick Hip Hop” — the title itself, of course, a play on global (Respect/ Da) and local (Chopstick Hip Hop) elements — features MC Yan from Hong Kong, China, K-One, MC Ill and Jaguar from Japan, and Meta and Joosuc from Korea, with tracks sung in English, Cantonese, Japanese and Korean.

Flows, Fixities, Englishes, Raplishes

In this section, I want to look briefly at some of the ways in which English is used and imagined in relation to other languages in parts of East and Southeast Asia.³ Using English lyrics of course has a long history in popular music both within Asia and elsewhere. Given the dominance of English in popular music, the first adoption of a new genre may also involve the adoption of English. As Connell and Gibson (2003) observe, many who first adopted rock, rap and reggae music also adopted English before switching to local languages. English-language popular music also carries both images of modernity and possibilities of economic success. Thus, English music was very popular in the former European Eastern

Bloc countries, in part because of the political implications of listening to English/Western music, while in Sweden, “it is accepted that English lyrics are the norm, and part of a career path for artists that leads towards global acceptance” (pp.124–125). From ABBA to current participants in the Eurovision Song Contest, the choice to use English rather than a national or local language is generally a choice to appeal to a global music market rather than either to remain local or to attempt to appeal through one’s localization. A danger with remaining “local” is to be condemned to the “world music” scene (and WOMAD concerts) rather than to the global music scene.

Nevertheless, while English (or other metropolitan languages such as French) is often the language through which a form of popular music enters a local music scene, it is also common for it to become quickly localized. Thus, while the take-up of rap by Tanzanians, for example, initially involved wholesale adoption of American idioms, from clothes and names, to language and musical style, it has now become indigenised in Swahili with local themes and references (*swa-rap*) (Connell & Gibson, 2003). Such localization also inevitably involves complex relations of class, race/ethnicity and language use. Although a local “Nederhop” movement of Dutch language rap has emerged in Holland, it features almost exclusively white Dutch youth. While it can claim greater Dutch linguistic and cultural “authenticity”, it also struggles against a more American/English oriented rap movement by non-white youth (largely of Surinamese origin), who can claim greater authenticity in terms of marginalization and racial identification, but who then, in turn, may lose out to the greater global authenticity of American English-language rappers (Krimms, 2000; Wermuth, 2001).

A “world Englishes” perspective on the localization of English around the world typically divides the world into three circles, inner, outer, and expanding, with English seen as having local norms in the first two circles, but external norms in the vast expanding circle (Kachru & Nelson, 1996). From this point of view, English “will probably never be used within the Japanese community and form part of the speaker’s identity repertoire. There will not be a distinctly local model of English, established and recognizable as Japanese English, reflecting the Japanese culture and language” (Yano, 2001, p.127). Yet this focus on nationally constructed local models of English, able to reflect a national culture and language, surely misses the point that English is used in multiple ways in a complex,

transgressive series of identifications. Taking various uses of English by the popular Japanese group Rip Slyme's CD *Tokyo Classic* (and see Pennycook, 2003a; Chapter 18), for example, it is easy to identify at least three different types of use (Table 1).

In the first example, from the track "Bring your style," one line of African American-influenced rap — with its iconic "yo" — is juxtaposed with a line of Japanese, albeit Japanese which contains a constructed word — *freaky side* — in katakana (the script for non-Japanese items). Such imitative uses of English may be seen in terms of "styling the Other" (Rampton, 1999) or "performing the Other." The second example, from the track "By the way," which uses this English chorus throughout, is somewhat different. While the text performs the common self-identification of rap music, it does so in more Japanese style, the register of the phrase "by the way," the pronunciation of "five guy's name" (with its four or more syllables) and the syntax of the sentence all suggesting Japanese-influenced English. Thus while the lyrics are in English and perform the activity not uncommon to rap of self reference (announcing the name of the crew), they also locate themselves phonologically and syntactically as Japanese performances in English. The third example, from the title track "Tokyo classic," by contrast mixes English and Japanese in complex ways. By naming Kinshichoo (a suburb of Tokyo) and by doing so in kanji, Rip Slyme locate their Japaneseness explicitly, yet at the same time they use the English word for Japanese, seeming in the same instant to refashion their identity from the outside. This Japanese identity is then both "freaky" and "double," the latter a recently coined term to describe

Table 1. Rip Slyme mixing it up in Japan

Lyrics	Transliteration and translation
Yo Bringing That, Yo Bring Your Style 人類最後のフリーキーサイド 'Bring Your Style'	<i>Yo Bringing that, Yo Bring your style</i> <i>Jinrui saigo no furikiisaido</i>
By the Way Five Guy's Name (x3) Five Guy's Name is Rip Slyme 5" 'By the Way'	Yo Bringing That, Yo Bring Your Style The last freaky side of the human race By the Way Five Guy's Name (x3) Five Guy's Name is Rip Slyme 5'
錦糸町出 Freaky ダブルの Japanese 'Tokyo Classic'	<i>Kinshichoo de freaky daburu no Japanese</i> Freaky mixed Japanese from Kinshichoo

people of mixed origin. English and Japanese flow across the boundaries of identity, becoming both fixed (Rip Slyme 5, from Kinshichoo) and fluid (Yo, double, Japanese), producing new possibilities of what it means to be Japanese, to use English, to participate globally, to be local.

Korea shares a number of similarities with Japan, including a massive English-teaching industry set against peripheral use of English within the country. Bilingual Korean MC Tasha, who, like Ilmari of Rip Slyme, has a mixed cultural and linguistic familial background, uses different and more complex relations between English and Korean. For example Table 2 shows the opening of “Memories ... (Smiling Tears)” from *Tasha Hip-Hop Album*. What Tasha achieves here is a mixture of Korean and English that combines the different “flows,” sounds and meanings of English and Korean. As Krims points out, the “rhythmic styles of MCing, or ‘flows,’ are among the central aspects of rap production and reception, and any discussion of rap genres that takes musical poetics seriously demands a vocabulary of flow” (Krims, 2000, p.48). It is one thing, however, to master the flow of one language (and there has been much debate over whether some languages are better oriented towards rap flows than others), but it is quite another skill to “flow-switch” as Tasha does here. In other tracks, she switches from one language to another using similarities of sound, or uses English and Korean to reinforce each other, each line carrying similar meanings. Here, however, she uses the Korean to add to the English (you need to understand both to get the meaning), artfully integrating the flows

Table 2. Korean-English mixing by Tasha

Lyrics	Translation
Yo if I fall two times I come back on my third 결대로 포기 않지 and that's my word	<i>I never give up</i>
If I fall five times I come harder on my sixth 조금만 더 가면 왜 포기 않지 난 아직	<i>I'm not far from the goal, I haven't given up yet</i>
If I'm knocked 7 times I come back on my eight 칠전팔기 내 인생 끝까지 가볼래	<i>Even if I fail seven times, I will try again</i>
Now knowledge of self thru the pain in this world 난 결대로 포기 않지 and that's my word	<i>I will keep trying until the end of my life I never give up</i>

of English and Korean rap styles in a bilingual performance that presents English and Korean in new relationships.

Malaysia (from a world Englishes perspective, in the outer rather than expanding circle) presents a rather different case, since English has a much wider institutional base and is much more widely used for internal purposes. While the widespread codemixing of the streets is officially disapproved of in the public domain (including popular music), a different concern emerges: how can English-language lyrics be localized, or to put it another way, how can fixity occur in the flow? As popular local rappers Too Phat explain about their successful track *Anak Ayam*, which became a big hit for them in Indonesia,

Malique: It's not just the language, it's also the instruments involved ... We're known for our fusion of traditional elements and we use old folk songs and we add a break beat to it and we rap on top of it ... We have the Malay tune there you know. Like if you listen to a rap act rapping in a normal beat they would be like "oh, that's another rap act" right. But if you hear a rap like us on *Anak Ayam* you will be like "hey, how come they are rapping in English but the background is, you know, is Malay." So like something they can relate to. Like in Indonesia *Anak Ayam* was pretty big. (Too Phat, 2003)

Another English-language-using hip-hop group, Teh Tarik Crew, by contrast, explain that for them the issue is not so much one of using traditional instruments but of talking about their lives. Rejecting the pressures "to put in traditional elements. Like sounds, whatever," they suggest "You don't have to put in traditional sounds to sound Malaysian". Indeed, as they point out, given that Europeans and Americans also sample Asian sounds, without this making them Asian, it is not necessarily such fixity that relocates the flow. Rather, as Mz Nina explains,

MN: I just feel Malaysian. Because that is how I speak. That is how I speak in normal life. I usually communicate with people in English. So how I rap is how I speak. ... Because we live in Kuala Lumpur and the things that we go through we write about. So kids maybe can relate to it. And that is how I feel — it is very Malaysian. (Teh Tarik Crew, 2003)

As Altimet from Teh Tarik Crew explains, "hip hop is a language — it is like English — you can use it to do good things, you can use it to do bad things. It is a double-edged sword." Thus, rejecting the negative image he feels often surrounds hip-hop culture, and particularly certain forms of

rap, he feels neither bound by English nor by hip-hop: “It can be used to express anything. A particular feeling, a particular place, something that happened” (Teh Tarik Crew, 2003). While the global flow of rap thus becomes temporarily fixed in the mix of language, music and local reference, participating in hip-hop culture, particularly in its relation to English, also locates these artists within a global culture. As Korean DJ Jun puts it, discussing the track “Universal Language” by Korean MC Joosuc — a track from the CD “Welcome to the Infected Area” in which Joosuc collaborates with Australian MC Weapon X, one singing in Korean the other in English — “Universal Language is about different languages but we are in the same culture which is hip hop. So language difference doesn’t really matter. So hip hop is one language. That is why it is called Universal Language,” (DJ Jun, 2003).

Several important points emerge here. For these hip-hoppers, English and hip-hop are both part of a global culture of language and music in which they participate. While the US remains an important reference point for hip-hop culture, they are also interconnected with other parts of the region: Mz Nina greatly admires Tasha, DJ Jun has worked with Rip Slyme, collaboration on different tracks may involve Japanese, Koreans, Australians, and so on. Being a young, urban East/Southeast Asian hip-hopper can involve English in many different forms (American imitations, local productions, mixed flows); forms of localization may take the form of local Englishes, but this all too often seems to have the aura of local exoticization (this is where world music meets world Englishes); in the sampling and mixing culture of hip-hop, localization is more likely to involve anything from local sounds, or keeping it real in Kuala Lumpur, to “representing” a suburb of Tokyo or flow-mixing Korean and English lyrics. As hip-hop and English flow globally, they become refixed locally, thus constantly reinventing global hip-hop. What, then, are the pedagogical implications?

Popular Culture and Hip-Hop Pedagogies: Teaching with the flow

In this final section, I want to suggest pedagogical responses to the flow and fixity of global hip-hop that go beyond the notions of inclusion and validation discussed in the introduction. As I argued, a functional account of how the inclusion of popular culture in education may enhance

literacy skills and student voice overlooks the fluidity and location of engagement with popular culture, and the central role of popular culture in identity formation. First of all, it is important to take hip-hop seriously, as does Shusterman in his claim that hip-hop is a significant domain for philosophical investigation: “the realities and truths which hip hop reveals are not the transcendental eternal verities of traditional philosophy, but rather mutable but coercive facts and patterns of the material, sociohistorical world” (2000, p.73). Rap and hip-hop may be viewed as a quintessential art of postmodern times, a form of “postmodernism whose representational strategies, while complex and contradictory, do not for that reason lose their liberatory potential” (Potter, 1995, p.9). As Krims (2000) suggests, “rap music would have to have been invented by postmodern theory, had it not been there, poised to exact its tribute” (p.8). Rap, suggests Shusterman (2000, p.61), is a

postmodern popular art that challenges some of our most deeply entrenched aesthetic conventions, conventions which are common not only to modernism as an artistic style and ideology but to the philosophical doctrine of modernity and its differentiation of cultural spheres.

Two aspects of hip-hop are particularly significant here: appropriation and performance/performativity. There are many features of hip-hop that might be considered typically postmodern, including “an enthusiastic embracing of new technology and mass culture, a challenging of modernist notions of aesthetic autonomy and artistic purity, and an emphasis on the localised and temporal rather than the putatively universal and eternal” (Shusterman, 2000, p.61). Of particular interest, however, is the “recycling appropriation rather than unique originative creation, an eclectic mixing of styles” (p.61), or what Potter calls “the relentless sampling of sonic and verbal archives” (1995, p.53). This aspect of hip-hop culture poses a particular challenge to notions of authorship and ownership, an issue addressed by Rice’s (2003) “hip-hop pedagogy” of writing based around a “whatever pedagogy” of hip-hop, “a writing practice that models itself after digital sampling’s rhetorical strategy of juxtaposition” (p.453). His choice of hip-hop “as a model for the composition essay” is an “attempt to draw upon a dominant form of contemporary culture familiar to the majority of students I encounter in my classrooms” (p.453). Thus, this is not an attempt to validate knowledge embedded in hip-hop culture but rather to engage with a set of styles, beliefs and practices that are part of hip-hop.

According to Rice, “Hip-hop pedagogy is not meant as a given substitute for dominant thinking, but, rather, as an alternative practice whose own application must be problematized even while students engage with it. Thus, I propose hip-hop pedagogy as a place to begin such questioning regarding our ability to resist dominant modes of thinking, to engage with consumerism while working against it, to spark the resistance, whatever” (p.469).

“Central to hip hop culture,” argues Walcott (1999, p.102), “is the idea of performance or rather acts of performativity.” Both are significant elements of hip-hop with important pedagogical implications. Performance has often been dismissed in language studies, either as the largely irrelevant domain of real language use (in a Chomskyan competence/performance divide), or as the play of non-serious etiolations in speech act theory. And yet, as Bauman and Briggs argue, “performances are not simply artful uses of language that stand apart both from day-to-day life and from larger questions of meaning, as Kantian aesthetics would suggest. Performance rather provides a frame that invites critical reflection on communicative processes” (1996, p.60). In this view, then, verbal performances put language on display, making language available to scrutiny. The code and flow mixing of Tasha and Rip Slyme, for example, make visible the possibility of English being intermingled with Korean and Japanese, thus raising questions about the monolingual fallacies that underlie many assumptions about language pedagogy and identity.

The notion of performativity (see Pennycook, 2003a, 2004; Chapter 18), drawing on the work of Butler (1990), opens up ways of thinking about language use and identity that avoid foundationalist categories, suggesting that identities are formed in the linguistic performance rather than pre-given, and that language use is an act of identity that calls that language into being. The notion of performativity, then, can take us beyond views of language and identity that tie them to location and origins, and instead opens up possibilities for seeing how languages, identities and futures are constantly being refashioned. In both the claims that hip-hop is a language itself, a language that transcends assumed divisions between languages, and the mixing of English with other languages, we can see the performative possibilities of a constantly shifting range of identifications. Engagement with hip-hop, Ibrahim (1999) suggests, is about being “able to see multiple ways of speaking, being, and learning” (p.367). To teach with the flow, then, suggests not so much an incorporation of hip-hop texts into

the curriculum but an opening up of possible languages and identities, an engagement with multiple ways of speaking, being and learning.

The location of classrooms within global transcultural flows implies that they can no longer be considered as bound sites, with students entering from fixed locations, with identities drawing on local traditions, with curricula as static bodies of knowledge. Popular music escapes attempts at local fixity, having always “reflected the fluxes and fluidity of contemporary life, unsettling binary oppositions established in earlier phases of modernity (tradition/contemporary; authentic/inauthentic; local/global) by refusing to be pinned down” (Connell & Gibson, 2003, p.44). Students also refuse such attempts to be pinned down, despite the array of educational technologies (tests, uniforms, architecture, psychological theories of identity) designed to do so. Popular music “remains an important cultural sphere in which identities are affirmed, challenged, taken apart and reconstructed” (Connell & Gibson, 2003, p.117). While the global spread of rap is of course at one level part of the global hegemony of particular cultural forms, at the same time “it can and does enable resistance to globalising trends; rap and the ever-evolving hip-hop scenes of particular inner-city areas are manifestations of this. Local musics remain vital” (Connell & Gibson, 2003, p.271). Thus, of interest here are “both the local and the global forces by which rap helps to form imagined identities in non-American contexts” (Krimms, 2000, p.5), or the ways that popular music “stages identifications, imagines subjectivities, and performs community” (Zuberi, 2001, p.195). If we believe that education needs to proceed by taking account of student knowledge, identity and desire, we need to engage with multiple ways of speaking, being, and learning, with multilayered modes of identity at global, regional, national and local levels. Students are in the flow; pedagogy needs to get with the flow.

Notes

1. It is nevertheless the case that just as singers such as Youssou N’Dour or Wasis Diop from Senegal or Angélique Kidjo from Benin use not only French, Fon, Yoruba, Wolof etc. but also English, so rappers within the “Francophone” circuit will also have English in their repertoire.
2. *Verlan*, as Doran(2004) explains, “is a kind of linguistic *bricolage* marked by the multilingualism and multiculturalism present in the communities where it is spoken, which include immigrants from North Africa, West Africa, Asia and the

Caribbean. Given the marginal status of these communities vis-à-vis elite Parisian culture, Verlan can be viewed as an alternative code which stands both literally and figuratively outside the hegemonic norms of Parisian culture and language" (p.94).

3. Data used in this article draws on research from an Australian Research Council (ARC)-funded project, Postoccidental Englishes and Rap, Principal Investigator Alastair Pennycook; Senior Research Assistant Adam Le Nevez; with additional research assistance from Emi Otsuji and Young Hee Park. I would also like to thank Positive Tone, Too Phat and Teh Tarik Crew in Malaysia for their assistance in this project.

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Chapter 8

Principled Polycentrism and Resourceful Speakers

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Speaking the Same

If we all spoke an identical centralised form of English, an international variety we could all recognize and learn, so some would argue, this might make communication in English around the globe easier. Although this has long been the goal of some sectors of the ELT industry, and a model to which many have aspired, there are several problems with this idealistic goal: Most obviously, it is impossible to achieve — we will never be able to get everyone to speak the same way, even if everyone wanted to in the first place. Of course, the fact that it's not achievable does not mean we should reject it as an ambition since it is still possible that approximating the same target might still be worthwhile. Here, however, another consideration intervenes. Once we accept that it is impossible for everyone to speak the same way, and that ways of speaking English will inevitably be influenced by other languages and cultures, then we need to consider that different ways of speaking English are understood differently from different speaker positions: people who speak related first languages often find the English spoken by those speakers easier to understand than the English spoken by speakers of other languages: German and Dutch, French and Italian, Japanese and Korean, Malayalam and Tamil speakers may find each others' English more readily comprehensible than, say, Vietnamese and Spanish, or Greek and Chinese speakers.

This also brings us to a more general point that once English is spoken with features such as syllable timing, it often appears to be more readily understood than stress-timed varieties. As Deterding and Kirkpatrick (2006, p.406) note in their study of ASEAN speakers, “the avoidance of reduced vowels in unstressed syllables and also the clear bisyllabic enunciation of triphthongs, actually enhance understanding.”

Indeed, giving fuller value to vowels rather than using the schwa /ə/ (common in stress-timed varieties of English) appears to render English more readily comprehensible not only among other speakers of syllable-timed varieties of English but also more broadly. Syllable-timed English tends to make vowel sounds more salient and may also appear more like written language, which is frequently the medium through which English is learned: All three vowels of 'elephant' or 'computer,' rather than just the stressed 'el' or 'pu', are made visible. More broadly, when we look at questions of intelligibility, it is also clear that there is much more at stake than questions only of phonological or lexical comprehension, since we are often engaged in much wider processes of communication and accommodation.

Choosing which version of English might be used for international communication is also of course politically contentious. While it might have seemed possible in a previous era to opt for British or American English, shifting global politics make the choice of a global norm more difficult. This is one thing that the world Englishes framework has given us: many Englishes. The recent interest in China English (importantly not necessarily English as affected by Chinese languages but rather English with Chinese characteristics) (He & Zhang, 2010) is a good example. Yet one of the shortcomings of the world Englishes framework is that while it has argued against central language norms and posited instead a variety of different Englishes, it has tended to view questions of power and difference only along the polarity between 'inner circle' norms (British, American, Australian, etc.) and the rest.

Even after so many years' work on English varieties, therefore, the focus remains on the differences between the supposed inner circle varieties and their outer and expanding circle variants. Yet all varieties of English are in complex relations of power with other varieties. As Martin (2014) observes, for example, the sociolinguistics of English in the Philippines is far more complex than merely placing it in the 'outer circle' as if that explained the many Englishes used there. There are circles within circles in the Philippines, amid questions of access, education, style, disparity and difference (Tupas, 2010). The issue, therefore, is not centrally about how Philippine English differs from American English but how English resources are spread and used and made available or inaccessible to people of different classes and ethnicities across these islands. So any claim to a variety of English, while at one level a defiance of inner circle norms,

is also always a political claim in relation to other varieties, and a claim amid competing social, economic and political values.

When we start to consider further what kind of English students might need, we also have to reflect on contemporary multilingual and multimodal contexts of language use. One approach to understanding the complexity of multilingual urban communication is to assume that there must be a lingua franca in order for communication to occur. If a world Englishes framework is unhelpful here since it operates with problematic nation-based frameworks of English (Philippine or Malaysian or Myanmar English) (Bruthiaux, 2003), a more fruitful way forward may be the English as a lingua franca (ELF) approach (Jenkins, 2006, 2009; Mackenzie, 2014) based on current understandings of general tendencies towards comprehensibility: syllable timing, the use or not of /ð/, the pluralization of nouns not normally pluralized in other varieties (furnitures, kins, researches, staffs), and so on. The idea of *lingua francas*, however, needs some further discussion. The original lingua franca developed among crusaders and traders of different language backgrounds (using vocabulary from Arabic, French, Greek, Italian, Spanish and Turkish) for trading purposes across the Mediterranean region in the Middle Ages. The term *lingua franca* (Italian for “Frankish tongue”) is based on the Arabic use of the term for “Franks” to refer to all Europeans (and thus foreigners: *faranji/farengi*) (Ostler, 2010). The original *lingua franca*, or *Sabir*, Walter (1988) suggests, “served its purpose perfectly in commercial exchanges because of its particular quality that each user thought that it was the other’s language” (p.216, my translation).

Referring to the current use of English as a lingua franca, Phillipson (2009) suggests a certain historical irony here that the language of the medieval crusaders has now become the term affixed to “English as the language of the crusade of global corporatization, marketed as ‘freedom’ and ‘democracy’” (p.167). Clearly, however, in these current approaches to English as a lingua franca — as a language learned outside the home (Ostler, 2010) or a common language between people who do not share a mother tongue (Kirkpatrick, 2011) — something very different is implied. Indeed, Kachru (2005) has rejected this idea of English as a lingua franca on the grounds that the term is inaccurately used to refer to the use of a language, English, for international communication, whereas the original term referred to an emergent contact language. While there is little to be gained from an insistence on the original meaning of lingua franca, there

is nonetheless an important linguistic ideological distinction to be made here (Pennycook, 2012b; Chapter 14): If we view lingua francas through the lens of modernist language ideology, where a lingua franca becomes a *learned object*, we have put language as an entity before the process of communication. If, however, we view a lingua franca as an emergent mix that is always in flux, that indeed should not be predefined as ‘English’ or any other pregiven language, then we can place the processes of interaction before an assumption about the medium.

From Elf to Bahasa Rojak

This brings us to several further considerations. Looking back at emergent trade languages reminds us that there is nothing new here. As any history of port cities tells us, this mixing has been going on a long time. According to Tomé Pires, a Portuguese apothecary from Lisbon who, following the Portuguese seizure of Malacca in 1511, spent three years there (from 1512 to 1515)¹, the port was extraordinarily diverse, including “Moors from Cairo, Mecca, Aden,” Abyssinians, people from Kilwa, Malindi, Ormuz, “Parsis, Rumi, Turks, Turkomans, Christian Armenians, Gujaratis” and on through a vast list of people including “merchants from Orissa, Ceylon, Bengal, Arakan, Pegu,” Siamese, Malays, people from Penang, Patani, Cambodia, Champa, China, Brunei, Luzon, and “the Moluccas, Banda, Bima, Timor, Madura, Java, Sunda, Palembang, Jambi, Tongkal, Indragiri, Kappatta, Menangkabau, Siak, Arcat, Aru, Bata, from the country of the Tomjano, Pase, Pedir, from the Maldives” (as cited in Gunn, 2011, p.168). Malacca in the 16th century was a port that drew traders from across the region, and this diversity, it should be noted, was viewed in more complex terms than it would be following the emergence of the nation state. In her stories of Peranakan (Baba Nyonya) Chinese in the region, Lee (2010, 2014) also testifies to this mixture: “The Baba Nyonya culture is a rare and beautiful blend of many cultures — Chinese and Malay, mixed with elements from Javanese, Sumatran, Thai, Myanmar, Balinese, Indian, Portuguese, Dutch and English cultures” (2010, p.12).

When we ask how communication could have happened in such contexts, the answer is not so much in terms of a pre-existing lingua franca but rather in terms of complex chains of communication and emergent commonalities (of course, the fact that money and goods were

involved helped too). Clearly, for the many traders at the time, one had to be resourceful. And whatever language resources were used to buy and sell, barter and trade, it was a *bahasa rojak* or *bahasa gado-gado*². This is why Canagarajah (2007) opts for the idea of Lingua Franca English (LFE) rather than English as a Lingua Franca (ELF), since from this position LFE is emergent from its contexts of use: speakers “activate a mutually recognized set of attitudes, forms, and conventions that ensure successful communication in LFE when they find themselves interacting with each other” (p.925). LFE is “intersubjectively constructed in each specific context of interaction. The form of this English is negotiated by each set of speakers for their purposes” and thus “it is difficult to describe this language a priori” (Canagarajah, 2007, p.925). This “translingual perspective” takes “diversity as the norm” and “challenges the assumption of other models of global Englishes that sharedness and uniformity of norms at different levels of generality are required for communicative success” (Canagarajah, 2013, p.75).

This suggests the need for a much more flexible model for learning English: Far removed from the notion that intelligibility might be guaranteed by everyone speaking the same variety of English, a more relativist or polycentric model appears better suited to intelligibility. Indeed the idea of a model itself becomes quite problematic from this perspective since the moment we turn this into a model, we overlook the question of positionality — it depends on who is talking to whom — and produce a potentially limiting or reduced version of the language. This has been a consistent point of critique against ELF approaches that propose a version of English stripped of various elements, from phonological features to idioms. A polycentric approach, by contrast, suggests that rather than seeking a model of English that assumes that we can accommodate the diversity of English into one framework, we need to turn our focus on how people manage to communicate in contexts of diversity. This is not so much a model, therefore, but a form of *principled polycentrism*, more akin to Canagarajah’s LFE than ELF.

At the same time that many questions have emerged about how we conceive of English in the contemporary world, so too have there been many changes to how we conceive of language more generally, and particularly in the field of bi-and multilingualism. A number of researchers have been exploring new terminology beyond bilingualism, multilingualism, code-mixing and the like since these appear to suggest a rigidity of languages, a

set of fixed codes that people choose between. García and Li (2014) explain *translanguaging* as “an approach to the use of language, bilingualism and the education of bilinguals that considers the language practices of bilinguals not as two autonomous language systems as has been traditionally the case, but as one linguistic repertoire with features that have been societally constructed as belonging to two separate languages” (p.2). Canagarajah (2013) has argued along similar lines for a need to look at *translingual practices* where communication transcends both “individual languages” and words, thus involving “diverse semiotic resources and ecological affordances” (p.6).

In their studies of mixed language use in Danish schools, Jørgensen (2008) and his colleagues asked similar questions concerning the use of descriptions such as bi/multilingual. “What if the participants do not orient to the juxtaposition of languages in terms of switching?” Møller (2008) asks. “What if they instead orient to a linguistic norm where all available linguistic resources can be used to reach the goals of the speaker?” If this is the case, Møller argues, “it is not adequate to categorise this conversation as bilingual or multilingual, or even as language mixing, because all these terms depend on the separability of linguistic categories. I therefore suggest the term polylingual instead” (p.218). In a similar vein, studies of urban interaction have led to a focus on *metrolingualism* rather than multilingualism (Otsuji & Pennycook, 2010), where diversity is taken as the norm (Otsuji & Pennycook, 2014) and the significant relationship is seen as being between linguistic resources and the urban environment. These different strands of work have all started to question our assumptions about pre-existing, nameable things called languages. “What would language education look like,” asks García (2007, p.xiii), “if we no longer posited the existence of separate languages?”

Bahasa Rojak and Metrolingualism

In a series of linguistic ethnographic and netnographic studies in different regions of Asia — Ulaanbaatar, Dhaka, Tokyo and Sydney (Pennycook & Otsuji, 2014 a, b; Sultana, Dovchin & Pennycook, 2013, 2014)³ — we have been exploring the *bahasa rojak* of everyday communication, or what we have elsewhere called *metrolingualism* (Pennycook & Otsuji, 2015) and *transglossia* (Sultana, Dovchin, & Pennycook, 2014). These studies have explored the ways people draw on a range of linguistic resources as they

communicate online or go about their daily work. When we look at the many online and media contexts through which people interact, it becomes clear that the potential resources available to people may be extraordinarily diverse. Cultural flows in many regions of Asia frequently involve a complex and diverse array of cultural and linguistic forms and practices that are discussed, watched, taken up and redeployed in daily lives.

When a young Mongolian adult updates her Facebook page with a comment “Ai syopping @ Louis Vitton ... güzel çanta” using a Korean English phrase “eye shopping” (window shopping) and a remark in Turkish that they were “nice bags” (güzel çanta), we can of course turn to her own background to explain some of this: Although she grew up in the poor *ger* district of the capital, Altai won a scholarship to a Turkish school (Turkish high schools were established in Mongolia from the mid 90’s and were widely respected for their high quality Turkish and English medium subjects) and later, when studying as an exchange student in Ankara, she sought to overcome her loneliness by watching Korean TV dramas. Clearly, too, this use of English and Turkish with a largely Mongolian circle of friends on Facebook is largely dependent on their shared background of education in Turkish-medium high schools.

The Facebook posting of another Mongolian participant adds further dimensions to this, however. When Selenge writes “Zaa unuudriin gol zorilgo bol ‘Oppa ajaa ni Gym-yum style’ Guriineee kkkkk” (“OK, today’s main aim is ‘Your lady is in the mode of Gym-yum style’. Keep on doing it! Hahaha”), there is more going on (Sultana, Dovchin & Pennycook, 2014). There is the playful reworking of the Korean 우뽀강남스타일 (Oppan Gangnam style), with its intertextual reference to Gangnam style (modified with ‘gym’ and ‘yum’) and use of Korean ‘Oppa’ (older male/brother) and Mongolian ‘ajaa’(older sister), the onomatopoeic giggling, ‘kkkkk’, popular among Korean and Mongolian online users, and the use of contemporary Mongolian youth slang (‘Guriinee’ — ‘Go on!’; ‘Keep on doing it!’). She is thus drawing on, and playing with, a wide range of linguistic and cultural resources. Of equal importance are the *selfie* of herself at the gym uploaded at the same time, the intertextual references to popular culture, the use of online resources such as ‘kkkkk’ (which also suggests that some claims to a new universality in online symbols may be overstated) and the online community (loosely understood) with which she is interacting here.

Analysis of these online interactions indicates that this heteroglossic language use is by no means limited to mixing identifiably different

language resources, such as Bangla, English, Hindi, Mongolian, Turkish, Korean and so on. These young participants take up varied *voices* borrowed from different genres of popular culture. Thus when Ria in Dhaka starts a Facebook posting with: “ouffffffffffff arrey jala jala jala ei ontore arrey jala jala ...” she is doing a number of things: she uses particular textual means to emphasize her impatience (ouffffffffffff), uses another written sound (arrey) to show she agrees with an earlier comment and then switches into Bangla song mode (fire, fire, fire, this heart is on fire) with an intertextual reference to a well-known Bangladeshi film and song title (Dovchin, Sultana and Pennycook, 2015). This is then taken up by Aditi: “hai hai, pran jaye, pran jaye jaye pran jaye!: P LMAO!: P” with another written expression of sound (hai hai, expressing surprise or joy), a further takeup of Bangladeshi filmic song (my heart is falling deep in love) followed by a common emoticon (:P) and expression LMAO (laughing my ass off).

While the mixed linguistic resources form one part of this online interaction, equally important are the use of sounds, emotive expressions and references to forms of popular culture, as well as different genres (here love songs). In this example the reference is to Bangladeshi film songs, but elsewhere these young adults draw on Hindi film scripts, Korean dramas, popular music such as Gangnam Style, Sumo wrestling, Pepsi commercials, hip hop and much more (Sultana, Dovchin & Pennycook, 2013). As Dovchin (2011, p.331) suggests in the context of the takeup of popular music in Mongolia, “new forms of identities are performed through playful interactions and chaotic linguistic practices of urban youth consumers of popular culture.” These online environments help us see how the resources at their disposal are both a product of the interactions between people and part of the larger virtual space in which these interactions occur. Online environments put a range of resources at our disposal (Google Translate being just one) and, unlike face-to-face interaction, can allow time for the gathering of resources while also supplementing the pared down online environment with sounds, songs and expressions.

Such online environments suggest that people may use a pool of semiotic resources that are not necessarily what we would normally consider part of their personal competence. Rather than viewing this virtual space as the exception, I want to argue instead that this sheds light on language use more generally. If we move away from these virtual environments to focus instead on interactions in kitchens, restaurants and

markets, we find a further set of dynamics that need to be considered. While the kitchen at the *Patris Pizza* restaurant (Pennycook & Otsuji, 2014a) is hard to define in terms of a speech community or a community of practice (neither social bonds nor practices seem consistent enough), this space of interaction nevertheless becomes a site of diverse linguistic and other resources. These are in part a product of the backgrounds of the cooks: two brothers of Polish background and Nischal, from Nepal, who speaks Nepalese, Bangla, ‘a bit of Gujarati, Punjabi ... definitely a lot of Indian’ as well as ‘a bit of Czech and Slovak’ and who claims that the language of the kitchen is Polish rather than English (as the brothers, Krzysztof and Aleksy, claim).

But into this space come other resources: Jaidev, an Indian floor staff drops by to ask for a cigarette from Nischal, an exchange that happens in Hindi and English; Italian words such as *mozzarella* and *formaggio* turn up, not unexpectedly, in the conversations between the cooks; when Aleksy’s Columbian girlfriend calls him on his mobile, a few Spanish words suddenly enter the space to be taken up again by Nischal — *Hola, como estas?* (Hi, how are you?) – as he jokes with Aleksy later. In this busy workplace — criss-crossed by trajectories of people (cooks, floor staff, phone calls), artefacts (knives, sieves, plates) and food (ingredients, cooking, finished items) — a range of linguistic resources becomes available, sometimes unexpectedly, sometimes less so. As we observe the ways in which the activities they are engaged in, the linguistic resources they use, and the space of the kitchen interact, we see constantly shifting configurations of language use that are best understood not in terms of counted language resources but rather in terms of the interactions between tasks, resources and space.

When we look at the interactions that Nabil, the owner of a small bistro in Tokyo, engages in, we find not only that he draws on a wide range of linguistic resources but also that he is engaged in a diverse set of tasks (Pennycook & Otsuji, 2014a). Within a short period of time, Nabil moves around the small restaurant floor, negotiating with the chef about the dish, passing between tables and managing customers in English and Japanese (“sorry, gomen nasai” [sorry]), serving food (“hotate no carpaccio” [scallop carpaccio]) while also using the linguistic and culinary capital of French with customers (“voilà, bon appétit” [here it is; enjoy your meal]), before passing on orders for bread (“pain”) and another plate (“encore une assiette”), either side of a direction to another (French-speaking) member

of the floor staff to attend to two new customers who have just arrived (“two people, and two people onegaishimasu” [please]).

As he moves between tables, takes orders, delivers meals, directs staff, and manages the restaurant more generally, Nabil is engaged in a range of tasks which cannot be mapped onto the linguistic resources in any discrete, functional fashion. These local linguistic practices cannot be fully accounted for without consideration of the broader picture of how and why particular resources are available in this place, at this time, in relation to these objects. Of importance here, then, are the interrelationships between restaurant multitasking, linguistic resources, and the intricate patterning of movement, activity, and semiotic supplies. Nabil’s own personal trajectory and linguistic repertoire (from Algeria to Paris to Tokyo) of course plays a role here, as do the particular customers and staff, the material artefacts and activities involved (the bringing of scallops and bread, and request for another plate), the movement through the crowded restaurant (the layout of the restaurant and the small gaps between the tables), and the other available resources in this space, from menus to food orders, music to wine bottles.

Turning to the context of two busy markets in Sydney (Pennycook & Otsuji, 2014b), we also find this complex interplay of language, activity and artefact. As the two brothers Talib and Muhibb negotiate zucchini prices with a customer using English and Lebanese Arabic (“Tell him *arba wa ashreen* (twenty four). I told him. He wants to try and get it for cheaper *Arba wa ashreen* (twenty four)”), the fact that the zucchini they are trying to sell have turned yellow (“*Hadol misfareen. Misfareen hadol*” (These are yellowing. They’ve gone yellow)) requires a renegotiation, especially when the customer of Maltese background recognizes the word for yellow (*Isfar ...* we understand *isfar* in Lebanese). As in the Tokyo bistro we can see the importance of activities and objects in relation to the linguistic interactions. It matters that this exchange is happening early in the morning (it’s still dark outside) in a section of a huge open market area where many of the workers are of Lebanese background (though not all — their seven employees are of Turkish, Pakistani, Moroccan, Sudanese-Egyptian, Somali and Philippino backgrounds). Important too are the activities surrounding the buying and selling, loading and shifting of a range of fruit and vegetables. It matters too that the zucchini are turning yellow. And it is also significant that the customer can summon up some common terms from a shared crossover between Maltese and Arabic.

What starts to become evident, then, is that linguistic resources, everyday tasks and social space are intertwined. The question that starts to emerge in such contexts is how the diverse linguistic resources that are constantly at play, this reservoir of resources in Bernstein's (2000) terms, can be drawn on for varied types of communication in relation to objects, activities and spaces. When a woman selling mangoes at her stall in a different, smaller market insists in Cantonese to her customer 呢呢呢呢...係呀, 係呀. 呢個色好食. (Look, look, look ... yeah, yeah. This colour tastes good), the mangoes themselves, their colour, taste and smell, become part of the action. And when a young man, who by his account speaks Hokkien, Indonesian, Hakka, Cantonese, Mandarin and English, tells us as he husks corn over a large green bin that 乜都有, 撈埋一齊 (all sorts of languages are mixed together), we are pushed to consider that the repertoires of linguistic resources that people bring from their historical trajectories intersect with the spatial organization of other repertoires, while the practices of buying and selling, bartering and negotiating, husking corn and stacking boxes, bring a range of other semiotic practices into play: yellowing zucchini (down goes the price) and yellowing mangoes (up goes the price), the noise and urgency of market selling, all play crucial roles in how various resources will be used and taken up, and therefore what constitute at any place and time the repertoires from which communication can draw.

Resourceful Speakers

So this brings us back to the way I want to start to think about *bahasa rojak*, *principled polycentrism* and *resourceful speakers*. A range of recent studies of language use in Asia, as well as studies in Europe and North America, have started to question the ways we talk about languages, bilingualism, multilingualism and code switching, thinking instead of language diversity as singular rather than plural (Otsuji & Pennycook, 2014). Language and communication have come to be seen as part of a wider mobilization of semiotic resources: We use a range of things to communicate and do not therefore need to assume that communication is reliant on people speaking the 'same' language (Harris, 2009). Languages start to be seen not so much in terms of systems as in terms of practices, as something we do, not as an object in the curriculum but as an activity. We need therefore to ask ourselves what language myths we perpetuate through the language

ideologies we reproduce in our language classes, with our bounded entities, such as French, German, Japanese, Chinese, Korean, Indonesian, Italian, and so on. These language labels are very different from the ways in which languages work. We need to ask ourselves what we mean when we say we're trying to teach this or that language, between 3 o'clock and 4 o'clock on Wednesday afternoon, and we'll be getting back to it the following week again because it's a thing you learn on that afternoon in that way: What myths are we perpetuating about languages?

We do not actually 'speak languages,' we are not in fact 'native speakers' of things called 'languages'. Rather, we engage in language practices (Pennycook, 2010), we draw on linguistic repertoires, we take up styles, we partake in discourse, we do genres. Indeed languages can be seen not as pre-given entities but as sets of possibilities that emerge from practices, registers, discourses and genres. From this point of view, we can start to view language education in terms of multimodal semiotics, principled polycentrism and the need to develop resourceful speakers.

This *principled polycentrism* points to the relativity of locality. This is not the polycentrism of a World Englishes focus, with its established norms of regional varieties of English, but a more fluid concept, based on the idea that peoples' linguistic repertoires "reflect the polycentricity of the learning environments in which the speaker dwells" (Blommaert & Backus, 2013, p.20). It does not mean 'anything goes': a *principled* polycentrism suggests we should acknowledge commonalities and shared resources.

When we talk of being intelligible, we have to ask for whom? As Rajagopalan (2010) notes, much of the discussion of intelligibility in the context of the global spread of English still posits some undisclosed central norm as the hidden standard by which we judge intelligibility. We have to ask, instead, for whom is something intelligible? The spectre of mutual unintelligibility that is raised when confronted by divergent ways of speaking needs to take into account for whom such unintelligibility is presupposed. The intelligibility of a Thai businesswoman speaking in English to a Vietnamese small business owner will be different from the intelligibility of a Japanese designer talking to a Colombian clothes manufacturer. The effectiveness of their communication will depend less on their adherence to an international model of English and more on their capacity to use a range of linguistic and nonlinguistic resources and to accommodate to each other.

Developing *resourceful speakers* is surely what we are aiming at in

language education. By this I mean both having available language resources and being good at shifting between styles, discourses, registers and genres. This brings Blommaert's emphasis on a "sociolinguistics of *speech* and of *resources*, of the real bits and chunks of language that make up a repertoire, and of real ways of using this repertoire in communication" (2010, p.173) into conversation with the need to learn how to negotiate and accommodate, rather than to be proficient in one variety of English. Communication may be possible, as Canagarajah (2007) puts it, because people bring their "own strategies to negotiate" between different cultural and linguistic conventions; they "do their own thing,' but still communicate with each other. Not uniformity, but alignment is more important for such communication. Each participant brings his or her own language resources to find a strategic fit with the participants and purpose of a context" (p.927). What is important here is the focus on resources and positioning: it is not so much that we need a shared code to communicate but rather that we are able to bring our different resources into sufficient alignment. So an emerging goal of education may be less towards proficient native-speaker-like speakers (which has always been a confused and misguided goal), and to think instead in polycentric terms of *resourceful speakers* (Pennycook, 2012a) who can draw on multiple linguistic and semiotic resources, and accommodate, negotiate and be light on their feet and loose with their tongues, who might have been able to get by in the port cities of old and can still get by in the cities of today.

Notes

1. My thanks to James Mclellan for bringing this to my attention.
2. A mixed language (*Rojak* is a Malay dish of mixed vegetables). *Gado-Gado* (a different Indonesian dish) is similarly used. *Bahasa rojak* is often used with negative overtones but here I want to inflect it with a more positive sense.
3. In this meta-analysis of these studies I have not provided further details on research methodologies, contexts, conventions and so on. These can be found in the cited papers discussed in this section.

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Towards a Critical Applied
Linguistics for the 1990s

Section 2

Critical Approaches to Language and Discourse

Chapter 9

Towards a Critical Applied Linguistics for the 1990s

This chapter is based on an article that first appeared in 1990 in
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INTRODUCTION

We live in a world marked by fundamental inequalities: a world in which 40,000 children die every day in Third World countries; a world in which, in almost every society and culture, differences constructed around gender, race, ethnicity, class, age, sexual preference and other distinctions lead to massive inequalities; a world increasingly threatened by pollution and ecological disaster. I believe that to understand such inequalities we need to go beyond a view of politics as residing in the hands of nation states or “political leaders” and to understand ourselves within a set of global power relations. While it is therefore important to look at international relations, we should also be wary of reducing this to a socioeconomic description of world market forces. Rather, I suggest we need to look at the cultural and ideological bases of our work and lives in an effort to understand how they may be supportive of larger inequalities.

As applied linguists, we are involved in language and education, an intersection between two of the most fundamentally political aspects of life. I see societies as inequitably structured and dominated by hegemonic cultures and ideologies that limit the ways in which we can think about the world and, thus, the ways in which we can move towards changing it. I am also convinced that the learning of languages is closely bound up with both the maintenance of these inequalities and with the conditions needed to possibly change them. It is incumbent on applied linguists, therefore, to examine the ideological basis of the knowledge we produce. As Phillipson & Skutnabb-Kangas (1986) argue, “applied linguists help in *reproducing the material conditions for exploitation*, in a world characterized by unequally shared prosperity, waste, militarization, injustice, famine and disease” (p.118). Applied linguists, they suggest, need to explore the ways in which

our work supports the increasingly sophisticated forms of physical, social, and above all ideological coercion. As an educator and an applied linguist, therefore, I feel that my own project must always be both pedagogical and political.

In the hope that the addition of the journal *Issues in Applied Linguistics* will allow and encourage the emergence of a greater variety of opinions and voices than can be found in what are today the important journals in the discipline, I have taken the rather presumptuous step of trying to write a where-are-we-now? and where-are-we-going? article. Unlike most articles of this type, however, which tend to dwell in self-congratulatory style on the many achievements made to date before describing the holes which need to be filled by more research, this article will take a far more critical attitude. I wish to argue that applied linguistics could do with a major overhaul, a rethinking of our work in response to the ideas I have outlined above. One of the major problems we are facing is that the predominant paradigms of applied linguistics offer no framework for exploring the politics of language education. What I wish to do in this brief article is to deconstruct some of the basic tenets of applied linguistics with a view to showing how they are located within a very specific modernist conception of the world. Since it is also my view that we need to develop means of conducting transformative critiques, I shall try to show how what I shall call a *principled postmodernism* can help us move, in the first instance, towards a *critical applied linguistics*. What I shall argue for, then, is a critical approach to applied linguistics which is far more responsive to social, cultural, and political concerns than has been the case with most work to date. In short, I shall argue for work that always looks both to critique and to transform, that seeks to involve itself in a moral and political project for change.

LANGUAGE AND RESEARCH IN APPLIED LINGUISTICS

In this section, I shall try to show how particular aspects of applied linguistics are very much children of the modernist era. While my views here will be necessarily simplified and overgeneralized, I think it is important to try to make some sort of broad characterization of the field. First of all, while many other areas of the social sciences are questioning their epistemological bases, applied linguistics appears to be continuing untroubled with its firm beliefs in the basic tenets of European

Enlightenment thought and its two subsequent spinoffs, positivism and structuralism. This state of mind entails a continued faith in an apolitical, ahistorical view of language; in a clear divide between subject and object and thus in a notion of objectivity; in thought and experience prior to language; in the development of models and methods according to scientist principles and the subsequent testing of their validity by statistical means; in a belief in cumulative progress as a result of this gradual addition of “new” knowledge; and in the universal applicability of rationality and the truths and theories that it produces. I shall return to a discussion of criticisms of these views in the next section. Here, I shall endeavor to demonstrate how the predominant views of language and research in applied linguistics are related to these beliefs.¹

A definition of language, as Williams (1977) has remarked, is always, implicitly or explicitly, a definition of human beings in the world. It is crucial that we understand both the origins of the particular view held predominantly in the West about language as well as the implications of this view for learning and communication. First, we should be aware that the notion of language as it grew up in Europe was intimately tied to the growth of the nation state. As emerging states sought to wean their citizenry away from the church and to strengthen their hold over diverse groups of people by developing notions of a homogeneous ethnicity, the development of the notion of a language came to take on fundamental importance. This political construct was to take on even greater significance in the 19th century with the coming of industrialization and colonialism. This era saw attempts to invent a standardized language (Crowley, 1989) and to develop mass education as a powerful means of social control. As Harris (1981) describes the process, “the language myth in its modern form is a cultural product of Post-Renaissance Europe. It reflects the political psychology of nationalism, and an educational system devoted to standardizing the linguistic behavior of pupils” (p.9). In the late 19th and 20th century, this view of language was taken up by linguistics and given the solemn blessing of a science.

The invention of a standardized version of a language is particularly important, for it stands at the center of one of the great myths of modern linguistics: the belief that there was a shift from prescriptive to descriptive linguistics in the 19th and 20th centuries. It is a commonplace assertion in most linguistics texts that the growth of scientific linguistics marked a change from attempts to stipulate what correct language use should be

to the objective description of languages. As Crowley's (1989) extensive study of these claims shows, however, no such shift from prescription to description in fact took place: "The objectification of language ... is a construction of the history of the study of language in Britain that cannot be supported by the evidence ..., a discursive construction that serves particular social and rhetorical purposes" (pp.13–14). Indeed, linguistics has been engaged as much in the creation and definition of standards as was the case in the supposedly prescriptive era, a process which, as Bourne (1988) has pointed out, reached its most powerful form in the generativists' attempt to locate language as a biologically determined construct in each isolated individual.

Other implicit assumptions have accompanied this view of language. Morgan (1987) suggests that the predominant understanding of language has been "correspondence theory" which assumes a one-to-one correspondence between objects, words and thoughts. Although this representationalist view of meaning was challenged by structuralists with their belief that meaning was determined by the internal relationships within a structure, it has remained the predominant way of viewing language. Similarly, Harris (1981) argues that the "language myth" is based on two interrelated fallacies. The first is the "telementational" fallacy, whereby linguistic knowledge is taken to be a matter of knowing which words stand for which thoughts, words, therefore, being symbols created by humans for transferring thoughts from one mind to another. To achieve this, the second, the "determinacy" or "fixed code" fallacy, is invoked, whereby a language is taken to be a fixed and agreed-upon code for language communities to express their ideas.

Applied linguistics has also been greatly affected by the structuralist paradigms that have generally held sway since Saussure. The particular distinctions set up by Saussure marked an important turning point in the treatment of language: privileging the synchronic over the diachronic, the internal, structural relationships over external relationships, and assuming a dichotomy between the individual and society. The domination of these distinctions in 20th-century thought about language and language acquisition have resulted in the divorce of these studies from historical, social, cultural or political questions. The dualistic thinking of the European Enlightenment, strengthened by Saussure's distinctions, has thus led to a problematic divide between the individual and society, between culture and society, and between culture and cognition. Structuralist and positivist views have tended to stress society and cognition as the only

areas amenable to objective research, thus focusing on the individual in cognitive isolation, for example, or ideal speech communities, while failing to acknowledge both culture as the primary signifying system by which we make sense of the world and language learning as taking place within relationships of power.

In the next section, I shall suggest a different conception of language, but first I shall indicate some of the implications for applied linguistics of the view outlined above. It is important to note the legacies of this Eurocentric view of language: both linguistics, in its presentation of family trees (Nayar, 1989), for example, and applied linguistics, especially in its language planning policies (Jernudd, 1981), have developed models of language and language use that reflect more a European view of the world than any other reality. In addition, the legacy of an ahistorical and apolitical approach to language centering on the notion of a rational individual, a view bolstered by the use of cognitive psychology as a basis for much psycholinguistic work, has led to conceptions of language and communication in which there is no space for the consideration of questions of power and inequality. An apolitical and ahistorical view of language, after all, cannot account for competing struggles over meaning. Moreover, the telementational and fixed code fallacies that underlie much work in applied linguistics have led to a narrow emphasis on functionalism and communication. This view has tended to reduce language to a system for transmitting messages or for getting things done. Speaker A encodes ideas into the language and transmits the message to speaker B who then decodes the message. What this conception of language lacks is an understanding of language as an ideational signifying system that plays a central role in how we understand ourselves and the world.

Two problems connected to this merely functional view of language are the trivialization of content and an overemphasis on communicative competence. Language teaching has long had to struggle with the question of content: i.e., apart from language itself, what is a language lesson to be about? Unfortunately, with the spread of communicative language teaching, the belief grew up that as long as a message was passed from A to B, learning could take place. This led to an emphasis on any activity that would encourage one student to pass some form of message to another. These "interactive activities" and games came to dominate the language classroom and led to the ever-increasing trivialization of language learning and learners. While this clearly has important pedagogical and social

implications, it should also, as Mukherjee (1986) has pointed out, be seen for its political implications:

In ESL the puerile structure of content was not and is not about transmission of skills or critical understanding of concepts. It is geared to receiving situational instructions and learning how to assimilate as an 'object' into a structural order, into a value order, into a cultural order, into a linguistic order and, above all, into a racist order. (p.46)

Indeed, as long as language teaching continues to trivialize itself, refusing to explore the cultural and political aspects of language learning, it will have more to do with assimilation than with any notion of empowerment.

The second closely connected problem is the notion of communicative competence. While the addition of other competences to the narrow view of linguistic competence — sociolinguistic, strategic, paralinguistic and discourse competence — have helped broaden the notion of communicative competence, the central issue of social appropriacy has remained isolated from the question of the political desirability of language forms. Bourne (1988) argues that functional language teaching reworked the diverse possibilities in the notion of communicative competence into the transmission of fixed norms of appropriacy. And Peirce (1989) has suggested that “the teaching of English for communicative competence is in itself inadequate as a language-teaching goal if English teachers are interested in exploring how language shapes the subjectivities of their students and how it is implicated in power and dominance” (p.406). Thus, if we teach for communicative competence without exploring both how language use has been historically constructed around questions of power and dominance as well as how in everyday usage it is also always involved in questions of power, we will once again be developing a teaching practice that has more to do with assimilation than empowerment.

Having sketched out some of what I see as the questions we need to raise about the received notions of language in much of applied linguistics, I would like now to look in particular at the implications of the predominance of the positivist paradigm in applied linguistic research. Books on applied linguistics often seem obsessed with methods and models. I have already discussed at some length the implications of the notion of methods (Pennycook, 1989; Chapter 1), so I shall only suggest here that similar objections might be raised against the proliferation of language learning models. The process of fixing a view of learning into

diagrammatic form and then proceeding to try to test its validity according to the positivist methods of quantitative experimentation is once again a dangerously reductive move. While a reasonable case might be made for the use of models and methods as heuristic rather than ontological categories, that is, as temporary understandings through which we are passing, their canonization in the literature of applied linguistics has, on the contrary, accorded them the status of complete and adequate theories that can be applied to diverse settings (Nayar, 1989). This tendency to first technologize the learning process, then universalize the models by appealing to the objectivity of research methods, has long been a facet of modernist thinking.

It is probably true that applied linguistics is proud of its growing research tradition. I would suggest, however, that there are probably stronger grounds for concern than for celebration. First, and foremost, is the problem of the predominance of positivist, quantitative forms of research. In a review of research articles in *TESOL Quarterly*, Henning (1986) reports as a laudable development that the proportion of qualitative to quantitative research had shifted from 88%:12% in 1970 to 39%:61% in 1985. While it is doubtless useful that, where appropriate, better research methods have been used, it is, I believe, highly problematic to celebrate this increasing domination of quantitative research. Research has tended to concentrate on proof rather than understanding, yet it is something of a pointless exercise to use sophisticated statistical means to try to show a causal relationship between variables about which we have very little understanding (Mitchell, 1985; Van Lier, 1988).

In a rarely cited article written over ten years ago, Ochsner (1979) argued for a balanced approach to research that acknowledged not only the nomothetic, positivist tradition, but also a hermeneutic approach. Unfortunately, his advice has gone unheeded as the steamroller of positivism has come to dominate so much of the work in applied linguistics. While discussions of research usually acknowledge that qualitative research should be complimentary to quantitative, what in fact happens is that qualitative research is used in a minor service capacity to the all-important quantitative: it is seen as useful for defining categories and variables, but not as an end itself. This inequity has serious implications because qualitative research has been ignored, underdeveloped and misunderstood; it is often equated with a limited conception of ethnography, which, as Watson-Gegeo (1988) has pointed out, on the one hand ignores many

other qualitative research possibilities, and, on the other, has tended to caricature rather than characterize classrooms.

Although the nativist drive in second language acquisition (SLA) research to establish the 'natural' (exemplified by Krashen's attempts to define natural acquisition, a natural order of learning and a natural method for teaching), with its distinctly anti-classroom and anti-teacher agenda, is fortunately now in decline, much of SLA research still has little to say about classroom language learning (Van Lier, 1988). Indeed, despite claims to be dealing with classrooms, most of the research has been quasi-experimental, with students in small groups performing tasks set by experimenters. Such limited, positivist experiments, operating in the belief that language learning can be accounted for by quantitative measures of 'input' or 'interaction' (see Aston, 1986), have ignored basic sociolinguistic questions by comparing, for example, question patterns between pairs of strangers with question patterns between teachers and students in classrooms.

Research in SLA, through quantitative measures of hypostatized cause and effect relations in quasi-experimental settings, has treated the classroom as a site of mere linguistic transaction rather than trying to understand it as a complex locus of social interaction. Research exploring the social, cultural and political dynamics of second language classrooms has been minimal. Fundamental questions, such as the role of gender in classroom interaction and language acquisition, have thus received minimal attention (see Holmes, 1989, however, for work in this area). Furthermore, as Nayar (1989) has suggested, much of the research which has been done is completely inapplicable to most of the world, since it is conducted in utterly different circumstances from those in which most teachers and students find themselves. This would not be such a serious problem if it were not the case that North American research, with the universalizing tendencies of modernity, all the backing of prestigious universities and the supposed rigor of positivist methods, is exporting its findings as a form of universal truth to the rest of the world.

I could go on in this critical vein, but I feel by now that my central points have been made. What I have been trying to illustrate here are the severe limitations of most work in applied linguistics to date. These I have characterized as based on the tenets of modernism, especially its emphases on universal, foundational, and totalizing theories as well as on teleological, progressivist and positivist understandings of the world.

These shortcomings have implications not only for applied linguistics but for students and teachers of ESL around the world. To the extent that these ideas are located within the modernist paradigm which has played such a predominant role in maintaining social and cultural inequalities, and to the extent that English language teaching, as Phillipson (1986) has shown, is intimately linked to neocolonialism, we as applied linguists would do well to look to other ways of conceptualizing the modern world. In the next section I shall give a brief overview of what such a principled postmodernism might entail before illustrating how critical projects have been taken up in fields related to applied linguistics.

AN EPISTEMOLOGICAL CRISIS AND PRINCIPLED POSTMODERNISM

In the previous section, I outlined some of what I see as the basic tenets of applied linguistics (with respect particularly to views on language and research) and tried to show how these views are located within a very particular view of the world. In this section, I would like to sketch out what I see as the major challenges to modernist thought, which constitute a constellation of ideas that I am here grouping under the rubric of principled postmodernism: “postmodern” because these views involve a major re-evaluation of many of the most cherished beliefs of the modern era; “principled” because my interest here is to avoid the collapse into relativism or the language games popular in certain postmodern writing and to uphold a postmodernism that retains a notion of the political and ethical.

Although there has been a long tradition of critical work in scholastic circles, much of which has come under variations on a Marxist theme, recent powerful critical challenges appear to be shaking standard epistemologies more fundamentally to the core than before. It is not uncommon, for example, to find statements to the effect that philosophy itself has come to an end (Baynes, Bohman & McCarthy, 1986). Broadly speaking, these challenges may be grouped under the rubric of postmodernism which I will take here to include a variety of critical standpoints amongst which the emergent feminist and Third World voices are the most vibrant. Of particular concern are the more radical and political forms of postmodernism in the writings of Foucault and others (rather than the less political language games to be found in literary criticism and aesthetics);

feminist viewpoints that go beyond seeking equal opportunities for participation to challenge the implications of the history of that unequal participation as it is represented in a massive body of patriarchal thought; and work from the Third World where scholars have emerged from the straightjackets of colonial and neocolonial education to challenge the foundations of Western academic thought.

Postmodernist work has been attempting to show how Western scholarship is located within the context of modernity, a very particular way of viewing the world which may well be in decline. These critiques have drawn attention to the totalizing or universalizing tendencies in modernist thought, particularly the belief in a transcendent form of rationality. The belief in history as linear and ordered has been challenged, especially with respect to its tendency to submerge alternative views of the world and assume a linear and upward path of progress. Highly questionable, too, has become the notion of the unified, rational subject, that rational, Cartesian being capable of knowing both the self and other objects. Not unsurprisingly, these challenges have led to serious doubts about the nature of philosophical inquiry. Philosophers, and I believe all of us who are seeking to understand the underpinnings of our work in a broader sense, have had to respond to a number of challenges: questions about the local and the incommensurable in the face of claims to universality and foundationalism; the decentering of the subject and the concomitant sense of rationality in the face of emerging work on the unconscious, the will to power, the economy of desire and the formation of subjectivities in discourse; and questions about the modernist concept of representation — that a knowing subject can stand independent of a world of objects — in the face of the implications from Nietzsche's and Heidegger's work, which have suggested that we are all in and of this world and that there is no form of knowing outside the linguistic, social, historical and cultural frames within which we exist.

The focus of much postmodern criticism has been on science and philosophy. While critiques of positivism — the incursion of natural scientific methods into the study of humans — can be traced back through the Frankfurt School to Nietzsche and Kierkegaard, more recent postmodern critiques have shown how positivist thought has come to exercise extreme authority over substantial domains of our lives: we have become subjects of the normalizing gaze of medicine, psychiatry, and so on (see, e.g., Foucault, 1979). The critique of philosophy has challenged

that discipline's most fundamental claims to be able to develop a theory of knowledge on any universalizable basis (see, for example, Baynes, Bohman & McCarthy, 1986). These criticisms of modernity, then, have aimed to show how predominant Western, and increasingly world, modes of thought are specific to a very particular time and place and represent only one of many possible epistemologies.

In a number of ways, postmodernism and feminism should, as Nicholson (1990) has pointed out, be natural allies in their critique of the hegemonic body of modernist knowledge. It is not surprising, then, that a wide range of feminist work has sought to deconstruct the Western, male tradition of academic thought and to develop new modes and forms of knowledge. Everywhere, the academic canon has been challenged as women have started to rewrite literary criticism, history, sociology, anthropology, science, philosophy, political science, psychology, psychoanalysis and more (for an excellent collection of articles, see De Lauretis, 1986). Women are not only redefining these domains, changing our understanding of notions such as the subject or knowledge, but are shifting the whole ground on which academic work is done by stressing the personal (as always political), desire and memory. Recently, a number of feminist thinkers have started struggling with the problem of much feminist work continuing to reproduce the universalizing tendencies of modernist thought, especially in essentialized views of the female or universalized notions of women. As a number of the articles in Nicholson's (1990) collection suggest, however, taking up the postmodern challenge to locate struggle in the local represents a dangerous threat to the notion of gender as a unifying concept around which a struggle can be maintained. Nicholson suggests that a carefully constructed postmodern feminism can nevertheless overcome postmodern relativism and abandonment of grand theories by theorizing in ways inimical to essentialism, especially through historical work. While a postmodern critique of modernity's most firmly held beliefs (in a rational, unified subject, progress, or universalism) has outlined the specificity and limitations of modernist thought, feminist criticism has started to help us understand the gendered nature of that thinking and to suggest new ways of thinking about the world.

Not surprisingly, the universalizing tendencies of Western thought and the notion of linear, technological progress, with the West at the top of the scale, have received massive criticism from diverse Third World scholars as well. Just as we can observe the gradual incursion of one mode

of thought into other domains of human experience in the West, so can we observe a similar expansion from First and Second World countries to the Third World, especially as this was sanctified within the discourses not only of economic development, but of educational and technological aid as well. Writers such as Nandy (e.g., 1983), Kothari (e.g., 1987), and Mazrui (e.g., 1986), amongst many others, have pointed out the limitations and dangers of monoparadigmatic Western thought: "The politics of diversity and plurality," Kothari argues, "by rendering the mainstream monolith irrelevant, becomes the foundation of an alternative post-modern era of action and knowledge" (pp.279–280). The efforts of such thinkers to oppose the hegemony in the world of Western scientific thought also hold rich possibilities for the re-emergence of a diverse set of alternative epistemologies. Here, too, then, is a powerful form of transformative critique which argues against the received epistemologies of Western thought and seeks to re-discover, reinvent and create new and different ways of understanding the world.

Some areas of academic work have been going through major upheavals as the impact of this epistemological crisis has begun to be felt. Once the implications of the limited applicability of Western thought to many domains were confronted, anthropologists, for example, found their work in need of fundamental re-evaluation. Is it indeed useful to retain a notion of culture with its tendency always to essentialize others? Is it indeed possible at all to represent the Other? (For a discussion of these questions, see Clifford, 1988.) In the sociology of school knowledge, to take another example, radical new views have questioned the ideological bases of the curriculum, suggesting the need to re-evaluate assumptions that value one type of knowledge (academic) over others (everyday) (for a summary of these issues, see Whitty, 1985). And, as I have already mentioned, philosophy has arrived at the point where its very existence is being questioned. Despite these major upheavals, despite the "linguistic turn" that has brought many diverse thinkers outside the field of applied linguistics to agree on the impossibility of knowing outside language, applied linguistics appears to have continued blithely on with its continued faith in objectivity, in models and methods, in positivism, in an apolitical, ahistorical view of language, in a clear divide between subject and object, in thought and experience prior to language, and in the applicability of its theories to the rest of the world.

Recently, however, new perspectives relevant to applied linguistics

have started to emerge (see also the discussion of critical perspectives in the next section). In an important book that readdresses much thinking on the formation of the subject in language and psychology, Henriques, Hollway, Urwin, Venn & Walkerdine (1984) point to the theoretical weaknesses and political disadvantages in psychology's construction of the individual within the individual/society dichotomy and in the construction of the individual within positivist psychology both as an object of its study and as a site for social regulation. Arguing that psychology has constructed the modern individual (rather than reflecting some pre-given psychological entity), they point out that since it is important for us to understand the subject as multiple, contradictory and constructed within different discourses, we are thus obliged to look at power relations (and especially gender) in the formation of the subject in and through language. As Urwin (1984) suggests, Saussure's universal competence is rooted in the notion of a unitary subject and a common core rationality, independent of social processes. The sociolinguistic challenges to Chomsky's similar view, while useful in their criticisms of the dangers in notions of homogeneity and innateness, have not challenged this fundamental belief in a unitary, rational subject and have continued to replicate Saussure's basic dualism of the individual vs. society. As Bourne (1988) suggests, the polarization of the new disciplines of sociolinguistics and psycholinguistics has only served to further reproduce and legitimize this internal/external dualism.

A great deal of recent rethinking of the notion of language (outside applied linguistics) has also been going on. After outlining the representationalist and structuralist views of meaning, Morgan (1987) subsequently offers a third view of language which he calls "dialogic discourse." Drawing on the work of Bakhtin/Volosinov and Foucault, this view is neither just a description of an abstract structure nor merely a theory of language, but a politics of representation, an understanding of how language is socially constructed and how it produces change and is changed in human life. It identifies language as a scene of struggle, where the world is always/already in the word. This poststructuralist view of language, the importance of which for better conceptualizing language teaching has been clearly demonstrated by Peirce (1989), centers on a notion of discourse as a complex of signs and practices that organizes social existence and meaning-making practices.² As Weedon (1987) has remarked "once language is understood in terms of competing discourses, competing ways of giving meaning to the world, which imply differences in the organization of social power, then language

becomes an important site of political struggle” (p.24). Fundamental to this view, too, is the notion that subjectivities are constituted in discourse. Instead of the rational, unified subject, capable of ideas and experiences prior to and outside language, a poststructuralist view suggests that since subjectivities are constructed through and take up positions in competing discourses, they are therefore both multiple and contradictory spaces.

I have been trying in this section to sketch out some of the challenges to the predominant modernist paradigms posed by a broad postmodern critique. It would, however, be both an enormous and a presumptuous task to try at this juncture to set out explicit implications for applied linguistics. Nevertheless, I think it is worth making two final points about the ideas I am trying to put forward here. First, postmodern thinking can help us see the very particular nature of applied linguistics as it has developed in its modernist context. This should, at the very least, lead us to question the foundations of our work and the often implicit claims to universality and progress as they are couched within positivist discourses.

Second, while I do not wish to suggest that applied linguists should now start blindly accepting the plethora of new ideas that are at present floating around (we should certainly also approach new and critical ideas critically), I do feel that we should at least be responding to them. When a domain of academic work continues along untroubled while some fundamental questions are being raised about the epistemological bases on which it is built, that domain may be poorly grounded in any understanding of the forms of knowledge that it is itself producing. I have tried to sketch out some of the challenges being made to our understandings of ourselves and the world, challenges that deal with positivism, language, representation, the subject and rationality. If anthropologists are questioning the continued use of a particular notion of culture and the possibility of ever representing the Other, if educators are asking difficult questions about the cultural politics of schooling and about the interests and politics of different forms of knowledge, if psychologists are questioning the construction and concomitant regulation of the subject within psychological discourses, if poststructuralists are emphasizing power, struggle and discourse in language as very different understandings of the construction of meaning, if positivist claims to knowledge are being questioned not only for their limitations but because of the interests they serve, then surely applied linguists need to ask serious questions about their own work.

I would like to suggest, therefore, a certain direction for this project, one which would allow us to move out of the postmodern diaspora. In order to take up what I have called a “principled postmodernism,” we need to reinstate the political and the ethical as the principal elements of our academic work. While positivism submerged these issues beneath its scientific methods, postmodern thinking has by no means guaranteed their re-emergence. Thus, I think we need to find ways of dealing with questions of power as they have been developed by such thinkers as Foucault so that we can not only understand but also try to change inequalities. In the next section, I shall briefly outline four critical projects that try to deal with these issues, in the hope that this will give us a sense of a way forward for a critical applied linguistics.

CRITICAL LINGUISTICS, SOCIOLINGUISTICS, ETHNOGRAPHY AND PEDAGOGY

The use of the word “critical” is not intended to reference a notion of criticism only in terms of arguments against the canon of accepted thinking, but rather to include a notion of transformative critique. By this I mean that we as intellectuals and teachers need to take up moral and political stances in order to attempt to improve and change an inequitably structured world. By such criticism I do not mean the “fine-tuning” of models that so often passes for academic work, but work that seeks to understand the political implications of its practice. In this final section, I shall look briefly at critical linguistics, critical sociolinguistics, critical ethnography and critical pedagogy in the hope that these may give us some clues as to the ways in which we might construct a critical applied linguistics.

In an important addition to the small field of critical linguistics, Fairclough (1989) demonstrates how Critical Language Study (CLS) can reveal the processes by which language functions to maintain and change the power relations in society. He outlines two main purposes to his work: correcting “the widespread underestimation of the significance of language in the production, maintenance, and change of social relations of power,” and increasing “consciousness of how language contributes to the domination of some people by others, because consciousness is the first step towards emancipation” (p.1). In his criticism of standard approaches to language study, he argues that linguistics has operated with

an idealized view of language, which has isolated it from the social and historical matrix in which it is so firmly embedded. Since sociolinguistics, he suggests, has been heavily influenced by positivism, it has thus tended to describe and correlate variation with simplistic understandings of social class but has never asked why such social variation exists or tried to change such conditions. Other approaches to the study of language use, such as pragmatics (in its Anglo-American strain) or conversation analysis, have also tended to concentrate on the individual and on “micro”-structures, rather than on exploring how language relates to social power. Drawing on the work of Foucault and Habermas, Fairclough argues that by analyzing the way power and ideology are inscribed in discourse, we can come to a critical awareness of the way language both reflects and constructs social inequality.

In his book on language use in late capitalist society, Mey (1985) makes a similar point. He argues that for traditional sociolinguistics the present organization of society’s material production is taken as the only natural one. Furthermore, sociolinguistics tends to ignore social classes and operates instead with a superficial form of social stratification, failing, therefore, to establish a connection between people’s place in the social hierarchy and the linguistic and other forms of oppression to which they are subject. “A *critical* sociolinguistics, by contrast,” Mey argues, “seeks to recognize the political and economic distortions that our society imposes on us. It attempts to explain the differences between *oppressed* and *oppressor* language by pointing out that the different classes have unequal access to societal power” (p.342).

It is also possible, as Simon & Dippo (1986) have pointed out, to make research critical. Starting with the premise that “to actually *do* ethnography is to engage in a process of knowledge production” (p.195), they argue that all modes of knowing and all particular knowledge forms are ideological (this is not merely a question of “bias,” but rather a matter of whose interests are served by one’s work). Any production of knowledge must therefore be made accountable to a specific project, which for Simon & Dippo is a pedagogical/political project that aims to transform an inequitably structured society by constructing a mode of learning and a conception of knowledge “that may enhance the possibility of collectively constituted thought and action” (p.196). For ethnographic work to be critical, they argue, it requires (1) a problematic that is intended to reveal social practices as produced and regulated forms of action and

meaning; (2) a means by which it can be taken up in the public sphere to foster critique and transformation of the society; and (3) a self-reflexive element that can address the situated character of the research as located within particular historical and institutional forms. Most importantly, such an ethnographic project not only goes beyond the limitations of positivist research, it also aims to go beyond merely hermeneutic concerns in favor of an emancipatory project.

There is now a fairly large body of work under the rubric of 'critical pedagogy' (e.g., Giroux, 1988). Viewing schools as cultural arenas where diverse ideological and social forms are in constant struggle, critical pedagogy seeks to understand and critique the historical and sociopolitical context of schooling and to develop pedagogical practices that aim not only to change the nature of schooling, but also the wider society. Taking knowledge as socially constructed and all claims to knowledge as therefore "interested," it seeks to explore and challenge the types of knowledge produced and legitimated in schools. This position leads to an emphasis both on how subjectivities are constructed in and around schools and on student voice and popular culture as delegitimated forms of culture and knowledge that students bring to schools. As Simon (1987) puts it:

We view educational practice as a form of cultural politics. For us such a practice is centrally concerned with the moral and analytical task of assessing whether specific forms encourage and make possible the realization of differentiated capacities, or whether they disable, deny, dilute, and distort those capacities. Equally, such a practice is for us concerned with the educational and political task of constructing new forms that would expand the range of social identities that people have the possibility of becoming. (p.177)

CONCLUSION: CRITICAL APPLIED LINGUISTICS

What, then, might critical applied linguistics look like? From the brief discussion above of other critical approaches, I think some of the directions that it might take become clear. In his discussion of the ideologies implicit in different approaches to teaching writing, Berlin (1988) concludes that "every pedagogy is imbricated in ideology, in a set of tacit assumptions about what is real, what is good, what is possible, and how power ought to be distributed" (p.492). I believe we have to take these considerations very seriously and try to see the connections between our work and far

broader issues of social inequality. As applied linguists, we need to not only understand ourselves as intellectuals situated in very particular social, cultural and historical locations, but also to understand that the knowledge we produce is always interested. If we are concerned about the manifold and manifest inequities of the societies and the world we live in, then I believe we must start to take up moral and political projects to change those circumstances. This requires that we cease to operate with modes of intellectual inquiry that are asocial, apolitical or ahistorical.

I do not wish to appear, of course, to be providing some new prescription. Rather, my goals are to broaden the possibilities for the way in which we can investigate questions of language and education. We need to rethink what we mean by language, to investigate the very particular circumstances that have led to our current concepts and to see how, by taking up a view of discourse as a complex of signs and practices that organize social existence and (re) production, we can view language as fundamental in both maintaining and changing the way we live and understand the world and ourselves. Similarly, we need to rethink language acquisition in its social, cultural and political contexts, taking into account gender, race and other relations of power as well as a notion of the subject as multiple and formed within different discourses. Research would do well to drop its obsession with quantitative proof and claims to objectivity. I am not suggesting that we should reject quantitative assessment by any means (I think the quantitative/qualitative debate obscures the issue); rather, we need to acknowledge the ideological basis of all our work, and, in my opinion, seek both to further understanding and to bring about change. We need to see schools as complex cultural arenas where diverse forms are constantly in struggle, and we need to understand, above all, the cultural politics of language teaching. We would also do well to be more humble in the world, listening to the many alternative views of language and learning, rather than preaching our views as the newest and best. Engaging in critical work is by no means easy, but I believe it is essential that those of us who feel that change must and can be brought about need to start developing a means of pursuing applied linguistics as a critical project.

Notes

1. I should also acknowledge that I am well aware of a degree of diversity and dissent within what I am describing here as a homogeneous and hegemonic

body of thought.

2. See also the debate between Peirce and Dubois in the March, 1990 issue of *TESOL Quarterly*.

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Chapter 10

Incommensurable Discourses?

This chapter is based on an article that first appeared in 1994 in
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INTRODUCTION: WHICH IS BIGGER—LANGUAGE OR DISCOURSE?

My desire to write this paper has its origins in a deep concern that at times I am no longer able to communicate with my colleagues in applied linguistics, that at times we are no longer engaged in the same discourse. The difference over understandings of what we mean by 'discourse' came to the fore a few years ago during a conversation over coffee with a colleague in Singapore, a conversation that ended in frustration and misunderstanding. I was discussing some recent research and had explained that my interest in the global spread of English was not so much concerned with particular linguistic features of 'new Englishes' as with cultural and political implications of this spread. One interesting way to take this up, I suggested, was in the relationship between English and particular discourses with which it is associated. Thus, I argued, because of the particular connections between English and the global spread of capitalism, science and technology, Western academic work, American popular culture, democracy, environmentalism, and so on, to speak in English often implied taking up a particular position in the discourses put into play by the spread of these forms of culture and knowledge. Ultimately, I suggested, what could be said in English was in part limited and produced by the deployment of these global discourses.

To my colleague, this argument made little sense, but in trying to clarify our differences, he pointed to what seemed a key conceptual divergence in how the two of us understood language and discourse. Was I suggesting, he asked, that language use was, in a sense, determined by discourse, and that discourse, therefore, operated at a higher level than language? Surely, he argued, it was the other way round: language was the larger concept and discourses occurred within a language. We appeared to be talking from utterly different positions: for him, discourse

was an instance of language use; for me, language use was an instance of discourse. Or, to put it another way, on the one hand, there is a position that emphasizes language as a system and then looks to discourse analysis to explain how various contextual factors affect language in use, and, on the other, there is a position that looks at how meanings are a product of social and cultural relationships and then turns to see how these may be realized in language. From one point of view, we were participants *in the same discourse* (the same conversation), while from the other we were each taking up positions *in different discourses* (different ways of understanding).

The first view of discourse, which I take to be the predominant one in applied linguistics, is captured by Brown's (1980, p.189) explanation of discourse analysis as the exploration of how language is used beyond the sentence level: 'the analysis of the functions of language can be referred to as *discourse analysis* to capture the notion that language is more than a sentence-level phenomenon'. The other position is exemplified by Ball's (1990a, p.3) argument that 'the issue in discourse analysis is why, at a given time, out of all possible things that could be said, only certain things were said'. This second view of discourse analysis immediately raises some rather different questions from those of the more common applied linguistic understanding: first, the question asked is 'why', and not 'what' or 'how', suggesting that there is a shift here from description to explanation; second, the focus is not so much on how meanings are constructed between sentences, but rather on how meanings come to be articulated at particular moments; and third, there is an emphasis not so much on how language works once it has been uttered, but rather on how utterances come to be made, and how those choices are both produced and constrained. To put it another way, as Luke, McHoul, and Mey (1990, p.40) suggest, 'Paradoxical as it may appear to the structural linguist, we can show that discourse is not something that language *does*. Discourse is not a mere function of language. Rather discourse is, to put it crudely, the condition by which language as a structure or a system exists'.

This paper is an attempt to explore and account for these different positions. Is there, despite the apparently deep divide, some way in which they can be reconciled? Was the apparently diametric opposition that arose from the conversation a real effect of profound difference or are they merely extremes at either end of a general concern with language use and its contexts? Or do they operate from such fundamentally different epistemological premises that they can never be reconciled? Are these two

positions ultimately incommensurable? In the next section, I shall give a brief account of the development of a notion of discourse in what I see as mainstream applied linguistics.¹ Following that, I shall discuss the views of language, discourse, and ideology in the work of various critical discourse analysts. From there, I shall move to a discussion of a Foucauldian notion of discourse, a position which is close to the one from which I was speaking in the above conversation. Finally, I shall illustrate the implications of taking up one or other position for doing work in applied linguistics.

DISCOURSE AS SUPRASENTENTIAL LANGUAGE USE

The term *discourse* has now entered the vocabulary of many language teachers and applied linguists. There seems to be fairly broad agreement on its two core meanings: first, language in use; and second, the relationships between sentences. Thus, the *Longman Dictionary of Applied Linguistics* defines discourse first as ‘a general term for examples of language use, i.e. language which has been produced as the result of an act of communication’, and second — in contrast to grammar, which deals with clauses, phrases, and sentences — as referring to ‘larger units of language such as paragraphs, conversations, and interviews’ (Richards, Platt, and Weber, 1985, p.83). Discourse analysis, then, is ‘the study of how sentences in spoken and written language form larger meaningful units such as paragraphs, conversations, interviews, etc’ (ibid., p.84). Discourse and discourse analysis are now widely used in many domains of applied linguistics and with remarkable agreement on what these terms mean. Brown and Yule (1983, p.1) define discourse analysis as ‘the analysis of language in use’. For McCarthy (1991, p.5), discourse analysis is ‘concerned with the study of the relationship between language and the contexts in which it is used’. Cook (1989, p.6) suggests that discourse is ‘language in use, for communication’, and discourse analysis is ‘the search for what gives discourse coherence’. Finally, according to Hatch (1992, p.1), discourse analysis is ‘the study of the language of communication — spoken or written’. What I want to suggest in this very brief overview of discourse and discourse analysis in applied linguistics is that:

1. this commonly-held view of discourse is a very particular one, and it is important to account both for the adoption of this view of discourse and for its rapid spread and acceptance; and

2. this view of discourse, while useful in helping to expand our thinking about language and language teaching, also has a number of limitations.

Discourse analysis, as it grew up in applied linguistics, was a synthesis of a number of different approaches to the analysis of extended chunks of language use: text linguistics, conversation analysis, and the ethnography of speaking. Two key texts that drew links between discourse analysis and language teaching were Coulthard's (1977) broad overview of discourse analysis and Widdowson's (1978) narrower application of a form of text linguistics to communicative language teaching. This interest in discourse analysis can be partially explained in terms of the pragmatic needs of language teaching and language teaching theory for more comprehensive accounts of language use. As applied linguistics started to emerge in the 1960s and 1970s from its earlier more literal sense of being the application of linguistic theory to language teaching, there was a growing awareness that not only did it need a richer view of psychology than that afforded by behaviourism, but it also needed far broader views of language and communication. Thus, when Coulthard and Widdowson introduced their versions of discourse analysis, they were broadly welcomed by many people involved in language teaching. Soon we had better tools for analysing how texts were put together, how conversations worked in terms of turn-taking and sequencing, how intonation was linked to the larger conversational structures in which it occurred, and how patterns of language use might differ across different cultural groups.

These shifts in applied linguistics can be seen not only in terms of pragmatic needs, but also in terms of a general epistemological shift towards a more empiricist and pragmatist view that stressed, for example, the need for data from actual mother-child interactions, for research into the real happenings of classrooms, or for the use of authentic materials in language teaching. As part of this broader epistemological shift, applied linguists started stressing the importance of 'real communication' in the classroom, of language acquisition as a social process, and of communicative competence as a goal of language teaching. In 1980, in their introductory article, 'Discourse analysis, what's that?', to Larsen-Freeman's (1980) edited book, *Discourse Analysis in Second Language Research*, Hatch and Long (1980, p.1) pointed to the need 'to go beyond sentence-level syntax if we wanted to understand how meaning is attached to utterances'. Discourse analysis, they argued, opens new avenues for understanding

what language is learnt and how learners learn language. This led to a much greater focus on language in use and interaction than on mere linguistic input (see Hatch, 1983; Long, 1983). Meanwhile, work on the definition of communicative competence was also starting to explore the importance of discourse. Although left out of Canale and Swain's (1980) highly influential formulation (linguistic, sociolinguistic, and strategic competence), because they considered discourse to be insufficiently theorized at the time, Canale (1983, p.9) added 'discourse competence' to his later revision, defining it as 'mastery of how to combine grammatical forms and meanings to achieve a unified spoken or written text in different genres'. Thus, in a matter of a few years, discourse spread rapidly through the field of applied linguistics, so that today it is rare to find people involved in language teaching who are unaware of the significance of discourse for teaching reading, writing, intonation, or spoken language, and for the evaluation of students' communicative competence.

What I want to suggest, however, is that valuable though these developments have been, the concepts of discourse and discourse analysis that are used in applied linguistics are also limited. First, although there is an apparent disjuncture between the British tradition (e.g. Cook, 1989; McCarthy, 1991) — with its focus on either text linguistics in the Widdowson mould, or spoken discourse structures in the Birmingham style (Sinclair and Coulthard, 1975) — and the American tradition (e.g. Hatch, 1992) — with its focus on the process of conversational negotiation (conversation analysis and ethnography of speaking) — both share a view of discourse analysis that relates language as a system to different but, as I shall argue, *decontextualized* contexts. Second, nearly all this work takes as its principal focus the relationship between form and function — how lexico-grammatical forms come to take on particular meanings in different contexts — which, as will become clearer later, is only one particular way of exploring how meaning is created in language use. And finally, although I argued above that there were pragmatic reasons why discourse analysis had been so rapidly adopted in applied linguistics, I think it is also crucial to understand that pragmatism is itself an ideology (or discourse) and one that infuses a great deal of applied linguistic thinking.

As applied linguistics sought to go beyond the dominant paradigms of structuralism (in which meaning was either ignored or seen as held in place by the language system itself), it focused predominantly on the relationship between structures and their contexts. Thus, Widdowson

(1978, p.29), for example, focuses on how it is that a conversation such as 'A: That's the telephone. / B: I'm in the bath. / A: O.K.' can be coherent. He does so by producing a series of dichotomies that refer to the linguistic system on the one hand and language use on the other: usage and use, correctness and appropriacy, signification and value, sentence and utterance, proposition and illocutionary act, cohesion and coherence, and so on. Similarly, McCarthy (1991, p.7) asks how it is we can understand the comic interchange 'Ernie: Tell 'em about the show. / Eric (to the audience): Have we got a show for you tonight folks! Have we got a show for you! (aside to Ernie) Have we got a show for them?' and answers by appeal to the relationship between form and function. Thus, what these approaches to discourse analysis have in common is a focus on the reparation of the linguistic/semantic split occasioned by structuralist linguistics. The issue, therefore, is to find ways in which the meaning of language in use can be explained in terms of a relationship between the meanings of words and sentences (forms) and the meanings supplied by the context (functions). This is done by looking at:

1. the intentions or purposes of the language use (language functions or speech act theory);
2. the adherence to or flouting of conversational rules (Grice's maxims or Goffman's 'universal constraints' on communication systems and rituals); or
3. general forms of inferencing from the context or background knowledge.

Thus, while discourse analysis has moved from a purely linguistic analysis of suprasentential relations (which was how the term discourse analysis was originally used by Zellig Harris, 1952), and while applied linguistic use of discourse analysis has broadened the options for considering language use, the principal focus has been on the reparation of the structuralist linguistic/semantic split, rather than on an exploration of the wider context of 'contexts', the formation of background knowledge, or why and how a person comes to say certain things. In this view of discourse, the basic concepts are contexts, language, and discourse, and the basic issue is how the context affects the use of language (discourse). The language-using subject is seen as a more-or-less autonomous actor who establishes meanings by intention and inference. By contrast, when we come to look at alternative understandings of discourse in the following sections, it will become clear that they operate with a much more politicized view of the subject who is, indeed, called into being — 'interpellated' in Althusser's

(1971) terms — by discourse or ideology. Introducing some terms that I will use again later, the common applied linguistic sense of discourse analysis is basically a two-level view of discourse, with the ‘micro’ level being language forms (lexical, grammatical, intonational/phonological) and the ‘macro’ the context of utterance (speaker intentions, background knowledge, conversation/text structure).

There are two final reasons why a degree of caution is necessary towards the applied linguistic adoption of discourse analysis. My first concern is with the extent to which discourse analysis (see van Dijk, 1985, and Stalpers, 1988, for a counterargument) and applied linguistics are now being considered as disciplines in their own right. As Grabe (1990, p.vii) says in his foreword to an edition of the *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics* devoted entirely to discourse analysis, ‘Over the last ten years, discourse analysis itself has evolved to a point at which it is emerging as a discipline in its own right, rather than being viewed primarily as a set of disparate research techniques and approaches’. More significant, however, is the extent to which applied linguistics is also now conceived of as a discipline. For some this may be cause for celebration, but as Foucault’s work (e.g. 1970, 1972, 1979) on the foundation of disciplines has shown, it is this process of discipline formation that is crucial in determining which forms of knowledge are to be valued and upheld and which are to be devalued and discarded. At a time, therefore, when applied linguistics is solidifying its canon of disciplinary knowledge, with all the attendant consolidations and discardings that such a process implies, there is a danger that discourse analysis as commonly conceived in applied linguistics will increasingly come to define the questions that can be asked about language use. There appears to be the feeling, furthermore, that by adding the notion of discourse to the ‘lower’ levels of linguistic analysis (phonology, morphology, syntax), we have now arrived at a more-or-less complete analysis of language. It is common, therefore, to discuss the two traditions of discourse analysis — British and American — and even to suggest that they may be irreconcilable (Cook, 1989), but rarely is it considered that there may be a vast range of other considerations beyond the reconciliation of these two approaches. Thus, while discourse analysis has clearly opened up a lot of important possibilities for language teaching, it has also led to an over-confidence and, because of its narrow focus, a concomitant closing down of broader possibilities.

Finally, I think there are serious problems with applied linguistics’

political quietism. I suggested earlier that there were pragmatic reasons for the adoption of discourse analysis in applied linguistics, but it is also important to understand pragmatism as an ideology (see Chua Beng-Huat, 1983). Santos (1992) raises the problem of the ideological stance of pragmatism when she points to the almost complete absence of discussion of the political and ideological dimensions of ESL writing and of ESL in general. The tendency to stress the pragmatic over the ideological, she suggests, allows Swales (1990), for example, to sweep aside the ideological implications of discourse communities and genres. As Harland (1987) argues, this emphasis on realism, materialism, and pragmatism is rooted in an Anglo-Saxon tradition of language study, from the logical positivists and ordinary language philosophers to modern-day applied linguists. Thus, the possibilities of dealing with broader social, cultural, or political contexts of discourse are denied by appeal to an ideology of pragmatism.

CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

In the last section, I suggested that while discourse analysis as conceived in applied linguistics had opened up a number of important dimensions for language teaching, at the same time, by focusing on the relationship between language forms and a limited sense of context (immediate surroundings, speakers' intentions, background knowledge, or conversational rules), it tended to be confined to a narrow understanding of the larger social, cultural, and ideological forces that influence our lives. It does not seem sufficient to stop with a version of discourse analysis that posits a completely free-willed subject and language use free of ideological conditions.² To explore these ideas further I would like to look at the work of the various people working under the rubric of 'critical discourse analysis' (CDA), since this work has gone much further towards addressing the ideological dimensions of discourse. Although the various approaches to critical discourse analysis (Fowler, Hodge, Kress, and Trew, 1979; Fairclough, 1985, 1989; Kress, 1985, 1990; Wodak, 1989, 1990) differ in a number of ways, they share a commitment to going beyond linguistic description to attempt explanation, to showing how social inequalities are reflected and created in language, and to finding ways through their work to change the conditions of inequality that their work uncovers. Fairclough (1989) describes his two principal goals as: first, helping to 'correct a widespread underestimation of the significance of language in the

production, maintenance, and change of social relationships of power'; and, second, helping to 'increase consciousness of how language contributes to the domination of some people by others, because consciousness is the first step towards emancipation' (ibid., p.1).

Of significance here is these researchers' concern with, on the one hand, the analysis of various forms of discourse as instances of language use, and, on the other hand, with locating these discourses within wider questions of social power. Discourse, for Fairclough, is 'language as social practice' (ibid., p.17), a definition that has both similarities with and differences from the notion of discourse as language use discussed in the previous section. It is similar in that discourse is also used to mean chunks of language as it is actually used. It differs, however, in at least two respects. First, language as social practice differs from language use to the extent that it relates language to other social practices, rather than leaving it in a separate domain. Second, such language practice is seen as socially determined. Importantly, then, Fairclough is not looking for a relationship between language and society in the dichotomizing fashion of post-Saussurean linguistics, but rather is showing that language use is always a social act in itself. Such acts, furthermore, are not the individualistic acts of language users in cognitive isolation, but rather are determined by the larger social and ideological conditions of society.

In his recent summary article, Kress (1990, p.85) suggests that critical discourse analysts share with other discourse analysts a focus on texts and their contexts, but do so with a critical element: 'By denaturalizing the discursive practices and the texts of a society, treated as a set of discursively linked communities, and by making visible and apparent that which may previously have been invisible and seemingly natural, they intend to show the imbrication of linguistic-discursive practices with the wider socio-political structures of power and domination'. He lists a number of shared critical assumptions, amongst which are a view of language as social practice, texts as social products, speakers as differentially located, and meanings as products of those sociopolitical relationships. Such assumptions suggest that language is an opaque rather than a transparent medium, that the concept of a homogeneous language system is problematic because people always have differential access to that system, and that discourse analysis must always look to social power, history, and ideology to understand meaning.

Most critical linguists, then, view language somewhat differently

from its dominant conception in mainstream linguistic thought and discourse analysis. Fowler *et al.* (1979, p.1), for example, argue, first, that the language we use 'embodies specific views — or "theories" — of reality'. The key here, however, is not to view this in terms of 'a language' embodying 'a world view', but rather to accept that different uses of language *within* one language imply particular understandings. Second, they suggest that 'variation in types of discourse is inseparable from social and economic factors' and thus 'linguistic variations reflect and, what is more, actively *express* the structured social differences that give rise to them' (*ibid.*). Third, 'language usage is not merely an effect or reflex of social organization and process, it is a *part* of social process' (*ibid.*). These views, which locate language use as a social process and relate linguistic choice and variation to social and economic difference, start to flesh out the concept that language use is always embedded in its contexts. These contexts, furthermore, are not merely 'speech events', 'text genres', and so on, but rather are always contexts based on an understanding of social, cultural, and political difference.

If to some, this concentration on language in social contexts suggests sociolinguistics, it is worth pointing out that these writers distance themselves very carefully not only from mainstream linguistics, but also from mainstream sociolinguistics. Sociolinguists, Fowler *et al.* suggest, are 'at best naive in accepting the social structures they describe as neutral; while at worst they collude in a view of existing social structures as unchangeable' (*ibid.*, p.2). Indeed, as Fowler and Kress (1979) suggest, the dualism between linguistics and sociolinguistics is in itself harmful, since it implies that language and meaning can be studied in the abstract through linguistics, leaving language and its social contexts as an adjunct to be studied through sociolinguistics. This insistence on understanding the social contexts of language use is not, then, the addition of sociolinguistic or communicative competence to a version of linguistic competence, but rather an attempt to understand language use within the social and ideological structures of society. As Urwin (1984) points out, Saussure's universal competence, based as it is on a notion of a unitary subject and a common core rationality, is reproduced, not challenged, by a similar conception in sociolinguistic theory. What emerges from the views being discussed here, by contrast, is an understanding of humans as socialized; human subjectivities and language use are produced within particular social and cultural contexts, contexts in which ideological forms and social

inequalities abound.

Fairclough (1989, p.7), too, is critical of mainstream linguistics for being 'an asocial way of studying language, which has nothing to say about relationships between language and power and ideology'. Like the others, he is also critical of other areas of language study such as sociolinguistics, pragmatics, conversation analysis, and discourse analysis. Sociolinguistics he criticizes for remaining so firmly located within the tradition of positivism: it tends to concentrate on the 'objective description' of social 'facts' and to correlate supposed social 'classes' (which are often loosely defined social strata) with linguistic features. Pragmatics he criticizes for its individualism: its concentration on actions, intentions, and strategies of individual speakers who are assumed to be engaged in cooperative interactions that ignore questions of social power. Similarly, he takes conversation and discourse analysis to task for constructing an image of conversation as 'a skilled social practice existing in a social vacuum, as if talk were generally engaged in just for its own sake' (*ibid.*, p.12).

A slightly different approach to CDA can be found in the work of the neo-Hallidayan group of social semioticians, particularly Gunther Kress (1985; Hodge and Kress, 1988). Halliday's functional grammar is particularly useful for pursuing some of these questions since, while in the mainstream tradition described in the last section a principal focus is in matching form and function, they are already combined in Halliday's model, allowing for analysis to move on to broader concerns. From this point, Kress specifically relates his view of discourse to Foucault's:

Discourses are systematically-organized sets of statements which give expression to the meanings and values of an institution. Beyond that, they define, describe, and delimit what it is possible to say and not possible to say (and by extension — what to do or not to do) with respect to the area of concern of that institution, whether marginally or centrally. A discourse provides a set of possible statements about a given area, and organizes and gives structure to the manner in which a particular topic, object, process is to be talked about. (Kress, 1985, p.7)

What is of immediate interest here, I think, is that when Kress suggests that discourses 'define, describe, and delimit' what can and cannot be said, his view is clearly fairly close to the one I suggested at the beginning of this paper, that the issue in discourse analysis is how certain things come to be said at certain times and in certain places.

Having pointed to some of the different approaches and shared assumptions of CDA, I shall now try to show more clearly how their underlying visions of language, discourse, ideology, and society operate. To return to the two concepts that I introduced at the end of the last section, Fairclough's model of discourse analysis operates, first, with a dialectical relationship between the micro-structures of discourse (linguistic features) and the macro-structures of society (social structures and ideology). He stresses that while macro-structures of society may determine the micro-structures of discourse, these in turn reproduce the larger social and ideological structures. In contrast to the view of discourse discussed in the previous section, then, while the micro level (linguistic features) remains much the same, the macro is expanded from a notion of context and participants to a much broader conception of society. Second, between these micro and macro levels, there are a number of different levels, so that this view of discourse analysis can be seen as a four-level model. On the smallest level are text and discourse (these could be seen as separate levels but I have kept them as one here): text refers to the product (spoken or written) of the social process of discourse. Next, actual discourse is determined by 'orders of discourse', which are sets of conventions associated with social institutions. These in turn are determined by ideologies, which, in turn, are determined by relations of power within the broader society. In this view, coherence (to take one of the most common issues in applied linguistic discourse analysis) is dependent on 'discourse common sense' which in turn is ideological (Fairclough, 1989, p.107).

Kress's (1985) model is basically also a four-level one. In my discussion of Fairclough's distinction between text and discourse, I counted these as operating on the same level, as product and process. Although Fairclough also draws on Halliday for this distinction, his conception of discourse as language as social practice seems narrower than Kress's understanding. For Kress, by contrast, the meanings of texts (the first level) derive from two particular factors, discourses and genres (the second level). Thus, the forms and meanings of texts — the actual use of language — 'are determined by discourses — systems of meanings arising out of the organization of social institutions — and by genres — formal conventional categories whose meanings and forms arise out of the meanings, forms, and functions of the conventionalized occasions of social interactions' (Kress, 1985, p.31). While Kress is content to focus principally on these two levels, at which the forms and meanings of texts are

determined by discourse and genre, he also suggests a third level (ideology): 'While discourse and genre provide the systematically-organized linguistic categories which make up a text, ideology determines the configuration of discourses that are present together and their articulation in specific genres' (ibid., p.83). Discourses for Kress, therefore, are systems of meanings embedded in certain institutions, which in turn are determined by ideologies 'in response to larger social structures' (ibid.). Thus, the micro level of this analysis is the text (determined by discourse and genre, in turn determined by ideology) and the macro level is the larger social structure. This larger social structure remains somewhat vague in Kress (1985), though in Hodge and Kress (1988) the relationship between ideology and society is given a more formally Marxist flavour: 'In order to sustain these structures of domination the dominant groups attempt to represent the world in forms that reflect their own interests, the interests of their power' (Hodge and Kress, 1988, p.3).

While these different strands of CDA are extremely valuable in the frameworks of analysis they provide for how the relationships between language use and the social order operate, I nevertheless have a number of concerns about some of their underlying assumptions. One of the key questions to be asked here is, if we indeed understand social relations to be marked by deep inequalities, how are such inequalities to be explained? For Fairclough, and most of those working in CDA, this is done from a clearly neo-Marxist perspective in which power is, in the final analysis, located in the relationship between social classes and economic production, which is taken to be primary (base or infrastructural), material, and causative of all other relations. Simply put, this material reductionism leads to the position that 'the so-called base can be separated from the so-called superstructure (which it can't); that the base is "material" (which it isn't); and that it determines the rest (which it doesn't)' (Worsley, 1982, p.113). While we should never lose sight of material and socioeconomic inequalities, there is a danger that by making economic class relations primary, we lose sight of other sites of inequality (at the very least, race and gender; see, for example, Black and Coward, 1990 and Outlaw, 1990),³ construct an oversimplified version of society whereby a 'dominant group' has power while the 'oppressed' do not, and become too deterministic in ascribing causality to socio-economic relations.

A concomitant result of this view is that it tends to posit a 'real' world that is obfuscated by ideology. The estimable, though I believe

problematic task, of the critical linguist, then, is to help remove this veil of obscurity and help people to see the 'truth'. This view emerges, for example, in Fairclough's (1989, p.75) distinction between 'inculcation' and 'communication', the former being 'the mechanism of power-holders who wish to preserve their power' and the latter 'the mechanism of emancipation and the struggle against domination'. There are echoes here of Habermas (1984) and his view that there can be a form of 'communicative action' that is devoid of ideology. Thus, one of the problems that emerges from this approach to critical applied linguistics is that while all language is seen as ideological, there is nevertheless a 'real world' beyond such 'misrepresentation'. In a recent book on the news, for example, Fowler (1991, p.10) argues that 'because the institutions of news reporting and presentation are socially, economically and politically situated, all news is always reported from some particular angle'. Thus far, I would agree and indeed, like Fowler, would extend this view not only to such domains as the news but also to all 'representational discourse': 'anything that is said or written about the world is articulated from a particular ideological position' (ibid.). But what are we to make of the following statement that 'The world of the press is not the real world, but a world skewed and judged' (ibid., p.11)? This clearly suggests that the ideological positions misrepresent a real world. This, I believe, is a problematic assumption. It raises some awkward questions: How do we arrive at that real world without the mediation of language? How can we deal with the real world without ideological distortion? How is it possible to arrive at some Archimedean point outside language and ideology? What this statement suggests is two problematic divides: on the one hand, there is the real world as opposed to the unreal world (the real world misrepresented through ideology); on the other hand, there is ideological representation as opposed, presumably, to non-ideological representation.

I also feel that most of this critical discourse analysis tends to operate with a problematically static view of both language and society. What happens, by and large, is that texts (the micro level) are read in order to reveal the workings of social structures (the macro level). There are two dangers in this view: first, it is subject to a representational fallacy, whereby a 'real world' of social relations is represented in language; and second, in models whereby the micro is determined by the macro, which is in turn reproduced by the micro, there is little space for an understanding of human agency, interpretation, or change: socioeconomic relations

determine power, power determines ideology, ideology determines orders of discourse, and orders of discourse determine discourse. While I have been suggesting that an essential aspect of a critical approach to discourse analysis lies in the understanding that our ability to act in the world is constrained, it is nevertheless crucial here to allow for human agency rather than constructing a model in which all is determined by socio-economic (or other) relations. If in the last section I criticized mainstream applied linguistics for its assumption of a completely free-willed subject, the criticism might be made against critical discourse analysis that the pendulum has swung too far in the other direction: we now have a subject determined by ideologies that can simply be deduced from texts as they are read by critical analysts.

DISCOURSE AS POWER/KNOWLEDGE

So far, then, I have discussed both the need for and some of the pitfalls of engaging in critical forms of discourse analysis. Clearly, however, although the perspectives discussed in the last section relate discourse to broader social structures, they do not suggest the type of reversal of language and discourse that I raised in the opening of this paper. Such a reversal comes only if we take up a more Foucauldian position on discourse. So why Foucault? To put it simply, Foucault allows for critical analysis while avoiding the reductions and totalizations of more Marxist-based analysis. As Henriques, Hollway, Irwin, Venn, and Walkerdine (1984, p.92) suggest, the vital contribution played by approaches such as Foucault's is that they 'help deconstruct the monolithic, unitary character of power and the social domain which has characterized Marxist functionalist and structuralist social theory alike'.

A number of the critical discourse analysts discussed above explicitly draw on Foucault's work; Kress states that his view of discourse is based on Foucault's, and Fairclough's notion of orders of discourse is also supposed to be Foucauldian. Although I do not want to appear to be arguing for some sort of Foucauldian purity as if alternative readings of Foucault are not possible, I want to suggest that there are, at the very least, some differences between their readings of Foucault and mine.⁴ These differences lie in the tendency, first, to see discourse still as a linguistic phenomenon, albeit socially embedded; second to separate discourse from ideology and suggest that the latter determines the former; third,

to operate with a view of power only as something held by one group and not by others; and finally to view discourse as only concerned with the delimitation and regulation of what can be said, rather than also with the *production* of what can be said. McHoul and Luke (1989) suggest that there are two broad traditions here, one the Anglo-American, the other the European. In the first, discourse analysis remains located in the realm of empirical linguistics while drawing on various other social-scientific traditions. The second embraces 'a socio-historical-political view of discourse' (McHoul and Luke, 1989, p.324). Thus, when in the first tradition discourse analysis does take on a political element, there is a tendency to work with a dualistic framework between linguistic analysis of discourse and an added-on political framework, which interact dialectically with each other (see previous section). Anglo-American approaches 'import political ideas, as it were, for grafting onto an empirical-linguistic scaffold' (ibid.). A continental European (predominantly French) approach, by contrast, tends to theorize discourses from the very beginning as 'socio-historically specific systems of knowledge and thought' (ibid.). A similar distinction is made more generally by Harland (1987) when he suggests that Anglo-American pragmatism and materialism have always opposed the inversion of superstructure and infrastructure (making the former, and therefore language, culture, and discourse primary) by European structuralism and post-structuralism.

A key part of Foucault's work (1970, 1972, 1979, 1980a, 1980b) is his analysis of how various knowledges and disciplines — medical, psychological, psychoanalytical, penitential, sexual, and so on — normalize social institutions and practices in society. Central to this attempt to write histories of how human beings are made subjects (the subject, 'individual', or 'man', are produced, not pre-given, categories) is the notion of discourse, for 'it is in discourse', he suggests, 'that power and knowledge are joined together' (Foucault, 1980b, p.100). Discourse, Weedon (1987, p.41) explains, is a 'structuring principle of society, in social institutions, modes of thought and individual subjectivity'; discourses are 'ways of constituting knowledge' (ibid., p.108); they 'are more than ways of thinking and producing meaning. They constitute the "nature" of the body, unconscious and conscious mind and emotional life of the subjects which they seek to govern' (ibid.).

Importantly, then, to the extent that discourses are organizations of knowledge, and are always linked to power, embedded in social institutions,

and produce ways of understanding, they are akin to the concept of ideology. Foucault (1980a) explicitly rejects the notion of ideology, however, in favour of discourse, since ideology is predominantly used in contrast to something that is considered to be 'real' or 'the truth', and thus it is assumed that ideology necessarily obfuscates, hides the truth and leads to 'false consciousness' (see previous section). His interest, by contrast, is in the effects of claims to truth, in 'seeing historically how effects of truth are produced within discourses which in themselves are neither true nor false' (Foucault, 1980a, p.118). This is a key point, since it does not allow for some Archimedean point outside ideology or discourse from which truth or falsity can be judged. A second criticism raised by Foucault is that although ideology may help us to understand how individuals are less than autonomous, free-willed subjects, it tends to imply a unitary rather than a multiple subject. A final criticism is that even when ideology is taken as materialist and thus more infrastructural than superstructural (as in the work of Althusser and Pêcheux),⁵ it always seems to be secondary and reducible to class relationships and the means of production. Foucault's approach, by contrast, avoids an ontological or teleological search for an ultimate determinant such as class or relations of production and instead looks to a multiplicity of social, cultural, political, economic, technical, or theoretical conditions of possibility for the emergence of discourses. Thus, the constraints on human freedom of thought are no longer reducible to the nature of 'man', to the sexual drives of the subconscious, or to the relationship to the means of production, but rather are a product of a multiplicity of relationships. As Foucault once put it, human activity is not so much defined by labour as by 'pleasure, restlessness, merrymaking, rest, needs, accidents, desires, violent acts, robberies, etc.' (quoted in Harland, 1987, p.166).

Discourse in this sense, therefore, does not refer to language or uses of language, but to ways of organizing meaning that are often, though not exclusively, realized through language. Discourses are about the creation and limitation of possibilities, they are systems of power/knowledge (*pouvoir/savoir*) within which we take up subject positions. To think in terms of discourse in a Foucauldian sense is useful, I believe, because it allows us to understand how meaning is produced not at the will of a unitary humanist subject, not as a quality of a linguistic system, and not as determined by socio-economic relations, but rather through a range of power/knowledge systems that organize texts, create the conditions of possibility for different

language acts, and are embedded in social institutions. Thus we can speak of the discourses of democracy, law, capitalism, socialism, education, linguistics, applied linguistics, and so on. These discourses in effect 'map out' what can be said and thought about what they define as their respective domains.⁶ Before discussing, in the final section, various implications of taking up different discourses on discourse, a brief illustration of some general applications of a Foucauldian notion of discourse may help to clarify this concept.

Perhaps one of the best known is Edward Said's (1978) demonstration of how 'The Orient' is a construction of the discourse of *Orientalism*, a discourse which, in the writing of travellers, novelists, colonial authorities, academics, and so on, is constructed around a series of we/they contrasts (East/West, Orient/Occident, etc.) that produce an essentialized and homogenized Other ('The Arabs', 'Muslims', 'The Oriental Mind', 'The Japanese', etc.). 'Without examining Orientalism as a discourse', Said suggests, 'one cannot possibly understand the enormously systematic discipline by which European culture was able to manage — and even produce — the Orient politically, sociologically, militarily, ideologically, scientifically, and imaginatively during the post-Enlightenment period.' (Said, 1978, p.3). Said's analysis shows how, while Orientalism does not *determine* what is thought and said about the 'Orient', this discourse nevertheless defines, delimits, and produces it: 'it is the whole network of interests inevitably brought to bear on (and therefore always involved in) any occasion when that particular entity "the Orient" is in question' (ibid.).⁷

Foucault has also been taken up in various educational contexts (see Henriques *et al.*, 1984; Ball, 1990b). Particularly interesting here is Valerie Walkerdine's (1984) discussion of how the 'developing child' of child psychology and the 'active learner' of learner-centred pedagogies are the products of particular psycho-educational discourses rather than pre-existing entities about which child psychologists and educationalists 'make discoveries'. 'By examining the power-knowledge relations which are made possible by the regimes of truth of development psychology', Walkerdine (1984, p.163) suggests, 'it will be possible to demonstrate the conditions which have produced the classification and monitoring of development as a science and as scientifically validated pedagogy'. Given her observation that current pedagogical practices 'are totally saturated with the notion of a normalized sequence of child development, so that these practices help produce children as the objects of their gaze' (ibid., p.155), and in light

of the belief in natural sequences of development and the dominance of 'learner-centred' pedagogies within current ESL orthodoxies, this view of discourse would suggest that the active, motivated learner in a communicative ESL class is not so much a newly liberated category of learner that has emerged through better teaching practices as he or she is a product of some currently dominant psycho-educational discourses.

A Foucauldian notion of discourse has also been of use (though not uncontentiously) in work on gender. Sawicki (1988, p.176), arguing for the importance of Foucault in feminist work, suggests that 'Foucauldian discourse is radical not because it gets at the roots of domination, but inasmuch as it introduces radically new questions and problems concerning prevailing ways of understanding ourselves which continue to dominate our thinking about radical social transformation'. Taking issue with Dale Spender's (1980) analysis of 'man-made language', for example, Black and Coward (1990) argue that we need to understand words such as 'man' and 'he' not in some representationalist fashion (language reflects reality) whereby they reference males, but rather as located within a discourse in which men are represented as humans: 'there is a discourse available to men which allows them to represent themselves as people, humanity, mankind' (Black and Coward, 1990, p.132). Thus it is the absence rather than the omnipresence of men as gendered subjects in language that is represented by the use of 'he'. 'Our aim,' according to Black and Coward, 'is not just to validate the new meanings of women but to confront men with their maleness. This is not just about masculine behaviour, but about discursive practices' (ibid.).

This brief summary of Foucauldian approaches to discourse has highlighted a number of differences from the notions of discourse discussed in previous sections. Clearly, it shares a number of similarities with critical discourse analysis in its concern with questions of power and social structures. On the other hand, the actual notion of discourse is different both from the applied linguistic and the critical version. To return to the concept of levels once again, I think a Foucauldian analysis could best be described as a three-level model in which the text (in a broad sense that may mean a linguistic text but could also mean a body or a beach) is given meaning by discourses (which take up that middle space of discourse and ideology in the critical approach), which in turn derive from a multiplicity of non-discursive practices (which, perhaps most importantly, are by no means only questions of economic or class relations). Finally,

whereas both mainstream and critical discourse analysis tend to locate meaning in the relationship between linguistic form (discourse/text) and function, context, or social structure/ideology, this view of discourse locates meaning in discourse itself.

IMPLICATIONS AND APPLICATIONS

A Foucauldian notion of discourse has significant implications for applied linguistics and language teaching. As a number of people have commented (e.g. Hoskin, 1990), a key element of Foucauldian analysis is rendering the familiar unfamiliar. As I commented earlier, at a time when both discourse analysis and applied linguistics are being consolidated into disciplines, this may be a crucial juncture for such a rendering, for an attempt to question the 'givens' of applied linguistics. While there are many domains of applied linguistics that could usefully be subjected to such analysis — the discourses of communicative language teaching, the native speaker, and learner variables suggest themselves — my own work has focused particularly on the discourse of English as an International Language (EIL).⁸ I have been trying to show how this discourse grew out of colonial views on English education, was constructed in a particular way because of its connections to the structuralist and positivist orientations of linguistics and applied linguistics, and has become intertwined with discourses on global development and international capitalism. The discourse of EIL in effect maps out the possible ways of thinking, speaking (writing, etc.), and acting with respect to the global spread of English, producing a view of this spread as generally natural, neutral, and beneficial, and focusing attention on questions of linguistic variety in English rather than cultural and political implications of its spread. Thus, it both limits the possibilities for language teachers to think about our work differently and produces texts and subject positions in accordance with this view. Rather than following Phillipson's (1992) interesting, but I think overdeterministic, structuralist-Marxist analysis of 'linguistic imperialism', the notion of discourse here has allowed me to explore both historically and in the present how the idea of 'English as an International Language' has been produced.

This view of discourse also has considerable implications for language teaching. It is easier to compare a standard applied linguistic and a CDA approach, since both consider discourse to be essentially linguistic. The

difference lies in what they do with their texts/discourses. Thus we could compare, say, how McCarthy (1991) and Fairclough (1989) deal with the questions of coherence. Analysing a text about a boy who had been attacked by a python, McCarthy (1991, p.27) argues that, in order to be coherent, the text 'requires us to activate our knowledge of pythons as dangerous creatures which may threaten human life ...'. Meanwhile Fairclough (1989, p.103) analyses how an advertisement for an English course is made coherent by appeal to 'common sense' knowledge — that the reader 'is looking for *success*, the capacity to *dominate* and *influence* others', and so on — which in turn is ideological: 'the *coherence* of discourse is dependent on discursual common sense' which 'is *ideological* to the extent that it contributes to sustaining unequal power relations, directly or indirectly' (ibid., p.107). McCarthy looks to background knowledge to explain coherence, while Fairclough looks to the ideological construction of common sense. Alternatively, we could take a text from the exercises supplied by Cook (1989), and show that while his focus is on how the sentences in a passage are put together (Task 90, ibid., p.149), a critical analyst would probably focus on how this passage appears to be arguing for a biological basis for human warfare.

A Foucauldian analysis presents a different possibility. It is not concerned with how discourses (texts) reflect social reality, but how discourses produce social realities; it does not look for relationships between discourse and society/politics, but rather theorizes discourse as always/already political; it does not seek out an ultimate cause or basis for power and inequality, but rather focuses on the multiplicity of sites through which power operates; and it does not posit a reality outside discourse, but rather looks to the discursive production of truth. Rather than the version of conscientization offered by a Freirean pedagogy (see Weiler, 1991) or CDA, a pedagogy based on a Foucauldian notion of discourse does not allow for easy talk of 'oppressed' and 'oppressors', or of 'truth', or 'reality'. In her discussion of the difference between a Freirean-style pedagogy of 'talking back' and a pedagogy of 'talking story', Schenke (1991, p.53) suggests that it is important to be 'more wary of resolution, unconvinced by the binary language of oppression and liberation, more responsive to the capillary effects of power, and more attuned to smaller, less "heroic" acts of resistance and personal/social change'. This is not about trying to get students to understand how ideologies have obscured the 'truth', but how discourses construct our lives. According to Kearney (1988, p.386), 'it

is certainly unlikely that any amount of “knowledge” about the falsehood of our experience is going to help us think or act in a more effective or liberating way. A form of pedagogy, however accurate and scientific, which does no more than explain the intricate mechanisms of our enslavement offers little consolation’.

Recalling the reversal of priority of language and discourse with which I opened this paper, it becomes clear that the approach I am suggesting here is based on an understanding of how discourses map out our different worlds. Language teaching becomes a process of making the familiar unfamiliar, of linking the process of learning a second language to a pedagogy that seeks to question how we come to understand ourselves as we do. One immediate implication of this is in terms of language teaching curricula. The search for ‘content’ in language teaching has always been a contentious one, whether in terms of formal study of language as content, or the functionalist or pragmatist orientations of communicative language learning or language learning for specific purposes. More critical work has sought to deal with ‘social issues’ (crime, abortion, etc.), or, in the case of CDA, with the ideological underpinnings of texts, but these approaches, by dealing with ‘serious issues’ rather than dealing with issues seriously, and by starting with a dichotomy between language and social structure, have often failed to link the focus of these classes either to the language being learnt or to the lives of the students.

The understanding of language and discourse that I am suggesting here can, I believe, alleviate some of these difficulties by exploring the specific relationships between particular discourses and the particular language being taught. Thus, in the context in which I teach, it is in the connections between English and particular discourses (what I have elsewhere (Pennycook, 1994) called the ‘worldliness’ of English), discourses that are of importance to the particular context of language use, that a curriculum of relevance, language learning potential, and social change can be forged. Thus, I am exploring with my students how English in Hong Kong, China intersects with discourses of popular culture, national culture, capitalism, colonialism, and education. Another way forward is through what Arleen Schenke (1991, p.47) has called a ‘genealogical practice in memory work’, a practice that can start to attend to the discursive formation of student (and teacher) subjectivity and memory. Arguing that there is an important difference between student autobiography *per se* (student experiences, stories, and histories) and the

'autobiographical "I"', the voice through which such stories are narrated and heard, she suggests that it is by attending to the latter 'that we touch upon the discursive formations of subjectivity and memory, and that we can work towards a more historicized and engaged practice of feminist/ESL teaching' (ibid., p.48).

Finally, we need to be very aware both of the discourses into which we are asking our students to move and of the discourses in which we as teachers are engaged. The point here is that, as Foucault argued with respect to the mode of confession from the Catholic confessional to the psychiatrist's couch (Foucault, 1980b; Tambling, 1990), to be summoned to speak is not to give expression to some true inner self, but to be called into a certain discourse, a regime of truth: 'To speak is to assume a subject position within discourse and to become *subjected* to the power and regulation of the discourse' (Weedon, 1987, p.119). Thus, as we urge our students to speak or write, and as we listen or read, we need also to consider what discourses are constructing those moments of speaking and understanding. To quote Schenke (1991) once again: 'Because autobiographical work in teaching is a practice in "breaking the silence" of personal and social histories, and because these histories, in ESL teaching in particular, are traversed by legacies of colonialism, it matters fundamentally who speaks and who listens, under what conditions of possibility, and along the lines of which political and pedagogical agendas' (Schenke, 1991, p.48).

This notion of discourse, then, offers a number of possibilities for engaging critically with language and meaning without falling into some of the materialist or deterministic pitfalls that CDA can present. Like CDA, it locates the context of language use, the speakers and their intentions in a wider social, cultural, and political context than the view common to discourse analysis in applied linguistics. This, I believe, is a crucial step in opposing the discourse of pragmatism in applied linguistics and in acknowledging the political in second language education. Unlike much of CDA, however, a Foucauldian conception of discourse does not posit a reality to be unmasked, a truth that is represented or misrepresented in texts, or an ultimate location of power and inequality in socio-economic relations. Rather, it permits us to see how meaning is produced by discursive regimes that are related to a 'will to know' in diverse areas of social life. Such a view, I think, presents a useful way of pursuing questions of how we come to speak and to mean as we do.

CONCLUSION

I hope that this critical view of discourse analysis has not implied that either standard applied linguistic discourse analysis or CDA are not worthwhile activities. Both approaches are useful for applied linguistics: the first can help focus on discourse types, the relationship between discourse and background knowledge, awareness of interaction in the classroom, how texts are constructed, how turn-taking occurs in different cultures, whether teaching materials have been designed with an awareness of discourse, and so on; the second can help us develop an awareness of how language use is always connected to issues of power, how background knowledge is never an innocent way of knowing, how larger conditions of social reality are never absent from texts. And yet, as I have argued, the decontextualized contexts and the political quietism of applied linguistics, and the often reductionist and deterministic frameworks of CDA, suggest that these approaches should be used with caution.

One question that I raised in the introduction has been left hanging: are the applied linguistic (and possibly CDA) approaches incommensurable with the Foucauldian position I have been outlining? Certainly one response would be that they are not: could we not, for example arrange these positions along a continuum? At one end, a very linguistically based view of discourse analysis, where discourse merely refers to the way sentences are connected together, moving gradually through positions increasing the importance of context, until we arrive at a position whereby language is subsumed within discourse. There are two reasons why I feel such a notion is untenable: first, on epistemological grounds, it seems that different versions of discourse imply very different understandings of the world. CDA is clearly based, to differing degrees, on a neo-Marxist critical tradition that takes social inequalities to be its prime focus and sees ideologies as a fundamental way in which those inequalities are perpetuated. Such a view of ideology is not easily reconciled, for example, with a more liberal conception whereby ideology is taken to be either an apolitical system of thought or a series of beliefs held by people with a shared political orientation. And a Foucauldian notion of discourse, implying as it does a rejection of many of the staples of critical and non-critical thought (oppressed and oppressors, truth, reality, and so on), seems even further removed. Second, on moral grounds, I find it hard to accept the implicit relativity of the notion of continua, whereby different views

are simply seen as different and are not engaged with. So are we then inevitably caught in a trap whereby even when we appear to be engaged in the same discourse (from one point of view), we are nevertheless constantly engaged in different discourses (from another point of view)?

And yet, neither do I wish to end with the defeatist and equally relativist view of incommensurability. If there are good reasons to abandon, or at least question, the Enlightenment belief in a rational subject in control of language and meaning, then rather than looking for alternatives in other modernist frameworks, and thus continuing a search for teleological explanations of how we come to think as we do (located, for example, in a humanist belief in a 'true', 'real', or 'natural' self, in the Freudian subconscious, or Marxian socioeconomic relations), I believe we need to take up a more postmodern stance and thus to abandon such teleologies. In spite of Lyotard's (1984, p.xxv) assertion that postmodern knowledge 'refines our sensitivity to differences and reinforces our ability to tolerate the incommensurable', however, I have been trying to point to the need, in Hoy's (1988, p.22) terms, of thinking 'the great unthought', of acknowledging that, while we cannot know ourselves or the world around us in any objective fashion, we nevertheless need to ask how it is we come to think as we do. My hope is that, first, even if these views cannot be reconciled or merged, they can at least be mutually understood. By comparing and discussing these different understandings of discourse, my intention at the very least has been to make the familiar terrain of applied linguistic discourse analysis slightly less familiar and to render the unfamiliar terrain of Foucauldian discourse analysis slightly more familiar. And, second, I hope that others will take up some of the challenges that I have posed here so that the chasms that sometimes exist between us can be more easily traversed.

NOTES

1. There is an inevitable degree of over-generalization in my view of mainstream applied linguistics here (a problem that is also true of my description of critical discourse analysis). It is important to point out that what I am referring to as applied linguistics here is, in the narrower sense of the term, concerned principally with language teaching and thus with understandings of language, language use, and language learning, rather than the broader sense that refers to a wider range of applications of language theory, including stylistics, translation, neurolinguistics,

clinical linguistics, and so forth (see Crystal, 1987). I am only concerned, therefore, with how this narrower sense of applied linguistics has borrowed forms of discourse analysis from the much broader field of discourse analysis itself (see, for example, van Dijk's (1985) four-volume series).

2. This is not only the case for language use, but also for domains such as language acquisition (see Urwin, 1984) and communicative competence (see Peirce, 1989).
3. I do not wish to suggest here that work in CDA has not addressed questions of race or gender. My argument is that the neo-Marxist base of much of this work operates with a problematic assumption about causes and roots of inequality.
4. Another issue that I have not dealt with here is the shift in Foucault's thinking from his earlier archaeological period to his later genealogical period. Although there is debate over how much should be made of this distinction (see, for example: Dreyfus and Rabinow, 1982; Hoy, 1988; Hoskin, 1990), part of the difference in these readings can be attributed to some critical discourse analysts' favouring an archaeological approach to discourse and my tendency towards a more genealogical approach.
5. See, for example, Althusser (1971) and Pêcheux's (1982) important work that relates Althusser's concept of ideology explicitly to a notion of discourse. For a discussion of this work, see Macdonell (1986).
6. I owe this image of 'mapping out' reality to Roger Simon.
7. I am, of course, aware that there has been a great deal of discussion about Said's notion of Orientalism. This does not, however, seem to be the place to engage in an extended exploration of the problems with parts of his analysis. For an interesting discussion, see Clifford (1988).
8. I have explored these ideas in much greater depth elsewhere (Pennycook, 1994).

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Chapter II

Borrowing Others' Words: Text, Ownership, Memory, and Plagiarism

This chapter is based on an article that first appeared in 1996 in
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A number of years ago, when I was teaching at Xiangtan University in China, I asked my first-year undergraduate English majors to write a brief biography of a well-known person (such exciting tasks do we set our students). When I was grading these, I came across one toward the bottom of the pile that had a strange quality to it. It was a short piece on Abraham Lincoln (Why Abraham Lincoln? I wondered), written in rather simple but perfectly “correct” prose: “Abraham Lincoln was born in a log cabin in 1809 ...” (or words to that effect). It had the ring of a text from elsewhere, of language borrowed and repeated. Because I was at the time supervising my fourth-year students’ teaching practice in Yiyang, a small town in the north of Hunan, I asked one of them what he thought about this text. He looked at the first two lines and smiled. The text, he explained, was from one of the high school textbooks. So did that mean, I asked, that it had been copied? Well, not necessarily, the student replied, and then demonstrated that he too knew the text by heart: “Abraham Lincoln was born in a log cabin. ...” When I got back to Xiangtan University, I sought out the first-year student and asked him about his text. He explained that although he felt that he had not really done the task I had set, because I had asked them to do some research prior to writing, he had felt rather fortunate that I had asked them to write something which he already knew. Sitting in his head was a brief biography of Abraham Lincoln, and he was quite happy to produce it on demand: “Abraham Lincoln was born in a log cabin. ...”

Whereas I might have responded to this with moral outrage or delivered a lecture on plagiarism, or “academic norms,” I found instead that I was rather fascinated by the issues it raised: questions about ownership of texts, practices of memory, and writing. Because all language learning is, to

some extent, a practice of memorization of the words of others, on what grounds do we see certain acts of textual borrowing as acceptable and others as unacceptable? How have the boundaries been drawn between the acceptable memorizing and use of word lists, phrases, sentences (remember *English 900* with its 900 sentences to be memorized?), paragraphs, poems, quotations, and so on and the unacceptable reuse of others' words? How is it that notions of ownership of text have developed? When does one come to own a language sufficiently that to say something "in one's own words" makes sense? And how can we come to deal with different relationships to text and memorization in different cultural contexts? I recall some time after this incident talking to some of my Chinese colleagues about memorization and language learning. I was arguing that although memorization of texts might be a useful learning technique, it could never lead to productive, original language use (this, we have been taught to believe, is one of those "facts" of second language acquisition). I gave as an example one of our colleagues who was acknowledged as one of the most eloquent and fluent speakers in the department, suggesting that he could never have become so if he had been a mere memoriser. The others smiled, for this other colleague was known not only as an excellent user of English but also as someone with a fine talent for memorizing texts. Again, pause for thought. I knew that when we sat and drank beer and talked philosophy, he wasn't speaking texts to me. How had he come to own the language as he did, when that had apparently been done by borrowing others' language?

When I worked in Hong Kong, China more recently, parallel puzzles about ownership of text emerged in "moderation meetings," in which a number of us teaching on the same course compare grades for the same essays. Although such meetings often produce, in any case, quite extraordinarily divergent views on what is and what is not a good piece of writing, there is nothing like the hint of something borrowed to radically split the meeting down the middle: Some teachers will heap praise on an essay while others are pouring scorn on it. The issue, almost invariably, is whether it is the student's "own work." And the trigger for both the praise and the scorn can sometimes be as little as a two- or three-word phrase. For some, it is a felicitous phrase, appropriately used, suggesting someone with a good feel for language; for others, it is a phrase that could not be part of this student's "competence" (such is the tyranny of our knowledge

of students' interlanguages and competency levels), thus casting doubt not only over the origins of this phrase but also the origins of the rest of the text. The lines are drawn and the arguments rage over whether the essay warrants a D (or worse) or an A. Ironically, once the spectre of doubtful ownership is raised, teachers start to look for grammatical errors as a sign of good writing and to become suspicious when such errors are crucially absent. Our criteria are turned on their head: Suddenly we are looking either for language that is "too good" in order to incriminate the student, or we are looking for evidence of errors in order to exonerate the student. Thus, we end up in the "paradoxical state of affairs that the worse an essay is linguistically, the better mark it is perceived to merit" (Hutton, 1990). From being teachers constantly in search of sophisticated and standard language use, we become detectives in search of evidence that some chunk of language has been illegitimately used.

Indeed, once we start to explore the whole question of textual borrowing, the notion of ownership of text and learning becomes very complex. It is important to understand the cultural and historical specificity of notions of ownership and authorship and to explore the implications of these concepts' being increasingly promoted as international norms. Plagiarism also needs to be particularized in other ways: In terms of the particular cultural and educational context in which it is being discussed — what are the relationships to text, knowledge, and learning in a particular cultural context? And in terms of the nature of the institution and the particular language in which it is seen to be occurring: Is an educational institute promoting or thwarting creative thought, and in what language is it asking students to function academically? And in terms of what is understood as shared language or knowledge and particular language or knowledge: At what point does a phrase or an idea become owned? And at what point does it become public? Other interesting complexities arise: How do we understand the relationship between language and knowledge? What are we to make of the academic emphasis on repeating the ideas of others while doing so in our own words? Why is it that many teachers seem to react to supposed acts of plagiarism with such moral outrage? How important is the notion of intentionality: Is the issue that certain words are not the students' own, or is it more important to understand the intention behind the apparent borrowing? And is it perhaps useful to distinguish between notions of good and bad plagiarism?

THE ORIGINALITY MYTH: FROM DIVINE TO DISCURSIVE VENTRILOQUY

Constructing the Author

In order to understand how Western views on textual ownership have developed, we need to examine in greater detail what it means to be original, an author, and how it is that author, authenticity, and authority are so closely intertwined in Western thought. What, then, does it mean to be original, to say something new? In his genealogy of Western imagination, Kearney (1988) identifies three dominant paradigms, the *mimetic* (premodern), the *productive* (modern), and the *parodic* (postmodern). In the premodern, mimetic era (biblical, classical, and medieval), the image stood as a representation of reality, as a means through which nature, and especially God, could be worshipped. For both Aristotle and Plato, imagination remained “largely a *reproductive* rather than a *productive* activity, a servant rather than a master of meaning, imitation rather than origin” (p.113, emphasis in original). The great monotheistic religions are still tied to a position that it is divine, not human, inspiration that produced their texts (a view notoriously transgressed by Salman Rushdie). It was not until the great shift of thinking in Europe that became known as the Enlightenment that this view of imagination was replaced by the productive paradigm of the modern. In this view, the imagination was no longer viewed as a mimetic capacity but as a productive force: “As a consequence of this momentous reversal of roles, meaning is no longer primarily considered as a transcendent property of divine being; it is now hailed as a transcendental product of the human mind” (p.155). Shifting from the earlier onto-theological view of meaning, the humanist subject now became the centre of creativity. It is this view of meaning as held in place by the humanist subject which, once coupled with the notion of property rights, produced an understanding of individual ownership of ideas and language.

This understanding of imagination is clearly closely tied to the development of the notion of the author. The medieval concept of the author put great store on the authority and authenticity bestowed on a text by the *auctor*. In this view, texts were given truth and authority by dint of having been written long ago by famous men: As Minnis (1984) suggests, the only good author was a dead author. But it was the development of print, Ong (1982) argues, that “created a new sense of the private

ownership of words" (p.131). Tracing back the history of the development of the notion of the author, Foucault (1984) suggests that there was, in the 17th or 18th centuries, a reversal of the need for authorial attribution. Prior to this, he suggests, literary work was generally accepted without a notion of an author, an observation that accords with Kearney's (1988) that the premodern imaginative work was generally unauthored because it was the representation of reality or the creation of a religious icon through which God could be worshipped that was of importance, not the image-making itself. Scientific work (texts on medicine, cosmology, and natural science), by contrast, were accepted as true by dint of their authorship. This, Foucault suggests, was reversed in the 17th and 18th centuries, when the authorship of individual works of literature as individual acts of creativity became crucial, whereas the scientific domain evolved into a more general unauthored agreement on scientific truths. Kearney (1988) suggests that "the coming into being of the notion of 'author' constitutes the privileged moment of individualization in the history of ideas, knowledge, literature, philosophy, and the sciences" (p.101).

What is of significance in the description of these shifts of creativity and authorship is the need to see a stress on "new" meaning, on originality, on individual creativity, as very much an aspect of Western modernity, and thus both a very particular cultural and a very particular historical emphasis, albeit one with a great deal of salience in the world today. It is with the rise of such individualization that the history of literary plagiarism started to emerge (the notion of copyright and thus "intellectual property" was encoded in British law in 1710; see Willinsky, 1990). Thus, as Willinsky (1990) puts it, "this contest of creative imitation, invention, and authority, which has been at the heart of the force of the book as an intellectual property, is secured by the concept of an originating author, an actual body that gave life to words" (p.77). In this development, then, we can see the conjunction between the development of the notion of the author and the development of individual property rights, which, allied to other developments such as printing, produced a very particular vision of ownership of language and ideas.

Modernist Tensions

Despite the strength of this vision, backed up as it was not only by philosophical underpinnings but also by legal sanctions, it also seems to have been a view with many tensions and ambiguities. One thing

that is immediately striking when reading about textual borrowing is how remarkably common it has been and still is, and thus how textual borrowing has always been with us to an extent that the purer humanists and modernists would be unwilling to admit. As Mallon (1989) puts it, “the Romans rewrote the Greeks. Virgil is, in a broadly imitative way, Homer, and for that matter, typologists can find most of the Old Testament in the New” (p.4). White’s (1965) study of plagiarism in the English Renaissance raises similar interesting concerns. As he points out, the classical heritage on which the Renaissance drew was itself a period full of imitation: A great deal of the flourishing of Roman arts was based on free imitation of Greek works. When the writers of the European Renaissance turned back to their classical heritage, they not only revived art that had based itself on free imitation, but they also based their own work on the free imitation of this period. But this has always been the case for a great deal of artistic creation: As T. S. Eliot (1975) put it, the “most individual parts” of an artist’s work may be precisely those “in which the dead poets, his ancestors, assert their immortality most vigorously” (p.38).

What emerges from studies of literary plagiarism such as Mallon (1989) or Shaw (1982) is a very confused and complex picture.¹ First of all, the list of accused plagiarists is long and prestigious, including Laurence Sterne, Samuel Coleridge, Thomas De Quincey, Edgar Allen Poe, Norman Mailer, Alex Hailey (*Roots*), Dee Brown (*Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee*), Martin Luther King, Gail Sheehy (*Passages*), Jacob Epstein (*Wild Oats*), Helen Keller, and many more. Second, part of the difficulty here lies in the relationship between the demand for originality and the reverence of other writers, a tension that occurs when “the demand for novelty meets the sensitive writer’s normal worship of the great literary past” (Mallon, 1989, p.24). There is, therefore, a constant interplay between creativity and previous writing, a relationship which, as we shall see, is particularly significant in the context in which we teach. Third, the writers themselves or their supporters will often go to extreme lengths to exonerate the writer from accusations of unoriginality. Anything from poor note-taking to psychological disturbances, from unconscious errors to clever parodying are suggested once it is shown that a great author’s originality is brought into question. The debates around Laurence Sterne’s *Tristram Shandy*, for example, are intriguing because his work is seen both as highly original, a precursor to much later 20th-century literary experimentation, and also as heavily reliant on a number of other sources. The common explanation

among Sterne scholars is that there was a kind of mockery going on here, a parodying of others' work, and that those who accuse him of plagiarism misunderstand his work, his humour, and his originality.

The Individualist-Romanticist view of originality that emerged in the modern era, then, also carried with it many of the seeds of its own destruction, rife as it was contradictions, borrowings, and pretended originalities. An understanding of the whole Orientalist-Romanticist trait in European writing (the search for the "exotic" in distant places to revive the flagging powers of European creativity) reveals how the great claims to European exploration and discovery were another powerful set of myths. The actual physical invasions and colonisations of this period were of course very real, but the discoveries of difference were in many ways little more than repetitions of European tropes. As Tatlow's (1993) discussion of Gauguin shows, for example, what was really discovered in these voyages of European discovery was nothing but another part of the European imaginary: monsters, cannibals, and primitive natives. Furthermore, as Tatlow suggests, Gauguin was, like most artists, part of a larger tradition of massive borrowing: "Like Brecht, Gauguin borrowed from everywhere. His disdain for originality was his mark of it and, as Delacroix observed of Raphael: 'Nowhere did he reveal his originality so forcefully as in the ideas he borrowed'" (p.5).

Once one starts to take a closer look at the context of textual borrowing, then, it is hard not to feel that language use is marked far more by the circulation and recirculation of words and ideas than by a constant process of creativity. One thing that emerges from a recent book on spurious quotations and misquotations (Keyes, 1992), for example, is the vast amount of constant borrowing that goes on in the field of quotations. In one chapter, Keyes reports research by Robert Newcomb that reveals that many aphorisms generally attributed to Benjamin Franklin were in fact lifted from other sources, virtually word for word. Although Franklin pointed to this practice when he asked, "Why should I give my Readers bad lines of my own when good ones of other People's are so plenty?" (quoted in Keyes, p.31), he never acknowledged that his great collection of aphorisms were indeed the good lines of others. As Keyes shows, in fact, many of the famous lines attributed to various American presidents also have much older origins. These include Kennedy's "Ask not what your country can do for you; ask what you can do for your country," which is remarkably similar to various other sayings such as Oliver Wendell Holmes

Jr.'s 1884 request to an audience to "recall what our country has done for each of us, and to ask ourselves what we can do for our country in return" (Keyes, 1992, p.91). Other famous examples include Franklin Roosevelt's "The only thing we have to fear is fear itself," which had already been said in more or less the same words by Montaigne in 1580, Francis Bacon in 1623, the Duke of Wellington in 1832, and Thoreau in 1851. By the time we get to Ronald Reagan, whose fallible memory and inability to distinguish between fact and fiction are legendary, examples abound. It is worth noting here that because these examples are known to us today because they exist in the writings or sayings of well-known writers, so they must surely be but the tip of a vast iceberg of such repetitions.

Now it is tempting to chuckle at these famous sayings echoing through the years, and perhaps to cluck one's tongue at the thought that some of this must have been done wittingly. Yet I believe that these simple examples point to a far more significant series of questions. First, is it perhaps the case that there really is nothing, or at least very little, new to be said? As Goethe (1963/1829) once said "Alles Gescheite ist schon gedacht worden, man muß nur versuchen, es noch einmal zu denken" (Everything clever has already been thought; one must only try to think it again; *Maximen und Reflexionen*, p.52). Rather than the generativist-grammarians' view of language as an infinite production of sentences — a view that suggests that such linguists have rarely been in a conversation, read a newspaper, or indeed encountered any form of language use — is it not far more significant to focus on the social production and the circulation of meanings? A view of language that relates its use to social, cultural, and ideological domains suggests that we need to go beyond a view of language as an infinite series of decontextualized sentences or as the idiosyncratic production of a completely free-willed subject. Second, if it is in fact so hard to pin down the real originator of a quotation, are we perhaps engaged here in a false teleology, an impossible search for the first speaking or writing of certain words? Indeed, is it not possible that in some ways our endless books of apparently dubiously attributed quotations (or indeed all of our cherished canon of "authored" works) are a product of a search both to attribute authorship to certain words and to elevate writers to their canonical status by attributing pithy sayings to them? Is it the case that the insistence on the authorship of quotations, poems, books, and so on has less to do with authorial (author-real?) creation of texts and far more to do with textual creation of authors?

Postmodern Uncertainty: The Death of the Author

The notion of the individual as creative guarantor of meaning and originality, this particular vision of self and authenticity, has, of course, taken a fair battering since Marx, Freud, and others have questioned the notion of the unmediated and authentic expression of self. Dominant though this modernist paradigm of the author has been, it is now being questioned by the parodic paradigm of the postmodern. In the wake of both the “death of God” and the “death of the subject,” imagination and creativity become nothing but a play of images themselves, images that neither reference a reality nor are the products of a human subject. According to Kearney (1988), “one of the greatest paradoxes of contemporary culture is that at a time when the image reigns supreme the very notion of a creative human imagination seems under mounting threat” (p.3). The postmodern and poststructuralist positions on language, discourse, and subjectivity, therefore, raise serious questions for any notion of individual creativity or authorship. If, instead of a Self or an Identity, we consider the notion of subjectivity, or indeed subjectivities (we are, in a sense, the fragmented products of different discourses), then we arrive at more or less a reversal of the speaking subject creating meaning: We are not speaking subjects but spoken subjects, we do not create language but are created by it. As I suggested earlier, the question then becomes not so much one of who authored a text but how we are authored by texts.² Thus, the development of a notion of creativity can be seen to move from an external position, in which the origin of meanings has some determinate source, especially in the word of God (the divine ventriloquist);³ through an internal version of meaning, in which the individual was seen as the originator and guarantor of meaning (the speaking subject); and back to an external model, where meanings play off each other without any stable referent (discursive ventriloquy).

As Kearney (1988) suggests, “Postmodernism casts a suspecting glance on the modernist cult of creative originality” (p.21). This skepticism about creative originality is linked not only to the “death of the subject,” but also more specifically to the announcement of the “death of the author,” signaled most emphatically by Roland Barthes (1977b). Arguing, like Foucault (1984), that the notion of the author was very much a construction of modernity, Barthes (1977b) states that “a text is not a line of words releasing a single ‘theological’ meaning (the ‘message’ of the Author-God) but a multi-dimensional space in which a variety of writings,

none of them original, blend and clash. The text is a tissue of quotations drawn from the innumerable centres of culture" (p.146). "[T]o give writing its future," Barthes argues, "it is necessary to overthrow the myth: the birth of the reader must be at the cost of the death of the Author" (p.148). Barthes suggests that by doing away with the notion of the author, writing can no longer be seen as an act of representation, and meaning can no longer be attached to some authorial intent. Linking this idea to speech act theory, he suggests that all writing is nothing but "a performative," having "no other content ... than the act by which it is uttered" (p.146).⁴

If this line of thinking raises many questions about authorship, Swan's (1994) discussion of Helen Keller's supposed plagiarism starts to raise different postmodernist issues concerning the body and its boundaries. For Helen Keller, deaf and blind since the age of 2, perception was almost entirely tactile, and thus texts for her took on a different context in relationship to memory. As Helen Keller explained, her "friends often read 'interesting fragments' to her 'in a promiscuous manner,' and ... if she then uses them in her writing, it is difficult to trace the 'fugitive sentences and paragraphs' which have been spelled into her hand" (Swan, 1994, pp.57-58). But Swan is pointing to far deeper concerns here than the fact that Helen Keller must have developed very particular memory practices. Working through the psychoanalytic theories of Lacan, he points to fundamentally different understandings of language and boundaries: Because for Keller perception was through touch, it was an immense battle to construct for Keller an understanding that "the boundaries between self and other that her blind groping continually transgresses" have parallels in the "boundaries between her words and the words of others" (p.97). This discussion starts to open up a range of issues to do with modes of perception, memory, texts, and the understanding of personal and social boundaries. If we look at Helen Keller's case not as one limited to the particular perceptual constraints with which she had to work but rather as opening up concerns about bodies, texts, and ownership, we can also admit the possibility that different cultures and different psyches may operate with fundamentally different understandings of self and other and therefore of boundaries and ownership.

Finally, drawing this discussion back to issues more closely related to language learning, it is worth noting the ideas of Bakhtin (1986/1936), who insists on the dialogic nature of language: "the real unit of language that is implemented in speech ... is not the individual, isolated monologic

utterance, but the interaction of at least two utterances — in a word, dialogue” (Vološinov, 1973, p.117). By this he means not so much that language is used in communication but rather that all language use carries histories of its former uses with it. “Our speech, that is, all our utterances,” are therefore “filled with others’ words” (Bakhtin, 1986, p.89). Commenting on the importance of this idea of “appropriating others’ words” for language learning, Lensmire and Beals (1994) suggest that “We are born and develop, learn to speak, read and write, awash in the words of others. ... Our words are always someone else’s words first; and these words sound with the intonations and evaluations of others who have used them before, and from whom we have learned them” (p.411). Put together, these challenges to the notion of the author and individual creativity, and this argument that meanings are in a sense in circulation, that language is constantly cycled and recycled, raise profound questions about how we consider the notion of textual borrowing or plagiarism.

TEACHERS AND CHANGING TEXTUAL PRACTICES

What I have been trying to show here is that looking more carefully at traditions of ascribing meaning and creativity to God, the individual, or discourse raises a number of concerns about how meaning, texts, and textual borrowing are understood and thus challenges any easy ascription of a notion of plagiarism. An understanding of the notion of authorship and originality as a very particular cultural and historical orientation to meaning raises profound questions about plagiarism. We need to take seriously the “postmodern conviction that the very concept of a creative imagination is a passing illusion of Western humanist culture” (Kearney, 1988, p.28). I have been trying to question the premises on which a simple version of plagiarism is based, by showing that this particular version of meaning, originality, and authorship is located within a Western cultural and historical tradition that stresses creative and possessive individualism. Furthermore, Western claims to originality have always been made alongside a tradition of wholesale borrowing of language and ideas. Questions and research following from Foucault’s (1977/1984) key question, What is an author? therefore suggest that “the author in this modern sense is a relatively recent invention, but ... it does not closely reflect contemporary writing practices” (Woodmansee, 1994, p.15).

Hunting Down Those Borrowed Words

As teachers, therefore, we are presented by something of a dilemma. For those of us brought up in this Western tradition, we often find ourselves vehement defenders of “correct” textual practices, desperately trying to promote our version of language and ownership. This position, however, is filled with tensions. As I shall discuss in the next section, it faces very real challenges if we start to take seriously different textual and learning practices in other cultures. But, as I want to show here, it also faces challenges from its own inconsistencies. These are of two main kinds: On the one hand, as I suggested in the last section, the Western cult of originality has existed alongside wholesale borrowing, and thus whether we see Coleridge and others as devious plagiarists or as careless scholars, this history of plagiarism suggests a certain disingenuousness to the accusations made by teachers. Indeed, in light of the vehemence with which many teachers pursue apparent plagiarisers (see below), it is worth considering the vehemence with which many literary scholars defend their adored writers: “Scholars will tie themselves up in knots exonerating Coleridge” (Mallon, 1989, pp.32–33). At the very least, there is a degree of hypocrisy here as teachers on the one hand accuse their students of lacking originality, while on the other they defend their cherished creative geniuses against suggestions that they were simply resaying what had been said before. On the other hand, it would seem in any case that textual practices are changing: Even if there once were clearly defined lines between the borrowed and the original, they are starting to fade in a new era of electronic intertextuality.

Perhaps the best example of plagiaristic hypocrisy can be found in the following report from the *New York Times* (June 6, 1980; quoted in Mallon, 1989, p.100):

Stanford University said today it had learned that its teaching assistants' handbook section on plagiarism had been plagiarised by the University of Oregon. Stanford issued a release saying Oregon officials conceded that the plagiarism section and other parts of its handbook were identical with the Stanford guidebook. Oregon officials apologised and said they would revise their guidebook.

On one level, this is merely laughable. Yet I am left wondering how this could actually have happened. What was going on here when guidelines to avoid plagiarism were being copied? This case certainly

suggests that the same double-standards that seem to obtain in literary circles may also be the case in the academic domain, with one set of standards for the guardians of truth and knowledge and another for those seeking entry. Beyond the obvious observation that plagiarism exists on a large scale in the academic world (see, e.g., Mallon, 1989), there are two other domains that produce a degree of skepticism. First, in the same way that Western literary practices centre around the notion of the individual creator and yet constantly echo the lines of others, academic work also stresses the individual, creative thinker, and writer and yet constantly emphasizes a fixed canon of disciplinary knowledge. This problem is most obvious for undergraduate students (and especially if they are writing in a second language) who, while constantly being told to be original and critical, and to write things in their “own words,” are nevertheless only too aware that they are at the same time required to acquire a fixed canon of knowledge and a fixed canon of terminology to go with it.

The second problem concerns the power relations between different academics and between academics and their students or research assistants. One aspect of this is the common practice of senior academics (particularly in the sciences but also in other areas) putting their names at the head of papers in the writing and researching of which they have had little or no role.⁵ More generally, however, this issue touches on far broader questions of the origins of academic ideas and who gets credit for them. Just as questions have been raised about Wordsworth’s solitary male creative genius, because it seems he borrowed heavily from his sister, Dorothy, so it is evident that much of what gets claimed as the result of original academic work actually draws heavily on the work of silent others — women, graduate students, research assistants and so on.

The extent of moral rectitude and vehemence with which teachers sometimes pursue student plagiarisers can be extreme. Given the emphasis on the creative individual as producer and owner of his or her thoughts, it seems that the borrowing of words is often discussed in terms of “stealing,” of committing a crime against the author of a text. This particular connection presumably has its origins in the peculiarly Western conjunction between the growth of the notion of human rights and the stress on individual property (see, e.g., Pollis & Schwab, 1979), thus making the reuse of language already used by others a crime against the inalienable property rights of the individual. It is worth noting here in passing that whereas other student “misdeeds,” such as grammatical errors,

failure to understand a text and so on, may incur frustration, censure, and perhaps wrath, I cannot think of anything else that is viewed as a crime in this way. Although some language purists may rail against the ways language gets bent and twisted in both our and our students' hands and mouths, rarely is this taken up in such moralistic terms. Plagiarism, Kolich (1983) suggests, "is a highly emotional subject, and the issue of how to deal with it seems muddled by moral confusion, apprehension, and general loathing" (p.141). It seems that there is a very clear idea here that texts are "owned" by their "original" creators and that to use those words and ideas without acknowledging their ownership is indeed to transgress a moral (and legal) boundary. In Deckert's (1993) study of attitudes toward plagiarism, for example, he asked the students to identify instances where "the writer committed plagiarism" (p.145; emphasis added).

And yet even this notion of possessive individualism does not seem to account sufficiently for the moral outrage that is expressed and the zeal with which transgressors are pursued. As Kolich (1983) points out, "The mere hint that a student may have cribbed an essay transforms us from caring, sympathetic teachers into single-minded guardians of honor and truth" (p.142). Accounts of plagiarism abound with stories of the "hunt," the attempt to catch the offender and bring him or her to trial. "I was thrilled by the chase," recalls Murphy (1990, p.900), a chase which finally led to the student's confession of having copied some sections from a book. "Within the week," reports Murphy, "he was suspended from the university" (p.900).⁶ Perhaps another way of explaining the outrage expressed at plagiarism is to look not so much at a notion of ownership but rather at authorship and authority. Plagiarism, in a number of ways, undermines the authority of both teacher and text. Furthermore, if I am right that this tradition is under challenge from a number of quarters, the ferocity of this hunting down of borrowed words may be seen as part of a desperate rearguard action against changing textualities.

Changing Textual Practices

The postmodern and poststructuralist critiques of the notion of originality that I discussed in the last section tend to operate at a certain level of philosophical abstraction. There is another side to postmodernism, however, which tends to deal in more material changes. From this point of view, we might also ask how communication is changing in post-Fordist industrial contexts, how our writing practices themselves are undergoing

rapid changes through e-mail, word-processing, collaborative writing, electronic words, and so on. Thus, if the view of textuality discussed in the previous section is postmodern to the extent that it follows the epistemological shifts brought about by postmodern philosophical changes, there is also a postmodern approach grounded in the notion that postmodernism is a real condition of late capitalist society. That is to say, whereas on the one hand we may point to the death of the author brought about by deconstructionist approaches to texts, on the other we may see the death or the demise of the author as a product of changes in communication in societies dominated by electronic media. Following more this second line of thinking, Scollon (1994) argues that “we are currently seeing a shift away from the long dominant Utilitarian ideology with its emphasis on the presentation of a unique, individual author who is the ‘owner’ of the text toward a much more diffused form of referencing which has much in common with the forms of authorship and responsibility of oral traditions” (p.33). Scollon goes on to argue that referencing the writing of others is only partly about establishing ownership of language; it is also about establishing the authorial self of the writer. Thus, teaching attribution in academic writing may run into a number of difficulties since “the authorial self may well constitute an unacceptable ideological position” (p.35).

As Scollon (1994) suggests, writing practices are changing, and it is now common to find multiple layering effects in academic texts, where the supposed origin of a quote becomes ever murkier. To give one instance of this, while researching the ideas for this article, I came across the following example of layered quotation: In an unpublished manuscript, Morgan (1995) says this about an article by Ann Raimés (1991): “Giroux is then quoted as saying that academic discourse communities are ‘often more concerned with excluding new members than with ways of admitting them’” (p.14). So Morgan claims Raimés is quoting Giroux. I was interested to see what Giroux had actually said, so I had a look at Raimés (1991), where the relevant passage reads thus: “Another thorny problem is whether we view the academic discourse community as benign, open, and beneficial to our students or whether we see discourse communities as powerful and controlling”, and, as Giroux (cited in Faigley, 1986) puts it, “often more concerned with ways of excluding new members than with ways of admitting them” (p.537). So Raimés is claiming that Faigley is quoting Giroux. Still in search of the Giroux quote, I went in search

of Faigley, which reads: "Giroux finds discourse communities are often more concerned with ways of excluding new members than with ways of admitting them. He attacks non-Marxist ethnographies for sacrificing 'theoretical depth for methodological refinement' (p.98)" (Faigley, 1986, p.537). So Faigley appears to be paraphrasing the supposed Giroux quote but quoting another piece of Giroux. And at this point the trail seems to go rather cold: Giroux's words, which the other two articles suggest are quoted, turn out, it seems, to be Faigley's. The reference seems to be to Giroux's *Theory and Resistance in Education: A Pedagogy for the Opposition* in Faigley's bibliography, but the phrase "theoretical depth and methodological refinement" does not appear on page 98 of the book (or at least the copy I looked at). And so, as these words and ideas circulate around the academic community, it becomes unclear quite what their origins are. And does it matter? The ideas attributed to Giroux are interesting, but do we need to know who really said them originally? Within contemporary academic writing practices, with layers of citations, e-mail, cutting and pasting, and so on, the adherence to supposed norms of authoriality are becoming increasingly hazy.

Another interesting way in which our textual practices seem to be changing is happening alongside the greater use of the pronoun *I* in academic writing. Formerly, writers would often refer to their own published work as texts "out there," as objective entities to be referred to or quoted. Thus, Nunan (1988), for example, frequently refers to his own work in these terms: "The course design model developed by Nunan (1985a) is similar in many respects to that devised by Richards" (p.19); or "For example, Nunan (1986c) studied a number of 'communicative' classrooms... In the Nunan data, a study of the lesson plans ..." (p.139); or "This is made clear in the following quote: 'While objective needs ...' (Nunan 1989a, p.5)" (p.45). In this tradition, even if one is the author of the text, it is treated like any other in terms of quoting and referencing. This practice fixes text, ownership, and authorship in a clear and objective system.

By 1992, however, Nunan (1992) appears to be using a mixed style: on the one hand employing the old style: "This is exemplified in the action research programs described by Nunan (1989) ..." (p.103), but on the other hand shifting to greater use of *I*: "In the second investigation, I looked at a number of different aspects of language teaching pedagogy, including teachers' decision-making (Nunan, 1991a)" (p.95); or "In fact, in a recent

survey I found that it was the most frequently employed data collection method, being used in half of the studies analysed (Nunan, 1991b)” (p.136). Once this shift occurs, as it seems to be doing in a great deal of academic writing, the relationship to one’s own texts clearly changes, enabling a shift from direct quotation to easier incorporation. The reference may still be there, but there is a slipperiness over the reusability of one’s own words (self-plagiarism?), a process greatly enhanced by the ease of cutting and pasting between documents on a computer.⁷

It would seem, then, that both the postmodern skepticism about the myth of originality and the more material considerations about changing writing practices point toward the need to reevaluate beliefs in originality and textual ownership. There is therefore a degree of hypocrisy in the defense of the culture of originality because postmodern understandings of language and meaning, by contrast, point to the possibility of little more than a circulation of meanings. One of the central issues that emerges from this discussion, however, is that there is a discourse available to teachers educated in the Western tradition which stresses the centrality of originality and creativity. This is of particular significance when cultural traditions regarding text, ownership, and memorization collide with each other, as is the case in many writing programs and ESL classes. Scollon (1995) argues that “the traditional view of plagiarism constitutes, in fact, an ideological position which privileges a concept of the person established within the European Enlightenment, and ... as such it obscures our understanding of the construction of identity in intercultural discourse” (p.3). It is to this relationship between the Western understanding of textual ownership and other cultural practices that I now wish to turn.

TEXTUAL CULTURES IN CONFLICT

Before returning to the Chinese contexts with which I started this article, it is important to clarify my understanding of culture. What I wish to avoid here is the construction of a crude East/West dichotomy or to assume some essentialist version of Chinese culture. First, in discussing what I described as a “Western” view of text, I was attempting to sketch and critique a dominant tradition that has emerged from European and American contexts. Within the so-called West, there are of course, as Heath (1983) and others have shown, a diversity of literacy practices. Some of these may coincide to a certain extent with literacy practices

from other cultural contexts, whereas others may not. My chief interest was to describe what has increasingly been promoted as a global academic norm and to contextualise it as a particular cultural and historical practice. Second, by turning to look at China including Hong Kong, I am not attempting to construct some “exotic Other” but rather to return to the teaching contexts with which I am most familiar (most of my life as a teacher has been spent in Japan and China), and the contexts in which my own doubts about notions of textual ownership were formed. Furthermore, by looking at how students in Hong Kong dealt with the everyday difficulties of studying, I hope to be able to discuss these contexts in terms of the everyday practicalities faced by students.

Third, in talking of cultural difference, I want to avoid simplistic arguments such as “it’s OK to plagiarise in Chinese.” This both begs the question (it does nothing to question the notion of plagiarism) and fails to engage with a sense of difference. Rather, what I am trying to get at is the ways in which relationships to text, memory, and learning may differ. To deal equitably with our students, we need to appreciate such differences. Finally, it is important to understand the notion of cross-cultural communication not as some idealized cultural exchange, but rather as a place of struggle and contestation, because alongside the tradition of emphasizing the creativity of the West, there has also been a tradition of deriding other cultures for their supposedly stagnant or imitative cultural practices (see Blaut, 1993). Thus, I want to suggest along with Scollon (1994) that because plagiarism is a complex notion related to “the cultural construction of human identity, accusations of plagiarism may all too easily mask ideological arrogance” (p.45). The important point here is that whereas we can see how the notion of plagiarism needs to be understood within the particular cultural and historical context of its development, it also needs to be understood relative to alternative cultural practices. It is to an exploration of ways of understanding learning in a Chinese context that I shall now turn.

Deriding Chinese Learners

It is not uncommon in discussions of plagiarism to hear those cultural Others — our students — derided as rote learners. Different educational approaches are seen as deficient and backward. Masemann (1986) points to “the implicit evolutionary thinking about pedagogy in which teaching is conceived as progressing from ‘rote’ to ‘structured’ to ‘open’” (p.18). In this view, memorization is a traditional and outmoded pedagogical practice.

Derisory views on Chinese education have a long history, dating back in Hong Kong well into the 19th century. Thus, the otherwise fairly liberal Frederick Stewart, headmaster of the Central School in Hong Kong and a strong advocate of bilingual education, nevertheless showed little respect for Chinese educational practices: In his education report for 1865,⁸ he wrote, “The Chinese have no *education* in the real sense of the word. No attempt is made at a simultaneous development of the mental powers. These are all sacrificed to the cultivation of memory.” (p.138) Such views were commonly held by many colonizers who worked in China’s inland and Hong Kong. The Rev. S. R. Brown, Headmaster of the Morrison Education Society School, wrote in a report in 1844 that Chinese children are usually pervaded by “a universal expression of passive inanity: ... The black but staring, glassy eye, and open mouth, bespeak little more than stupid wonder gazing out of emptiness.” This view is linked to Brown’s view of Chinese schools, where a boy may learn “the names of written characters, that in all probability never conveyed to him one new idea from first to last.” Despite this lack of education, the Chinese boy also comes “with a mind to be emptied of a vast accumulation of false and superstitious notions that can never tenant an enlightened mind, for they cannot coexist with truth” (cited in Sweeting, 1990, p.21). The principal characteristics of Chinese boys are “an utter disregard of truth, obscenity, and cowardliness” (p.22).

Such views reemerged in the 1882 Education Commission’s interview with the Bishop of Victoria:⁹ “You know the way they learn; they memorate [sic], they hear the Chinese explanation, and this goes on from morning to night for years, and they get the classics into them” (1882, p.6). And later, “When a Chinaman goes to school he is given a little book, and he just simply sits and pores over it, not understanding the meaning of a character, and he goes on growing and getting other books which he does not understand at all, and at the end, when he is in his teens, he begins to have some explanation given to him” (p.11). This view can be found again in an article by Addis (1889) on education in China: “In truth Chinese education *is* — pace the sinologues — no education at all. It is no ‘leading out of’ but a leading back to. Instead of expanding the intelligence, it contracts it; instead of broadening sympathies, it narrows them; instead of making a man honest, intelligent and brave, it has produced few who are not cunning, narrow-minded and pusillanimous” (p.206). He then goes on to discuss the sinologues’ excuses for Chinese education: “It is

natural that those, who have devoted much time and labour to the study of a language and literature like Chinese, should be disposed to overrate the value of that which has cost them so much industry and effort to acquire, and occasional encomiums of the Chinese methods of instruction are only what we might expect. We are told, for instance, that it is eminently suited to the present system of government" (p.206). He goes on: "The truth is that if the comparative test be applied, almost the only merit which can be claimed for Chinese education is that it strengthens the memory" (p.206).

Such views, with Chinese learners cast as passive, imitative memorizers, to be enlightened by the advent of the creative West, echo down to the present (see Deckert, 1992, 1993; Jochnowitz, 1986). Sampson (1984) points to how Western teachers in China "respond to memorization by Chinese students with such derision and scorn" (p.162), and Biggs (1991) discusses similar stereotypes perpetuated by external examiners at Hong Kong University and discussions of Asian students studying in Australia. From within such discursive constructs of our memorizing students, it is easy to see alternative learning practices and relationships to text as little more than backward, outmoded learning strategies. Once the students' authorial creativity is questioned and once they are positioned within these discourses of cultural derogation, students are treated as potential or actual criminals, with large warning signs posted around their assignments to make clear what the law is. "If you copy other writers' words," teaching materials for first-year Arts Faculty students at Hong Kong University warn, "pretending they are your own, you are engaging in what is known as plagiarism. *If you plagiarise in this way, you are guilty of intellectual dishonesty. You will be penalised heavily for this. Take care to avoid it, therefore*" (emphasis in original).

Cultures of Memory and Text

In comparing cultures of memorization, it is tempting to make a comparison between former Western practices of memorization and more recent Chinese (and other) practices, thus perhaps suggesting that the West has simply developed a more modern attitude to the text. Thus one might see in the following advice on English teaching by Herbert Palmer (1930) an earlier evolutionary stage in the West: "*Memorizing or Repetition* is especially good, because, by aid of it, the form and flame of expression adhere to the mind, and little by little Taste is acquired, good literature becoming a sort of personal property of the recipient, to act as an

antagonism to the mediocre” (p.32). While acknowledging the importance of understanding these historical antecedents, I wish to avoid any argument that suggests some evolutionary path to cultural change, and I want to suggest that cultural difference may be more profound than such surface similarities might suggest.

It is important first of all to consider different ways in which language is understood. Harris (1980) argues that “the European is the inheritor of an intellectual tradition which is strongly biased in favour of regarding languages as superficially different but fundamentally equivalent systems of expression” (p.21). This view is in part a result of a belief that language represents a more or less similar “real world.” This surrogationist (or representationist) orientation of Western thinking on language (whereby languages are seen as “surrogational systems” [p.33], as representations of reality or of thoughts) is a very particular cultural and historical tradition. By contrast, the Confucian doctrine of *cheng ming* works with the opposite assumption, namely that “things are conceived of as conforming to the natural order not in themselves, but in virtue of corresponding to their names” (Harris, 1980, p.48). In this quite different understanding of language, in which primacy is accorded to language and not to the “real” world, notions such as metaphor, which suggests that some word “stands for” something else, become quite different because reality is in the language and not in the world.

This kind of reversal may be seen, I think, in the contemporary significance in Chinese society¹⁰ of performing acts according to homophonic reference: for example, people eating crabs after the fall of the Gang of Four in a reference to the phrase *héngxíng bàdào*. This four-character phrase is made up of “walking sideways” (= running amok) and “feudal rule” and together suggests how rule without order (walking sideways = tyranny) rides roughshod over the people. Eating crabs (standing metaphorically for “walking sideways”) can signal the end of tyrannical rule. What I think is interesting here is the way in which reality appears to reflect language rather than the other way round: Objects in the world are changed in order to effect change through language. This kind of reversal of language and reality, in which “doing language” can stand in for doing reality, also seems to occur in other cultures: Christie’s (1995) discussion of literacy among the Yolngu people of Northern Australia suggests a similar relationship whereby it is language that shapes reality and not reality that shapes language. Indeed, there is a provocatively intriguing

parallel here between this reversal and a poststructuralist view of language in which, as I suggested earlier, the issue is not so much how authors produce texts but how texts produce authors.

What I am trying to suggest, therefore, is the possibility that the memorization of texts is not a pointless practice from this point of view, because the issue is not one of understanding the world and then mapping language onto it but rather of acquiring language as texts as a precursor to mapping out textual realities. This view of texts and language, which is derided from a Western point of view because the learning of texts is seen as meaningless unless coupled to “prior understanding,” also ties in with (perhaps produces) a respect for textual authority. This veneration of old textual authority — akin in some ways to the medieval European view of the text — is often seen as an inherently conservative construction of authority. I want to suggest, however, that it is not necessarily so; rather, it can also be understood as according primary importance to the text rather than to the world. To assume a material reality that is described by language may well be an equally conservative position. In any case, I think these speculations at least point to some profoundly different possibilities in how language, texts, and memorization may be understood.

This view is supported by explorations of what Chinese learners actually do when they memorize. Biggs (1991) has pointed out that there is a major contradiction in common perceptions of Asian students: On the one hand, they are held up as paragons of educational excellence, while on the other hand they are derided as rote learners. In an attempt to resolve this paradox, Marton, Dall’Alba, and Tse Lai Kun (1996) have shown that there are important distinctions to be drawn *within* forms of memorization rather than *between* memorization and understanding: “The traditional Asian practice of repetition or memorization can have different purposes. On the one hand, repetition can be associated with mechanical rote learning. On the other hand, memorization through repetition can be used to deepen and develop understanding. If memorization is understood in this latter way, the paradox of the Chinese learner is solved” (p.16). The point here, then, is that research into Chinese learning practices shows that there are different types or levels of memorization. And thus, a student’s “ownership” over a text may have different causes and different effects.

The Everyday Contexts of Borrowing

Importantly, too, we need to try to understand the ways in which

our students develop particular relationships to texts and learning within the everyday contexts of their lives as students. To this end I conducted informal interviews with Chinese students at the University of Hong Kong who had been “caught” plagiarising. A number of different concerns emerge here. In most cases, it seemed that there was a complex mixture of things going on: It could not simply be said that students had just copied a passage and hoped to get away with it. Some were aware that the essay had not been very good and complained of heavy workloads — four assignments due in one week, for example. In these cases, students seemed to be aware that they had not done a particularly good job (the “plagiarism” was more a symptom of careless work than a deliberate strategy). Other students showed less awareness that they had done much wrong but revealed similar careless study habits in which highlighted parts of texts were reused in the essay. This was sometimes also linked to a broader dissatisfaction with the first year at the university — students complaining of little incentive to work hard (the first year only requires a pass) and disappointment with the quality of the lectures and tutorials. From this point of view, these study habits became more a case of resistance than of ignorance, ineptitude, or dishonesty. Indeed, the notion of plagiarism as resistance is one worth exploring further.

One interesting issue that was raised concerned the distinction between plagiarizing ideas and plagiarizing language. The problem, as one student put it, was that the ideas he was discussing were clearly not his own, so if he took the ideas but rephrased the language, he would be plagiarizing ideas but not words. To him, it seemed almost more honest to simply keep the language the same and leave the ideas. As another student explained, she had understood the author and felt that to rewrite in her own words would be less effective than using the author’s own words. She knew that rewriting would bring about more mistakes and probably a less powerful message. Another student explained that if you understand the material but use language from the text, that may be the best means to achieve such clarity. According to another student, “It’s my usual practice When I find something that seems to be meaningful, I will try to take it from the article.” Referring specifically to the passage for which he had been criticised, he explained: “I think the language of the passage is quite good, so I don’t take time to change the words.”

Interestingly, many of these comments echo those reported by Sherman (1992) from her Italian students:

They were virtually unanimous that it was a good idea to reproduce large tracts from source material when dealing with an academic subject. They found my requirements for "own wording" rather quaint They pointed out that the opinion or the facts could not be better expressed than they were by the source writer, and that they themselves could hardly presume to improve on a publicly acknowledged expert. Taking over his words was thus necessary in order to cover the subject, and also a mark of respect for the originator. (p.191)

Another student who was unsure what she was supposed to have done wrong (indeed, it wasn't very clear to me either) argued that secondary school had never prepared them for such issues, either practically or theoretically. In school there were few chances to write essays: Most of the time they were required to take tests, for which of course books could not be used and memorization was a key strategy. Essays were generally only for English classes and required interpretation of texts, not citation of facts. Other students made similar comments, one explaining that he didn't see much wrong with what he had done because "In secondary school no teacher forbids us to do something like that." It was a question of which subject was being studied: If it was English, which was the only class designed to "improve my English," they were expected to write in their own words and be original; but in other classes there was no problem in borrowing from other sources — they were supposed to answer the question; how they wrote the answers didn't matter. Another issue raised was the status of translated words: One major piece of work a student had done in Form 7 (Grade 13) involved using Chinese sources, which she had translated, using the translated pieces as they were. Her teacher had been more concerned with the content and correct referencing than with the origins of chunks of language. In fact, the question of textual ownership in relation to translation opens up a whole new domain for investigation (see Duranti, 1993).

A number of quite challenging issues were raised by several students, showing that many of them, while sometimes unsure about the rules of textual borrowing, were nevertheless aware of issues to do with texts and learning.¹¹ One argued that both of the writing processes he used (either trying to write original texts or using much more language from the readings) could be useful. There was a satisfaction in being able to write in one's own words but useful things to be learned from reusing the structures and words from others' texts. This process of memorization of

such texts, he pointed out, had been a crucial part of how he had learned English at high school. Some students pointed to what they saw as the hypocrisy and unfairness of the system in which they were required to do little more than regurgitate ideas but always required to do so in a foreign language. It was also suggested that there was a degree of hypocrisy in lectures where it was evident that a lecturer was doing little more than reproducing chunks of the course text (with their good textual memories, students were very good at spotting this) and yet never acknowledged the source. If they took close notes, memorized them, and rewrote them in an exam, they could be accused of plagiarism. Another student directly confronted the strict attitudes to borrowing from other texts since it failed to take into account what students learned. Perhaps, she suggested, this was a teacher's problem not a student's. The important point here is that she was questioning the idea that anti-plagiarism attitudes were linked to better learning. From a student point of view they may not necessarily be so: "Whether I copy or not, I know the material. I don't think we should be forced to say it in our own words I don't think if one plagiarises, that means he doesn't learn anything Perhaps plagiarism is a way of learning."

A final issue that emerged from these interviews (and also other work I have been doing with students at Hong Kong University) concerns the extent to which these students feel the English language remains a language of colonialism, a language which, although important to them for social, academic, and economic advancement, remains a colonial imposition. Thus in a number of students I found an interesting ambivalence, on the one hand an acknowledgment of the importance of English and sometimes a fondness for English (these are the students that have made it to university through their knowledge of English), on the other hand an anger at the imposition of English in their lives. As one student put it, "the teaching of English is a kind of cultural intrusion in Hong Kong and may be regarded as a political weapon". The important issue here is that there is often a deep split between the English/academic domain and the Chinese (Cantonese)/daily life domain in these students' lives. Many seem to feel that they have no ownership over English — it remains an alien language — and thus to write "in their own words" is not something that can be done in English. They are obliged to study in a foreign language and they return the chunks of language in the form in which they receive them.

What I think this brief summary of the interviews points to is the complexity of things going on behind the surface phenomenon of apparent plagiarism. Students come to our classes with different cultural and educational backgrounds, with different understandings of texts and language, with different approaches to learning. They are also confronted by a range of more local concerns such as particular assignments which may require little more than the regurgitation of a set curriculum. Some students were led into trouble through a mixture of heavy workloads and inappropriate study skills: good reading habits but overuse of highlighted sections in their writing. It certainly seemed important to distinguish here between good and bad plagiarism, that is between those who reused parts of texts very well and those who seemed to randomly borrow. Other students seemed to take a more active view in all this and to see their borrowing strategies either as an unappreciated approach to learning or as an act of resistance to the university and the English language context they are obliged to work in.

CONCLUSIONS AND EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS

I have been trying in this article to complexify and situate different understandings of texts, memory, and learning, to show how relations between texts and learning are far more complex than a simple accusation of plagiarism will allow. The issue of textual borrowing goes to the heart of a number of key issues in second language education: the role of memory, the nature of language learning, the ownership of texts, the concepts of the author, authority, and authenticity, and the cross-cultural relations that emerge in educational contexts. For some, the position I have been trying to establish here may seem too relativistic, allowing no grounds for asserting that someone's writing practices are unacceptable. My point, however, is that although of course we still need to leave a space open to criticise unacceptable borrowing practices, unilateral accusations of plagiarism are inadequate and arrogant. Part of the problem here lies with the use of the term *plagiarism* as if it described some clearly definable practice. What I have been trying to show here, by contrast, is that behind this clumsy term may lurk any number of different concerns, and so, despite the demands on our time that such reflexivity may make, I believe it is incumbent on us as teachers to develop an understanding of the complexity of issues involved in language learning and textual

borrowing.

Another argument might suggest that whatever complexities there may be in textual relationships and memorization, there are nevertheless a very clear set of standards in academic practice to which we need to get our students to adhere. I also want to suggest, however, that this argument is inadequate. It articulates nothing but a normative view on so-called standards, does nothing to challenge the ways in which academic systems operate, and fails to take into account any of the complexities that our students may bring in terms of their own relationship to texts and memory. I am suggesting, therefore, that many of the ways we approach supposed plagiarism are pedagogically unsound and intellectually arrogant. It is not adequate to observe simply on the one hand that students “copy” or that on the other hand they need to learn academic writing practices. Both observations are trivially true but insufficient in terms of an awareness of cultural difference and a self-reflexivity about the practices to which we adhere. Part of any discussion of citation, paraphrase, textual borrowing, and so forth needs, as Willinsky (1990) observes, to include discussion of how and why these notions have been constructed, how authorship, authenticity, and authority have been linked together, and how these practices may be in a process of flux. It is not enough, however, to focus only on Western writing practices as a “cultural syllabus” (Sherman, 1992, p.197). Also needed is an attempt to understand the other side of the coin — our students’ textual and language learning worlds as well as the constraints on their lives and their perceptions of how academic norms operate and may be flouted.

Given the difficulties in establishing any clear sense of authoriality, it is important to understand authorship, authority, and plagiarism as located not within some objectively describable system of textual relations but rather in “an historically established system for the distribution of social power and privilege” (Scollon, 1995, p.25). Thus I hope to encourage others to pause and consider what is going on, to try to consider self-reflexively how a particular notion of authorship and ownership has grown up, how it is a very particular cultural and historical tradition and may now be undergoing transformation, how our students may be operating from fundamentally different positions about texts and memory. All language learning is to some extent a process of borrowing others’ words and we need to be flexible, not dogmatic, about where we draw boundaries between acceptable or unacceptable textual borrowings.

Notes

1. Indeed, as Mallon (1989) and Shaw (1982) show, there seem to be some strange psychological aspects to plagiarism, including a tendency to “give the game away” (Shaw, 1982, p.330). It was De Quincey, for example, who leveled the accusations of plagiarism against Coleridge soon after the latter’s death in 1834, an accusation which, as Mallon suggests, was ironic because De Quincey had previously stated a great aversion to such accusations and because he himself was yet another in the great line of literary plagiarists. According to Mallon (1989), “Coleridge’s case suggests that he may have been addicted not just to opium but to plagiarism itself, flirting with the equivalent of an overdose in the risks of exposure he ran” (pp.34–35). Plagiarists, it seems, like Dostoevsky’s Raskolnikov, arsonists who return to the scene of the crime and serial killers who write ever more revealing notes to the police and newspapers, draw attention to themselves, whether as a result of guilt, a desire to be found out, or the thrill of flirting with the threat of exposure. “Giving the game away,” suggests Shaw, “proves to be the rule rather than the exception among plagiarists” (p.330).
2. Of course, there are dangers with this position. Although it helps to move away from the foundational concept of a core self or rationality, it may leave us little more than discursive ventriloquists. We need, therefore, to theorize a notion of agency or voice in order that we do not reduce subjectivity to nothing but a product of the discursive. There is not space here, however, to elaborate on this.
3. I have borrowed this phrase from Coleridge, who, in defense of the accusations leveled against him declared “I regard truth as a divine ventriloquist” (quoted in Mallon, 1989, p.31).
4. Jacques Derrida, also taking issue with the idea that meaning in speech act theory is guaranteed by the author’s intentions, speculates about the possibility of understanding “performatives” as scripted performances rather than individual acts. Perhaps, he suggests, language is not so much made up of infinite individual acts but rather is subject to what he calls a generalized citationality (see Norris, 1983). See also Derrida (1988) for an interesting debate with Searle.
5. A controversial case of plagiarism of a questionnaire at Hong Kong University, which was eventually settled in the Hong Kong Court of Appeal in 1993, had its origins in just such a practice. According to Linda Koo Chih-ling, who brought the case of plagiarism against a colleague, the origins of the dispute go back to 1983, when she refused to put the name of a senior colleague on a paper she had written (interview in the *South China Morning Post*, August 28, 1993). From then on, she claims, she has been ostracised and discriminated against. And, like literary scholars tying themselves in knots to exonerate their cherished literary heroes, an internal inquiry (labelled a “kangaroo court” by Linda Koo) has since been working to downplay the implications of the decision by the Court of Appeal.
6. Murphy (1990) also discusses the problems with such witch hunts, including a traumatic account of accusations made against an anorexic woman.

7. This example seems to be more a case of the rebirth of the academic author rather than the death of the author. My point, however, is that it shows how textual practices are changing in terms of the relationship between text, authority, and ownership.
8. The Annual Report on the State of the Government Schools for the Year 1865, published in the *Hong Kong Blue Book*, 1865.
9. *Report of the Education Commission Appointed by His Excellency Sir John Pope Hennessy ... to Consider Certain Question Connected with Education in Hong Kong*, 1882.
10. I am not suggesting that Chinese society is still determined by Confucian doctrines such as *cheng ming*. Rather, I want to suggest that such doctrines reflect a long tradition of a particular understanding of the relationship between language and the world that reverses the polarity of much Western thinking.
11. Indeed, I have elsewhere (Pennycook, 1994) argued that these students may be more aware of issues around textual borrowing than their teachers.

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Chapter 12

Critical Applied Linguistics and Language Education

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INTRODUCTION

Critical applied linguistics (CALx) is an emergent approach to language use and education that seeks to connect the local conditions of language to broader social formations, drawing connections between classrooms, conversations, textbooks, tests, or translations and issues of gender, class, sexuality, race, ethnicity, culture, identity, politics, ideology or discourse. In the following sections I provide an overview of this work as the intersection of different critically oriented domains, such as critical discourse analysis, critical literacy and critical pedagogy, before discussing various problems and difficulties faced by this work, including struggles over the meaning of the term *critical*, the need for work beyond only critique, and the question of its applicability to the majority (non-Western) world. Finally I discuss ways in which CALx opens up many new ways of thinking about applied linguistics, and thus presents to applied linguistics more broadly a fresh array of concerns about language, politics, identity, ethics and difference.

EARLY DEVELOPMENTS

Although the term CALx itself is relatively recent (see Pennycook, 2001), and related areas such as critical discourse analysis (CDA) only emerged in the 1980s, critical approaches to applied linguistics nevertheless draw on a critical tradition around language and pedagogy that has earlier origins. As Luke (2002) argues, critical language analysis can be seen as dating back to the work of Vološinov (1895–?), and more recently Foucault (1926–1984). Critical literacy and pedagogy

have been greatly influenced by the work of Paulo Freire (1921–1997), while postcolonial critics such as Frantz Fanon (1925–1961) have been influential for the development of an understanding of language, identity, race and colonialism. CALx in its contemporary forms can best be understood as the intersection of various domains of applied linguistic work that operate under an explicit critical label, including critical discourse analysis, critical literacy, critical pedagogy, or critical language testing (CLT); as well as work that may have a less explicitly defined banner (critical approaches to translation, for example) or that defines its critical work more specifically, such as feminist or antiracist pedagogy. By and large, this work can be characterized as starting with the perspective that language is, as Joseph (2006) puts it, political from top to bottom. CALx therefore deals with applied linguistic concerns (broadly defined) from a perspective that is always mindful of the interrelationships among (adapting Janks, 2000) dominion (the contingent and contextual effects of power), disparity (inequitable access to material and cultural goods), difference (the construction of and engagement with diversity) and desire (the operations of ideology, agency and identity).

While some lament the development of CALx as being “dismissive totally of the attempt since the 1950s to develop a coherent applied linguistics” (Davies, 1999, p.141), others see it by contrast as a sign of disciplinary maturity: “the very existence of a transgressive critical applied linguistics which attacks the foundations and goals of applied linguistics is perhaps a sign that applied linguistics is a discipline which has come of age” (Elder, 2004, p.430). While CALx is concerned with far more immediate social and political concerns than disciplinary coherence, its development does seem to suggest that ALx may have outgrown its infancy. New journals now testify to the emergence of critical work around language and education: *The Journal of Language, Identity, and Education*, for example, includes in its scope “critical studies of literacy policies,” “critical studies of school and community attitudes,” “critical studies about bias in schooling practices” (Contributor information). The newly (2004) established *Critical Inquiry in Language Studies* publishes research on “issues of language, power, and community within educational, political, and sociocultural contexts ...” And the recent (2004), *Critical Discourse Studies* aims to “publish critical research that advances our understanding of how discourse figures in social processes, social structures and social change” (editorial page).

MAJOR CONTRIBUTIONS AND CURRENT WORK

CDA and critical literacy share a concern to understand texts and practices of reading and writing in relationship to questions of power, equity, diversity and change. Norman Fairclough, whose approach to CDA has received wide attention, explains that critical discourse analysis “aims to systematically explore often opaque relationships of causality and determination between (1) discursive practices, events and texts, and (2) wider social and cultural structures, relations and processes; to investigate how such practices, events and texts arise out of and are ideologically shaped by relations of power and struggles over power” (1995, p.132). More recently, Fairclough, Graham, Lemke, and Wodak (2004) locate their approach to critical discourse studies within a broader field of critical social research and the growing awareness that major social issues such as the effects of global capitalism, issues of gender and sexuality, differential relations of power between languages, the need for critical citizenship, discrimination in terms of age or race, changing identities in relation to new transnational structures and changes to new communication media, are “to some significant degree, problems of discourse” (p.2). They go on to suggest a threefold distinction among ideological critique, which focuses on the “effects of discourse on social structures of power,” rhetorical critique, with its interest in “persuasion in individual texts or talk,” and strategic critique, which looks at how “discourse figures within the strategies pursued by groups of social agents to change societies in particular directions” (p.5).

Although critical literacy “does not stand for a unitary approach, it marks out a coalition of educational interests committed to engaging with the possibilities that the technologies of writing and other modes of inscription offer for social change, cultural diversity, economic equity, and political enfranchisement” (Luke and Freebody, 1997, p.1). In some ways, critical literacy may be seen as a form of applied CDA — critical discourse analysis for the classroom — though it also has wider coverage in its focus on literacy in social contexts and practices of writing. Morgan and Ramanathan (2005) describe the contemporary educational task of critical literacy as “cultivating a citizenry that is able to negotiate and critically engage with the numerous texts, modalities, and technologies coming at learners” (p.152). CDA and critical literacy also come together in the critical analysis of textbooks, showing, for example, how images of gender

and race are reproduced in educational contexts (see Dendrinos, 1992; Van Dijk, 1993). CDA and critical literacy can also be seen as two approaches to critical language awareness, the aim of which is to “empower learners by providing them with a critical analytical framework to help them reflect on their own language experiences and practices and on the language practices of others in the institutions of which they are a part and in the wider society within which they live” (Clark and Ivanić, 1997, p.217).

A further form of critical text analysis that has received less attention is a critical approach to translation, in part because translation itself is a minority focus of applied linguistics. Translation, argues Cronin (2003), nonetheless plays a crucial role within globalization, since one of its primary functions is “to replenish the intertextual resources of a culture” (p.133). While the responsibility of the translator is conventionally thought of in terms of giving a fair and accurate representation of a source text, this focus on “textual scrupulousness” overlooks the importance of “an activist dimension to translation which involves an engagement with the cultural politics of society at national and international levels” (p.134). This notion of activist translation links to Venuti’s (1998) *translingualism*, which aims to disrupt the assimilatory and domesticating tendencies that eradicate difference through translation. Indeed, Venuti’s (1998) approach to translation takes the position that to “shake the regime of English, a translator must be strategic both in selecting foreign texts and in developing discourses to translate them. Foreign texts can be chosen to redress patterns of unequal cultural exchange and to restore foreign literatures excluded by the standard dialect, by literary canons, or by ethnic stereotypes” (pp.10–11).

In addition, focusing on the global hegemony of English and the need to promote diversity, critical work in language policy and planning has opened up new perspectives on language and globalization. Work in language policy generally has been remarkable for its political quietism, only recently developing more critical theoretical frameworks (Ricento, 2006; Shohamy, 2005). Debates around the global spread of English and the destruction of the world’s linguistic diversity have been at the forefront of this more overt critical agenda. Central here has been Phillipson’s (1992) concept of (English) linguistic imperialism, an argument that English has been spread for the economic and political advantage of the core English-speaking nations. As Tollefson (2000) explains, Phillipson’s work differs markedly from mainstream sociolinguistic work focusing on the global

spread of English since he “focuses on the unequal distribution of benefits from the spread of English.” Rather than viewing the spread of English in positive terms and focusing on descriptions of varieties of English, Phillipson’s work “places English squarely in the center of the fundamental sociopolitical processes of imperialism, neo-colonialism, and global economic restructuring” (p.13). These concerns have then been allied with allegations of “linguistic genocide” and the need for “linguistic human rights” to protect the global diversity of languages (Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000). While these arguments have raised considerable debate, especially in relation to the need to understand how the global position of English is resisted and appropriated (Canagarajah, 1999; Pennycook, 2001), or how language rights can be understood in a more complex relation to ethnicity (May, 2001), the focus on the politics of language and globalization has become a key concern within CALx.

Sociolinguistics more generally has also been taken to task for lacking a critical dimension, Mey (1985) calling for a “critical sociolinguistics” that can “establish a connection between people’s place in the societal hierarchy, and the linguistic and other kinds of oppression that they are subjected to at different levels” (p.342). While sociolinguistics ought to have the tools to take questions of language and power seriously, it has been hampered by liberal social theory and sociologically deficient conceptions of class, gender and race (Williams, 1992). Some of the ways in which a critical sociolinguistics can operate can be seen in critical analyses of workplace settings which aim not just to describe inequitable practices but also to change them. Wodak’s (1996) study of hospital encounters, for example, looks not only at the ways in which “doctors exercise power over their patients” (p.170) but also at ways of intervening in this relationship. Studies of the literacy practices of young men in prison (Wilson, 2003), or of the discriminatory effects when Australian Aboriginal witnesses are silenced by the standard linguistic procedures of the courtroom (Eades, 2000) similarly seek both critical understanding and social restitution.

Critical approaches to language education — sometimes under the rubric of critical pedagogy — can be viewed, like critical literacy, as both a critical research enterprise and a domain of practice. Significant research in the first category, which, as *critical approaches to analysing learner language* (Ellis and Barkhuizen, 2005), has now been acknowledged as adding an important dimension to the often impervious domain of second language acquisition, includes work such as Canagarajah’s (1999) critical

ethnographies of “periphery” students’ and teachers’ forms of resistance to English and English teaching methods: “It is important to understand the extent to which classroom resistance may play a significant role in larger transformations in the social sphere” (1999, p.196). Important here has been Norton’s work on the ways in which gender, power and identity are interlinked in the process of language learning (2000). Kumaravadivelu (1999) offers a framework for *critical classroom discourse analysis*, which draws on critical ethnography as a research tool, and “seeks to play a reflective role, enabling practitioners to reflect on and cope with sociocultural and sociopolitical structures that directly or indirectly shape the character and content of classroom discourse” (p.473). A critical turn in second language teacher education has suggested that the notion of praxis — the integration of critical reflection and action — can help transform the teaching practicum from a reproduction of prior practice into the teaching *praxicum* as an incessant problematizing of pedagogical thought and practice (Pennycook, 2004; Chapter 6).

A focus on awareness of the inequitable conditions of language learning has produced approaches such as Darder’s (1991) *critical biculturalism* or Walsh’s (1991) *critical bilingualism*: “the ability to not just speak two languages, but to be conscious of the sociocultural, political, and ideological contexts in which the languages (and therefore the speakers) are positioned and function, and the multiple meanings that are fostered in each” (Walsh, 1991, p.127). Kubota’s (2004) *critical multiculturalism* “critically examines how inequality and injustice are produced and perpetuated in relation to power and privilege” (p.37). Based on “a critical understanding of culture” (p.38), such an approach is also both a research tool and a pedagogical approach, involving students “in critical inquiry into how taken-for-granted knowledge, such as history, geography, and lives of other people, is produced, legitimated, and contested in power struggles” (p.40; see also May, 1999). Turning to forms of critical pedagogy in the second language classroom, Norton and Toohey (2004) explain that “Advocates of critical approaches to second language teaching are interested in relationships between language learning and social change” (p.1). Morgan (1998) and many others (see Norton and Toohey, 2004; Pennycook, 1999) focus on how critical pedagogy in the classroom may address issues of power and inequality both within and outside the educational context, and how potential for change and resistance may be developed. Dealing with the very specific domain of academic English, Benesch’s (2001) *critical*

English for academic purposes, “assumes that current conditions should be interrogated in the interests of greater equity and democratic participation in and out of educational institutions” (p.64).

In the related domain of language testing, Spolsky’s (1995) history of the development of the TOEFL exam is clear from the outset that “testing has been exploited also as a method of control and power — as a way to select, to motivate, to punish.” So-called objective tests, he points out, by virtue of their claims to scientific backing and impartiality, are “even more brutally effective in exercising this authority” (p.1). These concerns have been pursued furthest by Shohamy (2001) in her notion of Critical Language Testing (CLT), which “implies the need to develop critical strategies to examine the uses and consequences of tests, to monitor their power, minimize their detrimental force, reveal the misuses, and empower the test takers” (p.131). Shohamy’s proposal for CLT clearly matches many of the principles that define other areas of CALx: language testing cannot be separated from social, cultural and political concerns; we need greater awareness and an ethical understanding of the effects and uses of tests; and a critical practice seeks transformative action. Doing applied linguistics critically, then, requires an understanding of the relationships between applied linguistic domains and the workings of power (dominion, disparity, difference, desire) as well as an ethical vision and tools for change.

PROBLEMS AND DIFFICULTIES

CALx faces four main problems: a rearguard action from the gatekeepers of disciplinary ALx; a tension between a normative political stance and the need for constant problematization; the need to move beyond critique to reconstitutive action; and the question of relevance to diverse contexts round the world. The emergence of these various critical projects has met with mixed responses. First, then, for some, CALx is little more than a critique of other orientations to applied linguistics; thus, Davies (1999) defines CALx as “a judgemental approach by some applied linguists to ‘normal’ applied linguistics on the grounds that it is not concerned with the transformation of society” (p.145). As is clear from the previous discussion, however, CALx is far more than a mere critique of normative ALx. A more significant concern is that CALx’s overt political stance on issues of inequality, racism, sexism or homophobia unacceptably “prejudges outcomes” (Davies, 2005, p.32). As Widdowson

(2001) argues, by taking an a priori critical stance (rather than maintaining a critical distance — to use a different sense of the critical), CALx may impose its own views on the objects of inquiry, taking inappropriate and thus hypocritical stances on the social world because of the impossibility of choosing between different ethical and political concerns. A CALx standpoint, by contrast, while mindful precisely of the ethical dilemmas it opens up, suggests that such views overlook their own *locus of enunciation* (Mignolo, 2000): It is mainstream ALx that is hypocritical if it seeks to maintain a belief in critical distance while ignoring the very real social, political and ethical concerns that inevitably come to bear on any applied linguistic context.

This debate — contrasting a political with an apolitical ALx — unfortunately obscures the more important concern that CALx research does indeed need to be wary of its own political normativity. There is a tendency, second, for CALx research to operate with a normative, static politics based on various forms of neo-Marxian analyses of inequality and emancipation, and an equally static applied linguistic epistemology. To move forward, CALx needs a more reflexive politics, a form of *problematizing practice* (Pennycook, 2001). CALx is not only about relating micro-relations of applied linguistics to macro-relations of social and political power; nor is it only concerned with relating such questions to a priori critical analysis of inequality. A problematizing practice, by contrast, suggests a need to develop both a critical political stance and a critical epistemological stance, so that both inform each other, leaving neither the political nor the applied linguistic as static. From this point of view, then, CALx maintains a consistent focus on issues of dominion, disparity, difference and desire while at the same time maintaining a constant scepticism towards cherished concepts of applied linguistics, from language and ethnicity to identity and discourse.

Third, CALx needs to ensure that on the one hand it goes beyond a language only of critique, and that on the other hand its proposed interventions are not seen as purely partisan. As Luke (2004) warns, CDA needs to move beyond a mode of critique “towards a reconstructive agenda, one designed towards redress, reconciliation and the rebuilding of social structure, institutional lives and identities” (p.151). While CDA locates itself as a project of consciousness raising (critical language awareness) or critical literacy, it is only when this becomes a more active project of critical writing — and thus goes beyond literacy as ideology

critique — that it becomes a project aimed at active engagement rather than awareness. Critical pedagogy and other domains of CALx are similarly divided between domains that critique pedagogy, multiculturalism or English for Academic Purposes (EAP), and action-oriented domains that seek processes of change and engagement. There is always a challenge, therefore, to move beyond critique towards transformative and reconstitutive action. While this concern may be what Davies (2005) has in mind when he asserts that CALx “refrains from proposing interventions and explanations” (p.32), paradoxically CALx has also been taken to task for proposing too many explanations and partisan interventions. Here CALx needs to ensure that the quality and reflexivity of its research, politics, epistemology and agendas for reform are more responsible than those in normative applied linguistics.

Finally, CALx is only useful insofar as it is applicable in diverse parts of the world. While applied linguistics generally has been challenged for its relevance to different contexts of global language use, CALx is equally open to such a challenge, in terms of both its critical and its applied linguistic epistemology. The concern here is that since much of the work that comes under the rubric of CALx is based on minority (“First”/“Western”) world contexts and theories, CALx is simply not readily usable in the majority (“Third”) world. As Makoni (2003) has argued, CALx does not have adequately contextualized strategies for engaging with local communities. Remaining aware of the diverse contexts in which it may hope to be applicable, CALx needs to be wary lest the very terms and concepts of any critical project at the same time inflict damage on the communities with which critical applied linguists wish to work (Makoni and Pennycook, 2007). The challenge here is to ensure that “the research agenda is formulated in collaboration and consultation with local communities” (Makoni, 2003, p.135) in order not only to develop a relationship between this field of critical scholarship and local knowledge and practice but also to encourage the development of CALx as localized practice.

FUTURE DIRECTIONS

The emergence of a different, alternative, transgressive CALx has far wider implications than merely adding a political dimension to applied linguistics. It has become both a gateway through which new theories and ways of thinking about applied linguistics are entering and changing the

discipline, as well as a developing domain that speaks to contemporary work in the social sciences. A newly emergent CALx that is going beyond the normative politics and epistemologies of emancipatory modernist critical approaches is responsive not only to shifts in mainstream linguistic and applied linguistic theory, but also to the linguistic, performative and somatic turns elsewhere in the social sciences. It is only recently, as Canagarajah (2004) points out, that we have come to “understand identities as multiple, conflictual, negotiated and evolving. We have traveled far from the traditional assumption in language studies that identities are static, unitary, discrete, and given” (p.117).

To this discursive understanding of the subject has been added a conception of identities as *performed* rather than *preformed*. Drawing on Butler’s (1990) insight that “gender proves to be performative — that is, constituting the identity it is purported to be” (p.25), Cameron (1997) points out that whereas “sociolinguistics traditionally assumes that people talk the way they do because of who they (already) are,” a performative approach to identity “suggests that people are who they are because of (among other things) the way they talk” (p.49). A performative view of language, sexuality and education, for example, goes beyond a framing of identity in terms of lesbian and gay identification and instead embraces the broader category of Queer (Nelson, 1999), which as Cameron and Kulick (2003) explain “interrogates heterosexuality by dismissing its claims to naturalness, and examining, instead, how it is vigorously demanded and actively produced in specific sociocultural contexts and situated interactions” (p.55). Once we take this performative turn in CALx, it becomes possible to explore the ways not only that identities are performed through language but also that languages are performed through acts of identity. Rather than assuming that languages preexist communicative activity, we can start to explore how languages are produced through communication (Makoni and Pennycook, 2007).

In response to a concern that these linguistic and performative turns may overemphasize discourse, text and semiotics at the expense of spatial, corporeal and institutional relations marked by conflictual relations of class, gender, sexuality, race and other forms of difference, a somatic turn (Shusterman, 2000) has reintroduced the body as a site of struggle. Language, as Bourdieu (1991, p.86) insists, “is a body technique, and specifically linguistic, especially phonetic, competence is a dimension of bodily hexis in which one’s whole relation to the social world, and

one's whole socially informed relation to the world, are expressed." This emergent form of CALx, both responsive to and influential towards the linguistic, performative and somatic turns in the social sciences, rests therefore on principles of performativity, contextuality, and transgression (Pennycook, 2007): a performative understanding of language that opens up an understanding of the contingent nature of identity; a contextual engagement with the competing demands of dominion, disparity, difference and desire; and a transgressive approach to the boundaries of mainstream thought and politics, maintaining a constant scepticism towards cherished concepts and modes of thought. CALx is therefore far more than the addition of a critical/political dimension to applied linguistics; rather it opens up a whole new array of questions and concerns about language, politics, identity, ethics and difference.

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Chapter 13

English as a Language Always in Translation

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The pretensions to self-sufficiency, the refusal to allow the foreign mediate, have secretly nourished numerous linguistic ethnocentrisms, and more seriously, numerous pretensions to the same cultural hegemony that we have been able to observe in relation to Latin, from late antiquity to the end of the Middle Ages and even beyond the Renaissance, in relation to French in the classical era, and in relation to English today.

(Ricoeur, 2006, pp.4–5)

The traffic of meaning

‘When you translate’, asserts Probal Dasgupta (2005, p.42) ‘you are part of the traffic’. And this traffic, this constant coming and going of people, bicycles, rickshaws, cars, trucks, ferries, tuk-tuks, ships, aeroplanes, trains, is a traffic in meaning, a passing to and fro of ideas, concepts, symbols, discourses. For Claire Kramsch (2006, p.103) this traffic in meaning is precisely what language teaching should be about, so that language competence should be measured not as the capacity to perform in one language in a specific domain, but rather as ‘the ability to translate, transpose and critically reflect on social, cultural and historical meanings conveyed by the grammar and lexicon’. The role of the language teacher from this perspective, therefore, is ‘to diversify meanings, point to the meanings not chosen, and bring to light other possible meanings that have been forgotten by history or covered up by politics’. Language teaching is indelibly tied to translation and the diversity of meanings. When we learn a language, we enter the traffic.

The massive global enterprise of English language teaching (ELT) — in other words, the global spread of English language teaching to speakers of languages other than English — ought to present just such a possibility: bringing millions of people into the global traffic of meaning. And yet,

it does not. A central problem with the way in which global English is understood by the nations responsible for managing its export is that it is seen, paradoxically, as a monolingual enterprise. Overlooked are the ways in which English always needs to be seen in the context of other languages, or, as I shall argue here, as a language always in translation. While this is profoundly obvious to those in countries where English has arrived as a language among many (see for example, Ramanathan, 2006a), the vast English export industry purveys the language as if it were an entity on its own, as if the main context of its use were only in its own presence. While discussion of English as an international language draws distinctions between different contexts of spread and use, with the fact that the majority of users are now non-native speakers of English frequently reiterated (for example, Kachru, 2005), the implications of this for understanding English as a language always in translation are often disregarded.

This is not to suggest that the use of English always implies a process of translation — the version of translation that has come down to us in the reductive histories of ELT — but rather that English is always a language in translation, a language of translingual use. The central issue here is one of how we understand diversity. The struggles over diversity in the face of the global spread of English tend to be presented in terms of diversity as numerical plurality — multiple languages or multiple Englishes. This focus on glossodiversity at the expense of semiodiversity (Halliday, 2002; Kramsch, 2006) obscures the potential role of language education in the production of diversity. And it is the blindness to the role that translation plays at the heart of ELT that constantly obscures this vision. As V. Ramanathan suggests,

the Applied Linguistics field has not yet grappled with tensions around the politics of translations across spaces, times, ideologies and cultures, and the implications of these not just for writing/texts in the discipline, but for our collective knowledge construction at large.

(Ramanathan, 2006b, p.224)

There are two main trajectories that have brought this about. The first has to do with the economic and political agendas that underpin particular aspects of global English pedagogy. The second has to do with various ways in which the global spread of English has been described and resisted. Despite the very different takes on this, they have all tended to posit an English core that does not allow for a more varied vision for the role of English. I shall deal with each of these briefly below.

Translation as pariah

A central strand of twentieth-century ELT ideology as it has been purveyed in the dominant discourses of applied linguistics has been the strange and insistent eschewal of translation. Although translation has always, for very obvious reasons, been part of language teaching, the canon of ELT theory that developed in the twentieth century turned translation into a pariah. As Louis Kelly (1969, p.217) notes in his wide-ranging history of language teaching, 'The mid-twentieth century is probably the only period since the Middle Ages in which translation was relegated to an advanced stage in language learning'. Why should this be? Several different intellectual and ideological concerns brought this about. Theories and practices of language learning and teaching — from the development of audiolingual methodologies based on structuralist and behaviourist accounts of language and psychology, to the development of communicative and task-based approaches based on humanist, cognitivist and neo-structuralist accounts of learning and language — all emphasized the singular importance of using English and only English in the classroom. As Elsa Auerbach (1993) argues, however, while such pedagogical dictates were justified with educational and psychological arguments, they cannot be viewed without also considering the broader political goals they supported: if not a monolingual English-speaking world, then at least a world in which the languages othered by English were downplayed, and English was promoted as a monolingual and separate entity. As Kelly (1969, p.407) remarks, '[t]hat the expert in language teaching acts with the purity of motive and design expected from a scientist is demonstrably untrue. Discoveries are filtered by social and educational needs, and what suits the circumstances is what is considered proved'.

Meanwhile, as English language teaching became increasingly big business, with vast sums of money to be made through textbook sales, the promotion of an English-only methodology became commercially expedient. Histories of language teaching were written with new, modern and English-only methodologies at the apex of modernity, and traditional approaches that used translation relegated to the dungeons of language teaching history. Perhaps the most insidious aspect of this self-interested historicizing was the construction of 'grammar-translation' — that catch-all concept designed to describe and denigrate all forms of teaching and learning that taught grammar or brought other languages into the classroom. This

label, as Anthony Howatt (1984, p.131) points out, is misleading: 'Coined by its opponents, it draws attention to two of the less significant features of the approach.' Quite bizarrely, however, the world was split into two, with the vast majority still mired in unproductive, old-fashioned, premodern, monolithic grammar-translation teaching, while a small, enlightened modern coterie engaged in the principled practices of English-only communicative language teaching. Local practices were denigrated and despised, dismissed as dinosaurs. Native speaker English teachers travelled the world, able to market their monolingual skills above their bilingual counterparts; book publishers set up their stalls at conferences, and sang the benefits of their glossy, international, monolingual products; teacher educators were flown around the world to run seminars, to advise on how to shed outmoded uses of other (outmoded) languages, and to teach using only English; and applied linguists colluded, developing theories, writing books, showing how English was the only language the world needed to teach English.

Of course, in spite of these efforts, translation has always nevertheless remained part of ELT in several ways. Hidden behind the focus on functional uses of English, the stress on communication and pragmatics, there remains a host of English language teachers around the world who have learned English as a language in translation, and who still allow these corrupting influences to creep into their classrooms. In their daily practices, the majority of teachers in the world have long used whatever languages in their classes get the job done, and have done so in far richer and more productive ways than their monolingual counterparts. Take, for example, this from a classroom in Sydney, where the students — all speakers of either Cantonese or Putonghua — are discussing with the teacher suitable food for pregnant mothers:

S1 Eat oranges. Oranges is good, specially the sweet oranges	The class is engaged in an open and relevant discussion in English
T Yes, egg is good for the baby	T adds more info
S1 Bone. Drink bone soup, <i>Gu tou a</i>	Here S1 adds a gloss in Putonghua to explain 'it's bone'
T bone	T repeats back bone in English
S1 <i>Bou do di bone soup. Bou tsung koi zet. Koi zet jing men dim gong a?</i>	S1 switches to Cantonese: Cook more bone soup. To supplement the calcium. How do you say calcium in English?
T Calcium	T supplies the English term

Adapted from Leung (2005).

Here we see ‘real communication’ in progress: the students are giving advice on good food for a pregnant mother, drawing on their own cultural and linguistic knowledge. Both the teacher and students are comfortable using the different languages at their disposal (English, Cantonese and Putonghua) to ensure that meanings carry reasonably well across the languages. And there is a good chance that in such interchanges a fair amount of language learning is going on.

None of this is to suggest that we should encourage those deadening practices of bad pedagogy where translation is a punitive exercise, a means to fill an hour of classroom time, a means of showing superior teacher knowledge, or a chance to reduce languages to mere equivalents of each other. But it does suggest that when we think of translation in an uneven world (cf. Radhakrishnan, 2005), we need to consider not only that uneven global linguistic field on which translation has to play, but also that pedagogical field from which it has already been given a red card, sent off, dismissed to scowl on the sidelines. As far as ‘best practice’ is concerned in ELT, translation is history. And as far as having a chance to enter the traffic of meaning through English, the road is blocked.

Language fortresses, lingua francas and local foci

Current thinking about the global spread of English has also fallen into the trap of becoming over-obsessed with English as a language unto itself, rather than focusing on the ways in which English is always a language in translation. Debates over the role of English in Europe are caught between several competing positions. First, is the concern that the spread of English is threatening other European languages: ‘If inaction on language policy in Europe continues, at the national and supranational levels’, Robert Phillipson (2003, p.192) warns, ‘we may be heading for an American-English only Europe.’ The perceived threat of English to European languages and cultures may, from this point of view, be countered by safeguarding diversity through the support of other European languages. As Claude Hagège (2006, p.37) argues in *Combat pour le Français*, drawing on the work of Phillipson (2005), greater support for French is a crucial part of support for cultural and linguistic diversity more broadly: ‘défendre une culture, c’est aussi défendre la langue dans laquelle elle s’exprime’ [to defend a culture is also to defend the language in which it is expressed]. In the current context, Hagège argues, it is

‘la langue anglaise et la culture américaine qui sont, à l’heure actuelle, les bénéficiaires de la mondialisation’ (105 [the English language and American culture that are at present the beneficiaries of globalization]) and, ‘Il s’agit, en réalité, de prendre la mesure du territoire de l’anglais dans le monde, et singulièrement en Europe, où le milieu anglophone des affaires est à l’origine du processus par lequel le domaine des langues européennes, déjà amputé, est menacé de se réduire plus encore dans l’avenir’ (118 [in reality it is a question of sizing up the territory of English in the world, and particularly in Europe, where the Anglophone context of business is the start of the process by which the domain of European languages, already amputated, is threatened with even greater reduction in the future]).

Second, is a concern that the use of English across Europe is leading to ‘a simplified, pidginized but unstable “Euro-English” that inhibits creativity and expressiveness, whether English is used as a mother tongue or as a foreign language, a language that is spoken with so much imprecision that communication difficulties and breakdowns multiply’ (Phillipson, 2003, p.176). From a different point of view, but striking a similar chord, Jennifer Jenkins has also warned that

if a policy of pluricentricity is pursued unchecked, in effect a situation of “anything goes”, with each Expanding Circle³ L1 group developing its own English pronunciation norms, there is a danger that their accents will move further and further apart until a stage is reached where pronunciation presents a serious problem to lingua franca communication.

(Jenkins, 2006, p.36)

While for Phillipson the solution lies more in the support for other European languages against the tide of English use, for Jenkins the way to ‘safeguard mutual phonological intelligibility’ is to establish a core of English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) pronunciation — or a lexicogrammatical core in the work of Barbara Seidlhofer (2001) — based on the actual negotiated use of non-native speakers of English.

While on one level usefully countering the potential damage wrought by incessant English language use, or reining in the centrifugal forces of divergence, both propositions raise several concerns. On the one hand, if defence against English is to be carried out through a new nationalism (the defence of diversity is the defence of national languages and cultures), we are left only with a model of diversity guaranteed by language fortification. Such a focus on *diversité* rather than the more dynamic processes of

diversalité (a term coined by creolist scholars) lacks an appreciation of the paradox at its heart: To defend diversity through a focus on language fortresses is to reinforce a vision of national languages that have been instrumental in the denial of diversity: ‘La créolité est une annihilation de la fausse universalité, du monolinguisme et de la pureté’ (Bernabé, Chamoiseau and Confiant, 1993, p.28 [créolité is an annihilation of false universality, monolingualism and purity]). As Raphaël Confiant argues, ‘la mondialisation créole valorise la “diversalité” c’est-à-dire le mélange, le partage des ancêtres et des identités, le non-cloisonnement des imaginaires’ (2006 [creole globalization valorizes *diversalité*, that is to say mixing, the sharing of ancestors and identities, the non-partitioning of the imaginary]). Put another way, while an argument for diversity through greater emphasis on European languages other than English may on one level take us beyond the threat of English monolingualism, it may also reinforce the same language ideologies if it does no more than pluralize the object from within the same epistemology. As Selma Sonntag (2003, p.25) argues, ‘the willingness to use the language of human rights on the global level to frame local linguistic demands vis-à-vis global English may merely be affirming the global vision projected by American liberal democracy’.

On the other hand, if English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) work focuses always on the core of English, we are left with yet another centripetal model. As Rani Rubdy and Mario Saraceni put it:

In the end, the validity of the EIL/ELF proposal will probably depend upon whether or not it chooses to embrace a polymodel approach to the teaching of English or a monolithic one, whether it leads to the establishing and promoting of a single (or a limited form of) Lingua Franca Core for common use among speakers in the Outer and Expanding Circles, possibly stripped of any cultural influences, or whether it will be flexible enough to manifest the cultural norms of all those who use it along with the rich tapestry of linguistic variation in which they are embedded.

(Rubdy and Saraceni, 2006, p.13)

At the heart of these current debates, then, is the question of whether a focus on English as a lingua franca, with its interest in commonalities across different uses of English, represents a pull towards the centre — albeit a new centre waiting to be described, rather than the old centres of inner circle (British or American, and so on) English — or whether it can be seen in terms of English divergence as ‘postcolonial speakers of English

creatively negotiate the place of English in their lives' (Canagarajah, 2006, p.200).

The other corner of this triangular debate between different ways of defending diversity has been through a World Englishes (WE) focus. Proponents of this framework have often taken exception to what they claim to be the normativity of an ELF approach. Kachru and Nelson, for example, juxtapose World Englishes with terms such as 'world English' (Brutt Griffler, 2002), 'English as an International Language' (Jenkins, 2000), and 'English as a Lingua Franca' (Seidlhofer, 2001) which 'idealize a monolithic entity called "English" and neglect the inclusive and plural character of the world-wide phenomenon' (Kachru and Nelson, 2006, p.2). And yet, while the World Englishes perspective has always sought to describe diversity and the centrifugal forces of English spread through local foci on variety, it also, paradoxically, becomes ensnared in the same frameworks of language diversity that it needs to escape. As Paul Bruthiaux (2003, p.161) points out, the descriptive and analytic inconsistency of the concentric circle model gives it little explanatory power, and its use of inconsistent criteria to categorize so-called varieties of English is confounded by a 'primarily nation-based model'. Thus it overlooks difference within regions and ascribes variety based on postcolonial political history: where a nation state was created, so a variety emerged. Ultimately, concludes Bruthiaux (2003, p.161), 'the Three Circles model is a twentieth-century construct that has outlived its usefulness'. The World Englishes framework, therefore, while attempting to focus centrally on diversity of Englishes, does so along national lines (for example, Indian, Malaysian, Singaporean Englishes) and thus, like the language fortress defence, reproduces part of the framework it needs to avoid.

While at one level, there may be an important distinction between a WE approach, with its centrifugal focus on local variation, and an ELF approach with its centripetal focus on the development of regional varieties (European and Asian English), at another level, this is a matter only of relative scale. While studies of Indian English, for example, would fall into the first camp, it is also clear that Indian English is more chimerical than this terminology allows. As N. Krishnaswamy and Archana Burde observe 'Like Indian nationalism, "Indian English" is "fundamentally insecure" since the notion "nation-India" is insecure' (1998, p.63). Given the diversity of Indian languages and regions and the need to see India not so much as an imagined community but rather as an unimaginable

community, it is unclear why Indian English itself should not be viewed as a lingua franca. And to discuss an entity called South Asian English, which comprises varieties across India, Sri Lanka, Pakistan and Bangladesh, is to talk in terms of a monolithic lingua franca English. While Kachru and others have long acknowledged the diversity within the supposed entities, this misses the point that the castigation of others for promoting monolithic English rather than diversity has to be done in more complex ways than mere pluralization. Thus, when Braj Kachru (2005, p.39) focuses on 'educated South Asian English' rather than 'Broken English', he is surely open to the same critiques that he levels at the purveyors of ELF. As Arjuna Parakrama (1995, pp.25–26) argues: 'The smoothing out of struggle within and without language is replicated in the homogenizing of the varieties of English on the basis of "upper-class" forms. Kachru is thus able to theorize on the nature of a monolithic Indian English.' Similarly, Canagarajah observes that in Kachru's

attempt to systematize the periphery variants, he has to standardize the language himself, leaving out many eccentric, hybrid forms of local Englishes as too unsystematic. In this, the Kachruvian paradigm follows the logic of the prescriptive and elitist tendencies of the center linguists.

(Canagarajah, 1999, p.180)

Looked at together, these three ways of approaching diversity in the face of the global spread of English — the linguistic fortress defence of other languages, the lingua franca attempt to describe English as used in negotiated contexts, and the local foci on Englishes that have become nativized in different parts of the world — we see several shared features. All three focus largely on form rather than meaning, and all three posit a core to English that is more or less stable. By assuming that the defence of diversity can best be carried out by defending national languages, the linguistic fortress position works with a vision of hermetic languages that are inherently tied to national cultures, with diversity lying in the separate cores of language diversity (English, French, Greek, Japanese, and so on). By attempting to describe what is common to communication among non-native speakers of English, the ELF approach aims at the re-creation of a different core, decentred from the former loci of correctness but re-centred in new canons of intelligible usage. By using a strategy of pluralization, the World Englishes perspective simultaneously posits a core entity that is English while excluding any other possibilities that destabilize this vision

of many Englishes. The central concern that the debates between these rival conceptualizations leave uncontested is how we can understand diversity outside those very frameworks that are part of the problem. Neither a defence of national languages and cultures, nor a description of a core of English as a lingua franca, nor even a focus on plural Englishes adequately addresses the questions of a diversity of meanings. All tend to focus on English in its own presence, on English as a language with a core. While each approach provides useful grounds for dealing with English, we are also lacking here a means to provincialize English (cf. Chakrabarty, 2000), to look at English as a language in translation.

Translation in an uneven world

There is neither space nor reason here to address translation in all its necessity and impossibility (cf. Spivak, 2005), so I shall dwell only on some key concerns. Translation as I am interested in it here is concerned not so much with questions of literary translation as with concerns about what R. Radhakrishnan (2005) terms 'translatability in an uneven world' (p.12). Translation from this point of view is not so much a method of language teaching or an aspect of comparative literature but rather is a fundamental player on the global stage. As Spivak (1993, p.179) remarks, drawing on a discussion with Michele Barrett, 'the politics of translation takes on a massive life of its own if you see language as the process of meaning-construction'. From this perspective, it is possible to view all language use as a process of translation, thus questioning the assumption that translation is a mapping of items from one code to another. According to George Steiner (1975, p.47), 'inside or between languages, human communication equals translation. A study of translation is a study of language'. That is to say that communication between languages presents not so much the central process of translation but rather a special case: all communication involves translation. This renders translation as not the peripheral area it has been to much of applied linguistics, but rather the key to understanding communication. It also suggests that this boundary we set up between languages, making translation an issue when we speak 'different languages' but not when we speak the 'same language' is a distinction that is hard to maintain.

For Dipesh Chakrabarty (2000, p.17), the 'problem of capitalist modernity cannot any longer be seen simply as a sociological problem

of historical transition ... but as a problem of translation, as well'. What Chakrabarty is pointing to here is that we need to consider very seriously that translation produces 'neither an absence of relationship between dominant and dominating forms of knowledge nor equivalents that successfully mediate between differences, but precisely the partly opaque relationship we call "difference"' (p.17). Walter D. Mignolo (2000, p.205) describes Chakrabarty's position as signalling 'the death of history and the beginning of translation as a new form of knowledge that displaces the hegemonic and subaltern locations of disciplinary knowledge'. Thus '*knowledge works as translation and translation works as knowledge*, that is *trans-* rather than *interdisciplinary*, undermining disciplinary foundations of knowledge' (Mignolo, 2000, p.208; original emphasis). As one element of what I have elsewhere called *transgressive theory* (Pennycook, 2007) therefore, translation, like transculturation (rather than the intercultural), makes difference and the need for boundary transgression central. As Ramanathan (2006b, p.229) puts it: 'Translations of texts from other languages make us re-think the assemblage of connectedness that we have assumed as "natural" and "appropriate" in the field, connections that have become heavily sedimented'.

This way of thinking about translation transgresses rather than maintains distinctions between languages (see Makoni and Pennycook, 2007). Translation is not so much a subordinate term to describe a practice between languages or within classrooms but rather a central aspect of social and global life that challenges the very notion of languages and their discrete operations. As Spivak suggests with respect to relations between languages for Indigenous Australians:

Given the rupture between the many languages of Aboriginality and the waves of migration and colonial adventure clustered around the Industrial Revolution narrative, demands for multilingual education here become risible. All we have is bilingualism, bilateral arrangements between idioms understood as essentially or historically private, on the one side, and English on the other, understood as the semiotic as such. This is the political violence of translation as transcoding, the contemporary translation industry about which many of us write.

(Spivak, 2005, p.241)

Understanding that we are dealing always with theory and translation in an uneven world (Radhakrishnan, 2003), that talk of bilingualism or

multilingualism in such contexts is to overlook the vast disparities between languages, is crucial if we are to see how translation in relation to English can be anything other than transcoding.

If we acknowledge the problem of the dominance of English as ‘the semiotic as such’, as well as the problem of talking about bi- and multilingualism as if these were the sole answer to issues of diversity, we are left with the question: how else in the face of English can we pursue diversity? In the same way that we need to move beyond a focus on linguistic fortresses, lingua francas and local foci, so we also need to see that a focus on heritage languages, multilingualism or foreign language learning may not take us far enough. As Kramsch (2006) warns, we need to ask what meanings are being borne by languages, what cultural politics underlie the learning and use of different languages. It is not enough to assume that more is better — multilingualism, multilingual language policies, more foreign language education — in simple numerical terms (Makoni and Pennycook, 2007). As Radhakrishnan argues:

If colonial modernity at the height of its hubris dreamed of one world, based on ‘*dominance without hegemony*’, then a post-modern and post-colonial condition based on the deconstructive truths of a world that is nothing but translation is indeed well positioned not just to read modernity against its much vaunted monolingualism, but go well beyond to imagine non binary possibilities regarding the One and Many (emphasis in original).

(Radhakrishnan, 2005, pp.21–22)

Once again, as with the example of classroom multilingualism above, this flow of languages in and out of each other is the norm across the world. It is English language teaching that has sought to prevent this flow (Pennycook, 2005; Chapter 7). To take the domain of hip-hop, for example, it is common to find languages mixed together and used in complex relations of translation. Whether mixing French, English, Haitian Creole and Spanish in Montreal (Sarkar and Allen, 2007), Chavacano, Tagalog, Visaya, and English in Mindanao in the Philippines (Pennycook, 2007), or simply Japanese and English in Japan, languages are both mixed and dependent on translation for meaning. Take, for example these lyrics from Japanese DJ Tonk (2004) (Move on) where the English word ‘listen’, written in katakana (*rissun*), followed by 2 (meaning ‘to’); and ‘our blues moonlight’ (in katakana: *buruusu muunraitō*) is juxtaposed with the traditional-sounding Japanese (in kanji) ‘under the moonlight’ (*tsukiakari no shita*). Here, then,

we have the old and the new, English and Japanese, contrasted, mixed and combined in a way that makes them hard to disentangle.

<i>Lyrics</i>	<i>Transliteration</i>	<i>Translation</i>
リッスン 2 俺達の ブルースムーンラ イト月明かりの下	<i>rissun two oretachino</i> <i>buruusu muunraito</i> <i>tsukiakari no shita</i>	Listen to our blues moonlight under the moonlight.

Conclusion: ELT as translanguing activism

Kramersch (2006) points out that while monolingualism should indeed be seen as a handicap, we should also be wary of an assumption that a language implies an easy relationship with a culture. Monolingualism, she argues, is the name not only for a linguistic handicap, but for a dangerously monolithic traffic in meaning. Here, then, is an argument, following Michael Halliday (2002), that we need to take *semiodiversity* as seriously as *glossodiversity*, the possibility of a multiplicity of meanings within a language as seriously as a multiplicity of languages (Pennycook, 2004). This argument urges us to question the epistemologies or linguistic ideologies on which support for diversity may be based. Thus a rights-based approach to support for linguistic diversity and opposition to the English-Only movement in the USA, as Sonntag (2003, p.25) points out, 'has not fundamentally altered the American projection of its vision of global English ... because a rights-based approach to promoting linguistic diversity reinforces the dominant liberal democratic project rather than dismantling it'. If oppositional strategies are conducted from within the same framework as that which they oppose, they run the danger of reproducing those same positions. As I suggested above, this is the trap into which the language fortress, lingua franca and World Englishes frameworks fall. They reproduce precisely those ways of thinking about language that they need to get beyond.

For us as educators, this argument opens up the potential to see our work as contributing to diversity not only in terms of increasing the number of people using languages or the number of languages being used, but also in terms of the breadth of meanings available within a language. This is where the emphasis on translation is crucial. It is one of the great crimes of the global hegemony of communicative language teaching over the last few

decades that not only did it promote a monolingual, native-speaker-norm-based, and educationally shallow version of English (or other languages), but it eschewed the complexity and depth of understanding language education as a project of translation. Translation, argues Michael Cronin (2003, p.133), plays a crucial role within globalization, since one of its primary functions is 'to replenish the intertextual resources of a culture'. While the responsibility of the translator is conventionally thought of in terms of giving a fair and accurate representation of a source text, such 'textual scrupulousness' only addresses part of the contemporary responsibility of the translator, since there must also be 'an activist dimension to translation which involves an engagement with the cultural politics of society at national and international levels' (134).

This notion of activist translation links to Lawrence Venuti's (1998) translingualism, which aims to disrupt the assimilatory and domesticating tendencies that eradicate difference through translation. Indeed, Venuti's approach to translation takes the position that to

shake the regime of English, a translator must be strategic both in selecting foreign texts and in developing discourses to translate them. Foreign texts can be chosen to redress patterns of unequal cultural exchange and to restore foreign literatures excluded by the standard dialect, by literary canons, or by ethnic stereotypes.

(Venuti, 1998, pp.10–11)

It is important to understand translation here neither in terms of the reductive and pejorative role it has been given within language teaching (so-called grammar-translation), nor only as the activity conducted by those who work to translate a text in one language into another. Rather, it is part of a much broader traffic in meaning. If language education can see itself not as a functionalist enterprise always in the service of other agendas (specific purposes) but rather as a practice of translingual activism, the traffic of meanings would be far better served.

The notion of English as a language in translation (ELT)² may sit usefully alongside the more common use of ELT since it draws attention to the urgency of dealing with English as always in relation to other languages. There are several dimensions to this view of ELT as translingual activism. First, is a broad vision of the global traffic of meaning. When you translate, you enter the traffic, and with the role that English now plays in the world, this is a congested highway. In order to unsettle the

role that English plays in the world, as language educators we need to bring translation as a broad cultural practice fully into the centre of our practice. Second, therefore, is the reincorporation of translation into ELT practice, the recognition that English is always a language in translation. Here we might start to think in terms of what James Clifford (1997, p.39) calls 'translation terms' for opening up questions of difference: 'a word of apparently general application used for comparison in a strategic and contingent way. "Travel" has an inextinguishable taint of location by class, gender, race, and a certain literariness.' Translation in and out of English in this uneven world needs a focus on such terms which get us some distance and fall apart, concepts which in their supposed commonality and globality may conceal levels of difference that need to be opened up. Finally then, the focus on activism draws attention to the point that this is not a question of methodology, of more efficient language use in the classroom, of revelling in difference and the fascinations of cultural incommensurability; rather, this is a question of unsettling common relations, not only of entering the traffic but of disrupting the traffic. ELT as translingual activism is about increasing the possible meanings available to those we teach.

To take the two terms — translation and activism — as central to the English language teaching enterprise is to contest current pedagogical discourses in a number of ways. It is to disregard the long history of translation eschewal, where the use of languages other than English is denigrated as old-fashioned, as causing interlingual interference, as the strategy of the non-native teacher who knows no better, as indelibly tied to the chalk-and-talk methodologies that focus on grammar. It is to oppose the many interests and complicities that have supported the use of English and only English in classrooms, where English has been seen as a language that operates only in its own presence. It is to reintroduce translation in all its complexity into English language teaching, to open up and explore the many possible meanings that can start to flow in and out of languages in relation to English. In its focus on activism, it is to see this as political action, as a way of confronting the possible threats to diversity posed by English. It is to do so not through the defence of other language fortresses, or a focus on a new core of English or a plurality of Englishes, but rather through a focus on the traffic of meaning. Translingual activism for a language always in translation such as English presents many challenges but also many possibilities for the English language teacher.

Notes

1. A reference to Kachru's 3-circle model, where the expanding circle refers to all those countries where English is learned and used as a 'foreign' (rather than a 'second' or 'native') language.
2. This is a form of discursive disruption in relation to the overly stable acronyms of the ELT world. I have similarly proposed (Pennycook, 2001) that Languages other than English (LOTE) might be replaced by LOBE, languages othered by English, or that the 'F' in TEFL might be better considered as 'feral' rather than foreign (Pennycook, 2004): Teaching English as a Feral Language.

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Chapter 14

Lingua Francas as Language Ideologies

This chapter is based on an article that first appeared in Andy Kirkpatrick, Roland Sussex (Eds.)(2012), *English as an international language in Asia: Implications for language education* (pp.137–154). London: Springer.

Introduction

One supposed truism in the discourses around the global spread of English is that it is the most widely spoken language in the world as a second language, whereas Chinese is the most widely spoken first language. English, while maintaining a base of a few 100 million “native speakers”, is numerically superior because of the huge number of “non-native speakers” around the world, who now vastly outnumber the former. Chinese, by contrast, while on the rise as a second language, achieves its numerical superiority from its colossal base of “native speakers”, the majority of whom reside in China. On the one hand, the world’s great lingua franca (LF), on the other hand the world’s great mother tongue. As one such version of this analysis explains, “Although Modern Standard Chinese has more mother-tongue speakers (approximately 700 million), English is unquestionably used by more people as a second or foreign language, putting the total number of English-speakers worldwide at well over one billion” (*English for students*, 2011).

“In terms of native-speaker rankings”, suggests Graddol (2006. p.60), English, which was “clearly in second place” behind Chinese, is falling behind Spanish and Hindi/Urdu and will soon also be challenged by Arabic “in the world league tables”. Crystal (2003) explains it thus: “about a quarter of the world’s population is already fluent or competent in English, and this figure is steadily growing — in the early 2000s that means around 1.5 billion people. No other language can match this growth. Even Chinese, found in eight different spoken languages, but unified by a common writing system, is known to ‘only’ some 1.1 billion” (p.6). This common argument raises several questions: First, what credibility can be given to such figures? What is the basis for these calculations of numbers

of speakers? One obvious concern is the variability in these figures: rather than Crystal's 1.5 billion second language speakers of English, Graddol (2006), citing the Ethnologue website (see Ethnologue, 2011), which is based on Ostler's (2005) estimates, gives a figure of 508 million for native and nonnative speakers combined, while the *English for students* website suggests that while an "estimated 354 million people speak English as their first language", estimates about second language speakers of English "vary greatly between 150 million and 1.5 billion". This is more than mere variation. Such figures must be based on profoundly different definitions of native and non-native speakers.

Concerns about the meaningfulness of such figures leads to several broader questions. On one level, we need to ask how they are derived and with what definitions of fluency or competence. I shall not dwell on this here, but it is important to consider that such figures are often based on school attendance data, and in fact tell us very little about use and capacity in English. At another level, we need to ask more generally what such approaches to language enumerability tell us. As Moore et al. (2010) observe, the counting of languages and the counting of speakers of those languages is such a flawed enterprise that there is little to be learned from these figures, percentages and league tables. From this point of view, attempts to count languages or speakers of languages, to compare the number of people who speak English with the number who speak Chinese makes little sense. At another level again, we need to ask what language ideologies underpin these particular versions of languages as native tongues or *lingua francas*.

In talking of language ideologies, I am pointing to the significance of understanding the "structured and consequential ways in which we think about language" (Seargeant, 2009, p.26). Languages are not pre-given entities that exist outside human understanding of what they are and what they do. They are ideological constructs that serve different purposes. By maintaining a distinction between English as a second language (and therefore *lingua franca*) and Chinese as a first language (and therefore not a *lingua franca*), we are constructing an idea of languages based on the widely-questioned divide between native and non-native speakers. There is an irony here that many who question this divide in relation to English language pedagogy nevertheless uphold it to make these claims about English and Chinese. The very assumption that Chinese is a native language to the vast populations of China, furthermore, is a language

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to English that “idealize a monolithic entity called ‘English’ and neglect the inclusive and plural character of the world-wide phenomenon” (Kachru and Nelson, 2006, p.2). Such a critique, however, as Jenkins (2006b) points out, is misguided, since it rests on the mistaken assumption that English as a lingua franca is the same as English as an International Language, which in turn may be associated with the notion of World Standard (Spoken) English proposed by authors such as Crystal (2003). While Crystal’s notion is of a possibly emergent variety of common spoken English rather than any prescribed version, it differs from both the pluricentric focus of World Englishes and from the Lingua Franca focus. Certainly the suggestion that ELF somehow promotes inner circle norms is mistaken, since “ELF researchers specifically exclude mother tongue speakers from their data collection. Indeed, in its purest form, ELF is defined as a contact language used only among non-mother tongue speakers” (Jenkins, 2006b, p.160).

Challenges to this “purer form” of ELF, however, as only occurring between non-mother tongue speakers, have led to a softening of this view, so that Jenkins has more recently asserted that while ELF is “a means of communication in English between speakers who have different first languages” (Jenkins, 2009, p.41), this does not necessarily exclude native speakers, but instead shifts their role in English use from central to peripheral participants. Even if mother-tongue speakers of English are included as possible participants in ELF discourse, however, this by no means renders ELF a so-called inner circle variety or a monolithic entity. Rather it acknowledges that such speakers also participate in global English exchanges, and, more normatively, urges them to acknowledge equal speaker rights to all participants. The inclusion of mother tongue speakers of English, on the other hand, does open ELF to some of the critiques that Phillipson (2009, p.167) aims at it, arguing that “*lingua franca* is a pernicious, invidious term if the language in question is a first language for some people but for others a foreign language, such communication typically being asymmetrical”. More generally, he goes on to argue that it is a “misleading term if the language is supposed to be neutral and disconnected from culture”. He suggests instead that English as a *lingua frankensteinia* might be a more appropriate term. While Phillipson’s concerns about an apparently monolithic ELF may seem misguided, his warning that there may only be a weak engagement with the cultural politics of English does need to be taken seriously.

A major focus of debate is whether the description of ELF is also used

as a basis for teaching, that is as a prescriptive rather than a descriptive tool. As Rubdy and Saraceni suggest,

so long as the underlying tacit assumption is that once the *Lingua Franca* core is systematically codified, it can then be used as a model for teaching and learning this form of English in the classroom, the question that arises is whether one form of prescription is not being (unwittingly or even wittingly) replaced by another. (p.10)

Certainly, some of the discussions about ELF do seem to suggest more than just a descriptive project. Expressing concerns with the trend in applied linguistic circles to adopt a *laissez-faire* attitude towards heterogenisation, Jenkins (2006a, p.35) suggests that “if a policy of pluricentricity is pursued unchecked”, there is a danger that mutual comprehension may be impeded, that accents will move further and further apart until a stage is reached where pronunciation presents a serious problem to *lingua franca* communication. Yet the ELF protagonists vehemently reject accusations of prescriptivism, arguing that it is precisely “the polymorphous nature of the English language” (Seidlhofer, 2006, p.42) that is of interest, that they are “trying to understand as far as possible emically, from participants’ perspectives, what they do when they negotiate meaning in these encounters” (p.44), or that an ELF approach “closely approximates [...] Kachru’s idea of a ‘polymodel’ approach to the teaching of English” (Kirkpatrick, 2006, p.81).

While some ELF researchers therefore claim an interest only in description rather than prescription (to the extent that such a distinction is workable — see Harris, 1981), there are other reasons why the prescriptive label does not hold. While Jenkins (2006a) maintains a goal to “safeguard mutual phonological intelligibility” (p.36), she does not do so by seeking “to impose a monolithic pronunciation model on ELF users” (p.36). Rather, she suggests

that anyone participating in international communication needs to be familiar with, and have in their linguistic repertoire for use, as and when appropriate, certain forms (phonological, lexicogrammatical, etc.) that are widely used and widely intelligible across groups of English speakers from different first language backgrounds. This is why accommodation is so highly valued in ELF research. (Jenkins, 2006b, p.161)

For other ELF researchers, meanwhile, the goal is not in any case to

propose a model, but rather simply to account for the diversity of language uses that are tied neither to native nor to nativised varieties (Kirkpatrick, 2006) in order to capture how “postcolonial speakers of English creatively negotiate the place of English in their lives” (Canagarajah, 2006, p.200).

As Rubdy and Saraceni (2006, p.13) put it,

In the end, the validity of the EIL/ELF proposal will probably depend upon whether or not it chooses to embrace a polymodel approach to the teaching of English or a monolithic one, whether it leads to the establishing and promoting of a single (or a limited form of) *Lingua Franca Core* for common use among speakers in the Outer and Expanding Circles, possibly stripped of any cultural influences, or whether it will be flexible enough to manifest the cultural norms of all those who use it along with the rich tapestry of linguistic variation in which they are embedded.

Defending themselves against some of the challenges to ELF research, Dewey and Jenkins (2010, p.89) argue that it “upholds and celebrates linguistic diversity”. It does not, they insist, “propose a uniform version of the language that might be termed ‘Global English’”; nor does it prescribe norms of usage. Rather, the goal of ELF research is “to describe how the language is manipulated in innovative ways to suit the communicative needs of speakers who interact in complex multilingual communities of practice, in settings where the language is sufficiently stable to act as a *lingua franca*, yet sufficiently variable to fit the infinite purposes it serves”.

Whether an ELF perspective can remain consistent with World Englishes perspectives remains an open question. World Englishes, and particularly the rather static “concentric circle” model, have come in for considerable criticism over the last few years, with Bruthiaux (2003) amongst others pointing out the model’s many inconsistencies, descriptive inadequacies, and perhaps above all its inability to deal with current contexts of global language use. Ultimately, concludes Bruthiaux, “the Three Circles model is a twentieth century construct that has outlived its usefulness” (2003, p.161), or as Ostler (2010) puts it, the three circles “are not an adequate basis for our attempt to fit the spread of English into some more general theory that would characterize *lingua-francas* in general, and not just English as it is currently spoken around the world” (p.35).

Although on some levels there seems to be no important difference between the idea of South Asian English (a WE construct) and English as a *lingua franca* in South Asia (an ELF construct), the WE focus is always

centrifugally towards local varieties (at least up to the point of describing national varieties), while the ELF orientation appears centripetal in that it aims to find out what is common to English across Asia, Europe, or other regions. The two frameworks also take slightly different approaches to the relation between their described entities (local or regional varieties of English) and other languages. While WE adherents have emphasised very strongly that World Englishes are not interlinguistic varieties caused by first language interference, but rather sociolinguistically evolved varieties that are learned in their communities of users, it is nevertheless quite possible to trace the relation between certain forms in a WE variety and local languages. Thus while there are features in common across World Englishes (more user-friendly invariable tag questions such as *isn't it* or regularisation of uncountable plurals, such as *furnitures* and *informations*), terms are also adopted from local languages (count words such as *lakh* "100,000" and *crore* "10,000,000" in Indian English, for example) precisely because there may be shared language knowledge of one or more other languages.

The ELF position, while also distancing itself from any suggestions of inter-linguistic deficit, posits a greater distance between the use of English and other languages, since it is premised on the communicative strategies among those who do not share a language. Indeed to talk of ELF in South East Asia is to focus on a region of the world in which it may be unclear why we would expect communicative norms to appear at all if such commonalities emerge from any first language similarities. ASEAN includes both the Philippines and Indonesia, which have very large numbers of languages across their many islands. Although English operates as a class dialect here as elsewhere (and thus speakers of minority languages, who are often disenfranchised in multiple ways, may be less likely to use ELF as a means of communication), ELF in ASEAN may nevertheless involve speakers of a very wide range of languages (Javanese and Cebuano, for example, in addition to Indonesian and Tagalog). Developing forms of communication in English in the region, therefore, are unlikely to be based on linguistic commonalities, or on knowledge of each others' language.

One of the things that has been missing in some of these discussions is the differences between Europe and South East Asia. In Europe, English is often used by people who may likely know some of each others' languages or similar languages (a Romance or Germanic language, for

example). They therefore speak and interpret in the knowledge that certain tenses or terms may have particular meanings, not as English but as part of some other language. When a Spanish speaker, for example, suggests that “It is always moving [...] to see how the camera’s gaze captures emotions, habitual body languages, especially when people ignores they are captured” (my data), someone who knows the Romance language use of the term *ignore* — meaning not to know rather than to deliberately overlook — can interpret this more or less as intended. This speaker does not have to speak one of those languages as a first language, but needs to know the use. A French speaker might not notice the use (or might register it, having been warned about this *faux ami* in English). A German speaker who knows English and Italian might accommodate this differently, drawing on their knowledge of Italian to interpret the Spanish in the English.

The South East Asian case is a different one, since English has taken on a particular role in relation to the other languages of the region which are generally less widely learned (Japanese used to be a partial exception and Chinese is an emerging one). As Kirkpatrick (2010a) points out, while the European Union has insisted on a multilingual policy, ASEAN by contrast has adopted English as its working language. While there are of course some commonalities across these languages, especially those influenced by Chinese language and scripts — Japanese, Korean and Vietnamese, for example, share some underlying meanings and terms from Chinese, and have to different extents and over different periods of time, shared writing systems — the possibility of a Vietnamese speaker interpreting, say, Thai terms or tenses in English is at the very least different from the ways parallel understandings may happen in Europe.

In a comparison of WE and ELF approaches, Pakir (2009) suggests they have four working axioms in common: an emphasis on the pluricentricity of English; seeking the recognition of a variety; accepting that language changes and adapts; and focusing on the discourse strategies of English-knowing bilinguals. Although a focus on language change and bilingual discourse strategies are indeed shared aspects of these approaches, Pakir’s first two points are more contentious. While WE focuses on a multiplicity of “centres”, and although ELF is also oriented towards a notion of diversity, it does not posit a plurality of centres. And although some ELF work may be oriented towards the description, codification and acceptance of ELF as a variety, most work views ELF as far too flexible and open-ended to be seen as a variety (Saraceni, 2010). On the other

hand, Pakir (2009) suggests that WE and ELF differ in that WE focuses on language users in all three circles, while ELF is interested only in the expanding circle. This too is questionable, however, since the major focus of WE has always been the outer circle, with less to say about the expanding circle and almost nothing about the inner circle.

The lack of attention to the diversity of inner circle contexts — what to do with Lebanese English in Sydney, for example, or Aboriginal English in other parts of Australia — has been one of many oversights of the WE model. A plausible case can in fact be made that the ELF focus is trying to address precisely that gap left by the holes in the World Englishes model: how to come to grips with a non-centrist understanding of English as an international language that is dependent neither on hegemonic versions of central English nor on nationally defined new Englishes, but rather attempts to account for the ever-changing negotiated spaces of current language use. The ELF model, it is argued, “liberates L2 speakers from the imposition of native speaker norms as well as the cultural baggage of World Englishes models” (Rubdy and Saraceni, 2006, p.8). That is to say, by adopting neither inner nor outer circle norms, and by admitting that ELF occurs in all three contexts — English is used as a lingua franca in Sydney, Singapore, Stockholm and Shanghai — an ELF focus opens up a more flexible space for thinking about global English use.

What Is a Lingua Franca Anyway?

By and large, there is fairly common agreement that the original lingua franca was a language that developed for trading purposes across the Mediterranean, using vocabulary from Arabic, French, Greek, Italian, Spanish and Turkish (to the extent that these were namable entities). Ostler (2010) describes the original LF as “the common contact language of the eastern Mediterranean in the first half of the second millennium, the pidgin Italian in which Greeks and Turks could talk to Frenchmen and Italians” (p.4). While we need to be cautious here when terms such as *pidgin Italian*, *Greeks*, *Turks*, *Frenchmen* and *Italians* are used, since what these terms referenced 1,000 years ago is very different from their current meanings, this does give us a sense of the original lingua franca as a widely used language of trade. Dewey and Jenkins (2010), drawing on Knapp and Meierkord (2002), explain this original LF as being composed of Italian dialects, and elements of Spanish, French, Portuguese, Arabic, Turkish,

Greek and Persian, “its hybrid nature being a defining feature of all the *lingua francas* that have followed” (p.72).

The term *lingua franca* (Italian for “Frankish tongue”) originated in the Mediterranean region in the Middle Ages among crusaders and traders of different language backgrounds. Phillipson (2009) suggests a certain historical irony here that the language of the medieval crusaders has now become the term affixed to “English as the language of the crusade of global corporatization, marketed as ‘freedom’ and ‘democracy’” (p.167). The term itself comes from the Italian, and the Arabic view that all Europeans were “Franks” (*Faranjifarengi*). As Ostler (2005) explains, one long-term effect of the French support for the Crusades and the establishment of Frankish domains in Palestine was the association for many Arabs of Franks with Europeans more generally. Hence, the widespread Arabic term for Europeans, based on the generalisation of Franks as Europeans, was adopted in the Italian term *lingua franca*, referring to the European-based means of communication in the Mediterranean. The original *lingua franca*, or Sabir, mixed Italian, Spanish, Portuguese and Arabic words and used a basic and reduced syntax (Walter, 1988, p.216).

A slightly different version is given in Kirkpatrick’s (2010b) explanation that “The origin of the term ‘lingua franca’ stems from when Germanic Franks moved into Gaul in the fifth century and adopted the local language, which became known as the language of the Franks, or *lingua franca*” (p.2). For Kirkpatrick, a “lingua franca can thus be defined as a common language between people who do not share a mother tongue” (p.3). From this point of view, a *lingua franca*, both historically and in the present, means a language adopted and used by speakers of other languages, which differs from the definitions above (where it is a language that emerges for trading purposes), but fits more with current definitions of English as a *lingua franca*. It is interesting to note, too, that his claim that “lingua francas tend to contain a large number of non-standard forms” (p.2) depends on the idea that there is a standardised version of the language from which non-standard versions differ. In this view, then, a *lingua franca* may be a language variety that emerges from a more standardised version that has been adopted for wider communication.

It has also of course become common to adopt a broader definition of a *lingua franca* than the original meaning of an emergent trading language. Thus the *Longman dictionary of applied linguistics* (Richards, et al., 1985) explains that a *lingua franca* is any language that is used for communication

between different groups of people who speak a different language. A lingua franca, from this point of view, could be an internationally used language of communication, such as English, French or Spanish, which is the view taken by many current writers on ELF. Ostler (2010) provides a very broad understanding of a lingua franca as any language learned outside the home: on the one hand there is the “mother tongue” (or vernacular), a language learned as a first language, at home, at one’s mother’s knee; and on the other a lingua franca, any language learned outside that environment: “all language deliberately acquired outside the home environment is a kind of contact language, consciously learned for social or pragmatic reasons” (pp.36–37).

If Ostler’s position suggests that any language can therefore serve as a lingua franca (French is a lingua franca to someone who learns Arabic at home in Paris; Arabic is a lingua franca to someone who learns Berber or Tamazight at home in Rabat, and so on), it also suggests that a lingua franca may be spoken between those who speak it as a mother tongue and those for whom it is a language learned outside the home. As seen in the discussion above, this remains a contentious position in the ELF debates, since for some, ELF occurs only between nonnative speakers (NNSs) of a language and does not include native speakers (NSs). As Jenkins (2006b, p.160) suggested above, those who speak English as a mother tongue may be excluded from the notion of ELF, which is seen by some as a “contact language used only among non-mother tongue speakers”, even if she herself does not adhere to this position (Dewey and Jenkins, 2010, p.72).

Braj Kachru (2005) objects to the notion of English as a lingua franca largely on the grounds that the term is inaccurately used. While these objections to the idea of ELF stem in part from the struggle for ascendancy between the World Englishes and ELF paradigms, his critique is primarily that the term *lingua franca* is used loosely and with a variety of meanings, and that this does not accord with the historical use of the term, which referred to a contact language used by Arabs, Turks and other traders around the Mediterranean. It was not therefore a pre-existing language adopted for communication, but a language of trade developed for pragmatic commercial purposes. The term *lingua franca*, Kachru explains, derives from the Arabic *lisan-al-farang*, which originally referred to Italian. Both this claim that the term referred to Italian (whatever was meant by that), and his odd claim that there is not much variation in lingua francas (an unlikely possibility that contradicts many of the other discussions of

the original *lingua franca*), are themselves highly questionable. Is there nevertheless more than just a minor quibble here over changes to the current use of the term in his critique?

While it is clear that for a contemporary understanding of *lingua francas* not much is to be gained by an insistence on consistent use across very different contexts (whether the language of the Franks, Italian, or a mixture of Arabic, Italian Spanish and Turkish), there is nonetheless an important point worth further discussion here. On the one hand, a *lingua franca* is understood as an emergent mix of languages, where, as Walter suggests, one can believe on both sides that one is speaking the other's language. "This language served its purpose perfectly in commercial exchanges because of its particular quality that each user thought that it was the other's language" (p.216, my translation). On the other hand, it is seen as a common language used as a second language. It is only in this second sense that a claim that *lingua francas* contain a large number of non-standard forms can be understood, since in the first case there is no standard by which they should be judged. Only when there is a standardised version of a language can we suggest that there are non-standard varieties.

Whereas with the first *lingua franca*, a language emerged for trading purposes, in the case of ELF an existing language has been adopted for such purposes. The extent to which this distinction works, however, takes us back to language ideological debates: it depends on how we understand language. If ELF does not include speakers of English as a first language, or even if it does include them as peripheral participants, the question becomes whether ELF really is a language adopted for international communication, or whether it may indeed be an emergent form of communication more akin to the original *lingua franca*. Perhaps neither Kachru's view of World Englishes as a preexisting system of communication with regional variations, nor the view of ELF as a means of communication in English between speakers of different languages, captures the more dynamic view of English as a *lingua franca* more like the original than would at first appear. In order to pursue this discussion further, I want to look first at the problems of whether Chinese should be considered a *lingua franca*.

Chinese as a *Lingua Franca*

Comparing English and Chinese, Wang (2008) suggests that "One can

hardly find situations where Chinese serves as a *lingua franca* among non-native speakers of Chinese, as does English” (Wang, 2008, 32.4). This may be true to the extent that Chinese does not serve similar purposes globally to those that English now serves. But if, as Crystal (2003) asserts, Chinese is found in eight different spoken languages, it is less clear Chinese is not also a *lingua franca* for those speakers. Kirkpatrick, for example, argues that

Bahasa Indonesia and Putonghua are the two most widely spoken Asian-based *lingua francas* in East and Southeast Asia. Indeed, with over one billion speakers in China alone, *Putonghua* is far and away the most widely spoken language on earth, and its influence and reach is growing. For the moment, however, English remains the region’s (and world’s) primary *lingua franca* in that English is the language most commonly used by people who do not share a mother tongue. (Kirkpatrick, 2010b, p.3)

Here, then, we confront an apparent contradiction: on the one hand, Chinese is claimed to rarely serve as a *lingua franca* among non-native speakers of Chinese; on the other hand, Chinese, or at least *Putonghua*, is claimed as one of the most widely spoken *lingua francas* in the region. *Putonghua* is claimed to be spoken by over a billion speakers in China, and if a *lingua franca* is used by speakers of other languages, then presumably native speakers of Chinese are not native speakers of the *lingua franca Putonghua*. This will take a bit of unravelling.

We might look at Chinese as a *lingua franca* in the general sense of a widely used language and focus on its use across China (including the Chinese mainland, Hong Kong, Macao and Taiwan) (Li, 2006). Assuming a general understanding of a *lingua franca* as a language used as a language of wider communication by speakers of other languages, there are several different ways in which this can be understood. The first possibility is that Chinese as a *lingua franca* (CLF) refers to the use of Chinese among minority groups within China. Although China may be more heterogeneous than is often acknowledged, with 54 officially recognised national minority groups speaking over 200 languages, this is only a small percentage (around 8%) of the overall population. The second possibility is that CLF refers to the use of standard Chinese (*Putonghua*) across the different language/dialect groups in China: if we assume that Chinese refers to the Mandarin (Guan) variety, then this *lingua franca* function might apply to some 20% of the population who speak the other major varieties. This, however, would only account for a few 100 million users of

Chinese/Putonghua as a lingua franca.

Among linguists (e.g. Li, 2006) there is reasonable agreement that, aside from the many minority languages spoken in China (some related to Chinese, others not), there are somewhere between half a dozen to a dozen (though most commonly seven) main regional groupings of Chinese languages or dialects (as we know, the language/dialect distinction is not a clear one and not generally a linguistic one), including Mandarin (Guan), Wu (including Shanghainese), Cantonese (Yue), Min (including Hokkien and Taiwanese), Xiang (Hunanese), Hakka (or Kejia, spoken in regions of Guangdong and other southern provinces), and Gan (Jiangxi Province). These varieties are largely mutually unintelligible in the spoken form of the language, and also contain considerable internal variation. Within these large-scale varieties, however, there are also some two thousand “distinct dialects and subdialects” spoken across different parts of China (Li, 2006, p.150). If we take a province such as Hunan, for example, which alongside various minority languages is also where the Xiang variety of Chinese is spoken, there are also many mutually incomprehensible varieties of Xiangyu (Hunanese) such that speakers from one area of the province may have great difficulty in understanding speakers from another region (Zhou, 2001).

These major varieties, then, are in themselves regional lingua francas, with Min, for example, operating across a wider range of varieties in Fujian Province (Chew, 2010); or Chinese in Hong Kong referring to both the spoken “dominant vernacular and regional lingua franca Cantonese” and to Modern Written Chinese, which is closer to Mandarin Chinese (Li, 2006, p.150). On top of this *Putonghua*, standard (or common) Chinese, which is based on the Chinese spoken around Beijing, is used as a lingua franca across varieties. Ostler (2010, p.227) lists Cantonese (56 million mother tongue speakers) and Shanghainese (77 million) among the world’s 25 languages with the largest number of native speakers. Both are far behind Mandarin Chinese with 873 million native speakers. The difference between this figure of speakers of Mandarin Chinese and the total population (or the total of non-Mandarin Chinese and other languages) gives us the figure, according to Ostler (2010), of 178 million speakers of Chinese as a lingua franca. This position would therefore support the view that Chinese (Mandarin/Putonghua) is a major lingua franca across China, but nevertheless only one for less than 20% of the Chinese population.

Chinese versions of this picture tend to differ somewhat, however,

with varieties of Chinese generally described as *fangyan* (regional speech, usually translated as “dialects”). From this point of view, most people in China speak “Chinese” though with regional dialectal variation. As Dong explains,

The language versus dialects debate lies in the fundamentally different definitions of ‘dialect’ between the Chinese tradition and the western tradition: ‘mutual intelligibility’ serves as the central criterion in the Western tradition, whereas common orthography, shared literature, historical roots, cultural heritage, and political unity, play a decisive role in labelling a variety as a ‘dialect’ or a ‘language’ in the Chinese tradition. (Dong, 2009, p.29)

From a Chinese point of view, then, Chinese is not a lingua franca because it is the first language of Chinese people, at least as defined according to shared culture, script and traditions. “The Chinese are also averse to discussing variety in the country and prefer the use of the term *fanyan*¹ (dialects) to refer to Chinese multilingualism, despite the existence of mutual unintelligibility” (Chew, 2010, p.60).

Putonghua (common language) itself presents us with a number of further difficulties. Putonghua has been disseminated as the linguistic norm, the acceptable variety of schooling and communication across China, “In the twentieth century”, Chew (2010) explains, “the Chinese nationalists, influenced by the European concept of nationhood, attempted to promote a national language as a means of communication both within and between provinces of China” (p.64). Putonghua

has become standardized as the national model for pronunciation (and to a lesser extent, for literacy), a form of semiotic capital, associated with linguistic ‘correctness’, and socially recognized as indexical of speaker attributes such as social status and advanced education backgrounds. (Dong, 2010, p.265)

And yet, as Dong (2010) notes, within mainland China

it is reported that 53% of the Chinese people are able to communicate in Putonghua or near-Putonghua (*China Daily*, 26/12/2004). Although this figure is not confirmed by sociolinguistic research, and it is not clear what are the speech practices of the other 47% (most probably vernaculars, dialects that are unintelligible to Putonghua speakers, and minority languages), it does sketch out the scale of Putonghua and its quasi-equivalent paralects within China and beyond. (pp.265–266).

If the idea of Chinese as a lingua franca (CLF) refers to Putonghua (the alternative is that it refers to a more generic and symbolic notion of Chinese), then these figures would suggest that if the *China Daily* (not noted for rocking the boat) is reporting *as a success* that over 50% of the population of China now speak Putonghua (or “near-Putonghua”), then the level of diversity is far greater than is accounted for in the figures for the seven major varieties plus minority languages.

Indeed, if this figure is to be taken seriously, then, on the one hand the idea of Chinese as the most widely spoken first language in the world becomes less clear (or at least it is not as far ahead of the pack as supposed in common figures), and a broader idea of Chinese as a lingua franca starts to gain ground. This might give us figures of about 600 million native speakers of Chinese/Putonghua and 600 million CLF speakers of Chinese/Putonghua. There are further complications, however, since Putonghua is predominantly a language learned at school: “People acquire Putonghua through formal education, as it is institutionally supported as the language of instruction in schools, as well as the official language in the state’s other institutions” (Dong, 2009, p.16). Putonghua, spoken by just over 50% of the population, has been learned in school, and is not, therefore, easily considered the first language of a large part of the population. Putonghua may in fact be a lingua franca (and therefore a second language) for a large proportion of the population.

Two further points complicate this picture. Despite the linguistic capital that accrues to Putonghua, as it is used across different regions of China, it also takes on local characteristics: “Like English, *putonghua* itself is spoken in many different accents and dialects, some more prestigious than others. What began as a limited dialect has now become a conglomerate of mushrooming regional varieties, united only by the grammar and core vocabulary of the written script” (Chew, 2010, pp.65–66). Thus, following a World Englishes-type orientation, we might argue that Putonghua should now be viewed as a conglomeration of varieties. Not only do we therefore need to consider Chinese as a cluster of languages/dialects, both united and disunited by the written script (while the Chinese script can unify, it also allows for diversity), and not only do we need to consider Putonghua as a lingua franca used across these mutually incomprehensible languages, but we also need to understand that as Putonghua has become localised and taken up in different regions of China, it has also become a lingua franca with considerable variety.

We also need to take on board the point that what unites Putonghua

is the grammar and core vocabulary of the written script. While this view that Chinese refers to a variety of languages or dialects unified by a script is commonly enough reiterated, the implications need further consideration. Although this ideographic script may on the one hand be unifying — it provides both the ideological grounds for the maintenance of a notion of Chinese and indeed the material conditions for shared forms of communication — it is also a divisive system in that the use of a non-phonetic script allows for the co-existence of much greater spoken variety. This view of a homogenous written script, furthermore, does not acknowledge the use of alternative characters to write other Chinese languages, such as Cantonese (Snow, 2004). But most importantly, if it is written Chinese that is the lingua franca, since people speak different Chinese languages/dialects, then we have to explore the possibility not just that a lingua franca is a language spoken by people who do not share a first language, but rather that it may in this case be a written language used by people who speak different languages.

A similar case might be made for English: Written English as a lingua franca, or rather certain registers of written English (this does not include emails, SMS and so on), exists as a fairly standardised and recognizable entity. As Gupta (2010) argues, “in many respects Standard English really is essentially monolithic. In any given text of Standard English (such as a newspaper article) more than 99.5% of words will be words spelled, inflected and used in the same way by Standard English everywhere. Standard English is so much a given that it is almost invisible” (p.86). Standard written English is not static, nor is it centred on the traditional norm-providing centres in the UK and USA. Rather it is a product of the totality of regulated writing across many regions of the world. In this sense it is an emergent yet regulated entity. It is a very different thing from the spoken and negotiated lingua franca English that emerges from daily interactions and bears many more traces of the languages that surround the interaction. And in this sense, a case could be made that it is written English that is the lingua franca, while spoken English is a diversity of different languages, or that English, like Chinese, has different spoken versions unified by a written version.

Emergent Lingua Francas

What can we conclude from all this? Common truisms about English

as the most widely spoken lingua franca, and Chinese as the most widely spoken mother tongue, stand on very thin ground indeed. The vast disparity between figures of speakers suggests not only that such figures are hard to produce accurately but also, more importantly, that they rest on highly questionable definitions of languages, second languages, native speakers, lingua francas and so forth. This arithmetical approach to languages is deeply flawed. As Moore et al. (2010) put it, “‘speakerhood’ and ‘language-hood’ are matters whose complexity poorly suits them for numerical representations” and “the use of such numbers, which continues unabated, privileges a conception of ‘languages’ as neatly-bounded, abstract, autonomous grammatical systems (each of which corresponds to a neatly-bounded ‘worldview’)” (p.1).

When we claim that English is the great lingua franca of the world and Chinese the great mother tongue, or when we equally concede that Chinese is the great lingua franca and English only comes second, we are dealing not only with incommensurable objects but also staking out very particular ideological ground. What counts as a language, a mother tongue, or a lingua franca, is an ideological position. If we argue that Chinese exists only as an ideological construct (it is a unifying language only by the will for it to be so, not by actual practice), we need to reflect on the fact that this also applies to English: ELF is not so much a linguistic system as an ideological construct. Language ideologies are not necessarily false, but they are interested ways of viewing the world. They represent very particular, and as Phillipson (2009) reminds us, at times insidious claims about language, communication and the world.

If the supposed truism that English is the great lingua franca and Chinese the great mother tongue stands on shaky ground, where might we want to head with a notion of English as a lingua franca? The problem, I have been trying to suggest, lies with the many unsubstantiated claims as to what constitutes language. Saraceni’s (2010) conclusion about ELF is that

we do not need to know the *what*, but the *how* and the *why*. We need to understand how people position themselves towards it, how they locate it within their linguistic repertoire, how it contributes to shaping their identities and how they use it to participate in, or resist, aspects of globalization. If World Englishes constitute an attitude, so should ELF, and, in a final analysis, the two can be seen as two terms denoting our laborious attempts to understand the unprecedented phenomenon of English in the world. (p.99)

One thing that emerged from the discussion of CLF is that the very differing attitudes to this from a Chinese and non-Chinese point of view are not in the end answerable as linguistic questions, but are in fact deeply ideological concerns. The problem has been, however, that this understanding has been all too often one way: Western linguists know what a language is, and it is Chinese ideology that denies that its dialects are really languages. The next step is to turn this perspective round and to show that Western insistence on particular definitions of language and dialect need to be equally accountable to the ideologies in which they are grounded.

If the Chinese view that most Chinese in China speak Chinese with certain regional variations (*fangyan*) is evidently a cultural and ideological position on language and nationhood, so too we have to recognize a similar position with respect to English. Where the Chinese position is a fundamentally nationalist one, the English one is a fundamentally internationalist one. The ELF project “maintains the ambition of a universal language, but does so in a fragmentary form” (Sergeant, 2009, p.12). The insistence that Chinese is the great mother tongue and English the great lingua franca are deeply held ideological convictions. At the heart of the problem is the predefinition of languages as entities, the a priori assumption that communication has to be premised on an idea of knowing the same language. As Harris (2009) remarks, the idea of “knowing a language” is one that is best discarded: “There is no longer any need to postulate, as in the Classical model, that A and B must both know the same language in order to engage in verbal communication” (p.74). The idea of knowing the same language obscures the point that for communication to occur, participants need to “integrate their own semiological activities with those of their interlocutor (e.g. in such matters as paying attention, making eye contact, answering questions, complying with requests, responding to greetings both verbal and non-verbal, laughing at jokes, etc.). This is both much more than and much less than is involved in ‘knowing a language’ as traditionally interpreted” (p.75).

For the Japanese dive instructor in the Philippines, for example, describing the afternoon dive sites, assisted by her Danish co-instructor and Philippine dive master, to a group of divers from different parts of the world, we do not have to postulate the existence of English as a lingua franca to achieve communication. The register comes from the diving community (“at 100 bar give me a sign, OK?”); the nonverbal

communication (the sign for “low on air”), the use of other props (a chart of the dive site), all contribute to the contextual use and understanding of these communicative resources. This is in part why Canagarajah (2007b) opts for the idea of Lingua Franca English (LFE) rather than ELF, since from this position LFE is emergent from its contexts of use: speakers “activate a mutually recognized set of attitudes, forms, and conventions that ensure successful communication in LFE when they find themselves interacting with each other” (p.925). LFE is “intersubjectively constructed in each specific context of interaction. The form of this English is negotiated by each set of speakers for their purposes” and thus “it is difficult to describe this language a priori” (Canagarajah, 2007b, p.925).

Individual language knowledge should be defined “not in terms of abstract system components but as communicative repertoires — conventionalized constellations of semiotic resources for taking action — that are shaped by the particular practices in which individuals engage” (Hall et al., 2006, p.232). From this point of view, language knowledge is “grounded in and emergent from language use in concrete social activity for specific purposes that are tied to specific communities of practice” (p.235). Likewise Blommaert (2010) insists on the need for “sociolinguistics of *speech* and of *resources*, of the real bits and chunks of language that make up a repertoire, and of real ways of using this repertoire in communication” (p.173). Sociolinguistic life is best understood as “*mobile speech*, not as static language, and lives can consequently be better investigated on the basis of repertoires set against a real historical and spatial background” (p.173). As Canagarajah (2007a) reminds us, lingua franca English does not exist outside the realm of practice: it is not a product but a social process that is constantly being remade from the semiotic resources available to speakers, who are always embedded in contexts and who are always interacting with other speakers. LFE is not so much about variations to an assumed linguistic system but rather about local language practices (Pennycook, 2010).

Tan, Ooi and Chiang suggest that “it would not be a bad thing to make English, in some respects, more like the *original* Lingua Franca, where variation existed and where speakers were less concerned about standards” (2006, p.92). We need to push this proposal further, however, beyond the idea that lingua franca communication is less concerned with standards, and beyond the narrow ELF or WE focus on whether count nouns get pluralised, local language terminology enters English, tag questions

become fixed, certain phonological distinctions do not seem important for communication, or verb tense and aspect are realised differently. It is not merely that the original lingua franca allowed for variation, but that it emerged from contexts of communication. It allowed people to believe, as Walter (1988) put it, that they were speaking each others' languages. Lingua franca communication is emergent and multilingual: we speak both our own and each others' languages. It is built from the bottom up: it is an emergent collection of local language practices.

Note

1. Chew refers to *fānyan* rather than the Putonghua *fāngyan*, testimony in its own small way to the variety in Chinese.

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English in the World/the World in English

Section 3

Critical Approaches to the Global Spread of English

Chapter 15

English in the World/the World in English

This chapter is based on an article that first appeared in J. Tollefson (Ed.) (1995),
Power and inequality in language education (pp.34–58).
Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Various right-wing intellectuals in the United States have recently been arguing that we are now witnessing the “end of history,” that the rapid reorientations in Eastern Europe represent a final victory for the West and for capitalist democracy. Although such claims are clearly naive, it is nevertheless evident that we are passing through a time in which many of the distinctions that have helped us to divide and explain the world appear to be crumbling. The preeminent symbol of this process was perhaps the pulling down of the Berlin Wall, bringing with it a series of implications both for the erosion of the communist/capitalist divide and for the possibilities of a restructuring of Europe. Large-scale structures, such as the Soviet Union and its sphere of influence, are disintegrating, and as they do so, many new and local concerns are coming to the fore. In Canada, the failure to find an agreement between the federal and provincial governments in the Meech Lake Accord, for example, has raised many questions about provincial concerns, the status of Quebec, women’s issues, and the rights of Aboriginal people within the larger construct of a nation state.

“Think globally, act locally” we are urged by environmentalist groups, suggesting a view of the world that bypasses the state and sees global problems as solvable by local, individual action. At the same time as these moves towards decentralization and fragmentation are occurring, however, new large-scale structures are developing, most notably with the reshaping of Europe, the growth of Southeast Asia as an economic and political force, and the complex challenges posed by the Muslim world. Distinctions such as that between ‘East’ and ‘West’ are shifting as global communications redefine cultural and political relations and as countries such as Japan start to straddle the divide. As Clifford (1988) has pointed out, the West refers to a technological, economic, and political force that no longer radiates

from a discrete geographical or cultural centre, but rather is disseminated in a diversity of forms from multiple centres (including Japan, Australia, the now former Soviet Union, and China).

These changes are difficult to comprehend, not just because of the rapidity with which they have been happening or because of their scale, but because many have challenged the premises according to which we have understood the world. And as I watch these shifts and changes — the turmoil of the world towards the end of the twentieth century — I am struck by the fact that English seems to be bound up in it all. Turn on the television news, and everywhere there will be something going on in English: signs and placards in English at a demonstration for Estonian independence, an interview with King Hussein of Jordan in English, a speech by Nelson Mandela in English to a packed stadium in Soweto. With the recent changes in Eastern Europe, there has been a rush to learn English, and such organizations as the British Council are scrambling to secure that market. Meanwhile, the private English language school business in Japan is now worth several billion dollars.

Just as I am both fascinated and troubled by these global changes, intrigued on the one hand by the possibilities brought about by these rapid shifts in international relations and our understanding of global order, but disturbed on the other by the implications of the continued power of international capitalism and “free world” ideology for the current massive global inequalities, poverty, starvation, exploitation, and pollution, so I am concerned by the relationship of English to all these changes. What I would like to explore here, then, is the *worldliness* (cf. Said, 1983) of English. I want to maintain the ambiguity of this term — worldliness in the sense of being in the world and worldliness in the sense of being global — and to argue that English is inextricably bound up with the world: English is in the world and the world is in English. Following Said’s (1983, p.35) question as to whether there is a way to deal fairly with a text without either on the one hand reducing it to its worldly circumstances or on the other leaving it as a hermetic textual cosmos, I want to ask how we can understand the relationship between the English language and its position in the world in such a way that neither reduces it to a simple correspondence with its worldly circumstances nor refuses this relationship by considering language to be a hermetic structural system unconnected to social, cultural, and political concerns.

This chapter, therefore, will seek to draw relations between global

inequalities and the English language. I will also be trying to work out ways of thinking about this relationship that avoid the pitfalls of structuralist determinism. I think it is of great importance in looking at questions of language, power, and inequality that we examine very carefully the critical frameworks we employ. In the next sections I shall review the predominant paradigm of writing on English as an International Language (ELL) before discussing more critical work that has raised numerous questions about the global spread of English. This will be followed by a discussion of ways of understanding the world and language before returning to a discussion of how we can conceptualize the question of the world being in English, and also of how opposition to the power of English and Western discourses can be formed.

The predominant paradigm

Otto Jespersen ([1938] 1968) estimated speakers of English to have numbered 4 million in 1500, 6 million in 1600, 8.5 million in 1700, between 20 and 40 million in 1800, and between 116 and 123 million in 1900. As we approach the end of the twentieth century, the number of speakers of English appears to have increased almost tenfold since 1900. Today, rough agreement can be found on figures that put the total number of speakers of English at between 700 million and 1 billion. This figure can be divided into three roughly equal groups: native speakers of English, speakers of English as a second (or intranational) language, and speakers of English as a foreign (or international) language. It is this last group that is the hardest to estimate but clearly the fastest-growing section of world speakers of English. Beyond these crude figures, a measure of the extent of the spread of English can be found by its varying uses around the world. For some time now, there has been circulating a range of descriptions of and statistics on the use of English, which have now become enshrined in the *Cambridge Encyclopedia of Language*:

English is used as an official or semi-official language in over 60 countries, and has a prominent place in a further 20. It is either dominant or well established in all six continents. It is the main language of books, newspapers, airports and air-traffic control, international business and academic conferences, science, technology, medicine, diplomacy, sports, international competitions, pop music, and advertising. Over two-thirds of the world's scientists write in English. Three quarters of the world's

mail is written in English. Of all the information in the world's electronic retrieval systems, 80% is stored in English. English radio programmes are received by over 150 million in 120 countries. Over 50 million children study English as an additional language at primary level; over 80 million study it at secondary level (these figures exclude China). In any one year, the British Council helps a quarter of a million foreign students to learn English, in various parts of the world. In the USA alone, 337,000 foreign students were registered in 1983. (Crystal, 1987, p.358)

There also seems to be fairly broad agreement on the reasons for and the implications of this spread. Although perhaps not all would agree with Hindmarsh's (1978) bland optimism that "the world has opted for English, and the world knows what it wants, what will satisfy its needs" (p.42), this view is nevertheless not too distant from the predominant view. Although few today would overtly cling to the common nineteenth-century arguments that England and the English language were superior and thus intrinsically worthy of their growing preeminence, the spread of English is today commonly justified by recourse to a functionalist perspective, which stresses choice and the usefulness of English, and suggests that the global spread of English is natural (although its spread was initiated by colonialism, since then it has been an accidental by-product of global forces), neutral (unlike other, local languages, English is unconnected to cultural and political issues), and beneficial (people can only benefit by gaining access to English and the world it opens up). Platt, Weber, and Ho (1984), for example, introducing the question of the "new Englishes," deal with the spread of English thus: "Many of the New Nations which were once British colonies have realised the importance of English not only as a language of commerce, science and technology but also as an international language of communication" (p.1). Similarly, Kachru (1986) argues that "English does have one clear advantage, attitudinally and linguistically: it has acquired a *neutrality* in a linguistic context where native languages, dialects, and styles sometimes have acquired undesirable connotations.... It was originally the foreign (alien) ruler's language, but that drawback is often overshadowed by what it can do for its users. True, English is associated with a small and elite group; but it is in their role that the *neutrality* of a language becomes vital" (pp.8-9). He goes on to suggest that "whatever the reasons for the earlier spread of English, we should now consider it a positive development in the twentieth-century world context" (p.51).

The main issue of debate is whether efforts should be made to maintain a central standard of English or whether the different varieties of English should be acknowledged as legitimate forms in their own right. The popular view, according to Crystal (1988), is that “while all mother-tongue speakers inevitably feel a modicum of pride (and relief) that it is their language which is succeeding, there is also an element of concern, as they see what happens to the language as it spreads around the world.... Changes are perceived as instances of deterioration in standards” (p.10). Mazrui (1975) sums up this attitude: “In spite of the phenomenal spread of the language, the British at home seem to look on it at best as an amusing phenomenon, and at worst as something which is tending to pollute and corrupt the language” (p.75). The two ideologies — one or multiple standards — can be clearly seen in the title change of the leading journal on English as a world language: When its editorship moved from W. R. Lee in Britain to Braj Kachru and Larry Smith in the United States, its title also changed from *World Language English* to *World Englishes*. In academic circles, the two leading figures in this debate have been Kachru (e.g., 1985) and Quirk (e.g., 1985), the former arguing, for example, that “native speakers of this language seem to have lost the exclusive prerogative to control its standardization” (p.30), and the latter maintaining, for example, that “the existence of standards ... is an endemic feature of our mortal condition and that people feel alienated and disorientated if a standard seems to be missing in any of these areas” (pp.5–6).

Apart from some work on the sociological and social psychological implications of the spread of English (see Fishman, Cooper, and Rosenbaum, 1977), which has also suggested that English is a neutral tool of international communication, the principal focus of work on EIL has been on questions of standards or on descriptions of varieties of English. The key issues, then, as represented in Kachru’s important edited volume, *The Other Tongue: English Across Cultures*, are questions of models, standards, and intelligibility (e.g., Kachru, 1982a, 1982b; Nelson, 1982), and descriptions of the new forms of English: Nigerian English (Bamgbose, 1982), Kenyan English (Zuengler, 1982), Singapore English (Richards, 1982), and so on.

The view that the spread of English is natural, neutral, and beneficial also seems to hold sway for many people more directly involved in English language teaching. Naysmith (1987) suggests that there is a “cosy, rather self-satisfied assumption prevalent at successive national and international

conferences that ELT [English Language Teaching] is somehow a 'good' thing, a positive force by its very nature in the search for international peace and understanding" (p.3). With the extent of the debate on the role of English in the world being between a conservative view on standards and a more liberal pluralist concept of variety, and with the primary concerns being those of intelligibility and description, most people in English language teaching have been poorly served by academic work that fails to address a far more diverse range of questions that might encourage a reassessment of our role as teachers of English in the world. It is to some of the critical work that has sought to address these issues that I shall turn in the next section.

Critical views on English in the world

What I think is sorely lacking from the predominant paradigm of investigation into English as an international language is a broad range of social, historical, cultural, and political relationships. There is a failure to problematize the notion of choice and an assumption that individuals and countries are somehow free of economic, political, and ideological constraints; there is a lack of historical analysis that would raise many more questions about the supposed naturalness of the spread of English during both the colonial and neo-colonial eras; there is a view of language that suggests that it can be free of cultural and political influences and therefore neutral; and there is an adherence to positivist and structuralist paradigms of analysis, with their emphasis on description and objectivity.

As I have argued elsewhere (1989a; Chapter 1; 1990b; Chapter 9), this divorce of language from broader questions has had major implications for teaching practice and research. A similar criticism has been leveled at the positivistic approach to language planning. Luke, McHoul, and Mey (1990) suggest that even in this highly political domain of applied linguistics, a technical discourse of norms and treatment was adopted from structural-functionalist sociology, thus allowing language planners to overlook the immensely political nature of their work. Many language planners, assuming their task to be an ideologically neutral one entailing the description and formalization of language(s) (corpus planning) and the analysis and prescription of the sociocultural statuses and uses of language(s) (status planning), embraced the "presupposition that the linear application of positivist social science could transform problematic, value-

laden cultural questions into simply matters of technical efficiency" (p.25).

Similar shortcomings can be found in much educational theory, where, as Giroux (1983) suggests, the predominant "culture of positivism" allowed for analysis only of questions of efficiency in learning and teaching, and not of questions such as the extent to which "schools acted as agents of social and cultural reproduction in a society marked by significant inequities in wealth, power, and privilege" (p.170). English language teachers, therefore, have been poorly served by the limited analysis of EIL provided by mainstream applied linguistics. There has been little opportunity to speculate on questions other than structural varieties of English. As Phillipson (1988) suggests, the "professional training of ELT people concentrates on linguistics, psychology and education in a restricted sense. It pays little attention to international relations, development studies, theories of culture or intercultural contact, or the politics or sociology of language or education" (p.348). Before going on in the next section to explore issues in international relations, development, international communication, and education, I shall turn in this section to critical analyses of English in the world.

Cooke (1988) has described English as a Trojan horse, arguing that it is a language of imperialism and of particular class interests. Both he and Judd (1983) draw attention to the moral and political implications of English teaching around the globe in terms of the threat it poses to indigenous languages and the role it plays as a gatekeeper to better jobs in many societies. First of all, then, English poses a threat to other languages. This is what Day (1980, 1985) has called linguistic genocide. In his study of the gradual replacement of Chamorro in Guam and the North Marianas, Day (1985) concludes pessimistically that "as long as the Marianas remain under the control of the United States, the English language will continue to replace Chamorro until there are no native speakers left. This has been American policy and practice elsewhere, and there is no reason to believe that Guam and the North Marianas will be an exception" (p.180). Although this may of course seem to be an extreme case, we should nevertheless acknowledge the widespread threat that English presents. If it is not posing such a threat to first languages, as a universal second language it is constantly replacing other languages in daily use and school curricula. In bilingual or multilingual societies, for example, the prevalence of English can easily lead to the disregarding of one or more other languages.

The second major issue raised here is the extent to which English

functions as a gatekeeper to positions of prestige in society. With English taking up such an important position in many educational systems around the world, it has become one of the most powerful means of inclusion into or exclusion from further education, employment, or social positions. In many countries, particularly former colonies of Britain, small English-speaking elites have continued the same policies of the former colonizers, using access to English language education as a crucial distributor of social prestige and wealth. Ngugi (1985) describes his experiences in Kenya, where not only was his native language proscribed with humiliating punishments (similar punishments and proscriptions were also the norm in schools for Canada's Aboriginal peoples) but English became "*the* main determinant of a child's progress up the ladder of formal education" (p.115):

[N]obody could go on to wear the undergraduate red gown, no matter how brilliantly they had performed in all the papers in all other subjects, unless they had a *credit* (not even a simple pass!) in English. Thus the most coveted place in the pyramid and in the system was only available to holders of an English-language credit card. English was the official vehicle and the magic formula to colonial elitedom. (ibid., 115)

Tollefson's (1986) study of leftist opposition to English in the Philippines gives further evidence of these connections between English and the social and economic power of elites. Whereas many studies of English language use in the Philippines have concentrated on questions such as integrative or instrumental motivation, leftist policies on language suggest a different orientation in the support for English or Pilipino. The increased emphasis on English during the martial law restrictions from 1972 to 1983, Tollefson argues, underlined the degree to which English plays a major role in "creating and maintaining social divisions that serve an economy dominated by a small Philippine elite, and foreign economic interests" (p.186). What emerges here is the clear suggestion that we cannot reduce questions of language to such social psychological notions as instrumental and integrative motivation, but must account for the extent to which language is embedded in social, economic, and political struggles. Therefore in arguing against the standard interpretation of the language situation in the Philippines, which tends to ascribe instrumental value to English and to see the struggle to maintain Pilipino as a sign of its symbolic and integrative role, Tollefson makes it clear that "consistent leftist opposition to English in the Philippines should not be viewed as an effort

to adopt Pilipino as a symbol of national unity and identity, but rather as part of a program to change the distribution of political power and material wealth" (p.186).

The extent to which English is involved in the political, educational, social, and economic life of a country is clearly a result of both the historical legacy of colonialism and of the varying success of countries since independence in warding off the threats of neo-colonialism. The different roles of English and Swahili in Kenya and Tanzania, for example, need to be seen with respect to both their colonial pasts and the different educational and development policies in the two countries (Zuengler, 1985). In Tanzania, Swahili has become widely used as the national and official language due in no small part to Nyerere's insistence on "education for self-reliance," a policy that emphasized the need for each stage of schooling to be complete in itself and to prepare Tanzanians to participate in the socialist development of the country. In Kenya, by contrast, although Swahili is also the official national language, English remains the dominant language of Kenya's economic and legal spheres, as it is the dominant language of much schooling, especially in Nairobi, within an educational system that has sought more to prepare an elite few for higher education than to educate a citizenry capable of maintaining a policy of socialist self-reliance.

If English thus operates as a major means by which social, political, and economic inequalities are maintained within many countries, it also plays a significant role as a gatekeeper for movement between countries, especially for refugees hoping to move to the English-speaking countries. In his extensive studies of the English language programmes in the Southeast Asian refugee processing centers, Tollefson (1988, 1989) has suggested that they "continue to limit refugees' improvement in English language proficiency, capacity for cultural adaptation, and preemployment skills, thereby contributing to the covert goal of ensuring that most refugees will only be able to compete effectively for minimum-wage employment" (1988, p.39). These programmes then, although ostensibly providing immigrants with English language education to prepare them for their immigration to the United States, serve as centres for the preparation of a workforce to suit the U.S. economy. They are constantly oriented towards the Americanization of immigrants, a process that assumes that American society has little or nothing to learn from immigrants' cultures and that "immigrants' primary civic responsibility is to transform

themselves by adopting that society's dominant values, attitudes, and behaviors" (1989, p.58).

The central belief here is that the cultures of immigrant peoples are the principal hindrance to their future prospects in North America, and that the American ideologies of individualism, self-sufficiency, and hard work as a guarantor of success need to be inculcated in these future citizens of the United States before their arrival: "Today's refugee program assumes that there is a unified American culture and character; that the refugees' cultures and characters are the source of their social, psychological, and economic problems; and that the purpose of the program therefore is reeducation: to teach the refugees to give up their old ways of thinking, believing, and behaving" (1989, pp.59-60). This discussion starts to raise questions not only about the connections between English in the world and social and economic power but also about the relationship between English and various cultural forms.

Ndebele (1987, p.4) suggests that "the spread of English went parallel with the spread of the culture of international business and technological standardization." Later in this paper, I shall explore in more detail the links between language, culture, and discourse — the extent to which the world is in English rather than just English being in the world — but at this juncture I shall merely address the question, similar to the ones already discussed with reference to social, economic, and political power, of the *parallel* spread of English and various forms of culture and knowledge. Most important in this respect is the dominance of English in the domains of business, popular culture, and international academic relations. As Flaitz (1988) has shown, it is through popular music that English is making a major incursion into French culture. As this study also shows, there is a deep split between the attitudes of various members of the French elite, with their constant attempts to lessen the effect of English on the French language, and those of a broader section of the population, who welcome the conjunction of popular culture and English. As Flaitz (1988, p.201) points out, this study clearly refutes claims such as Fishman's that English is not "ideologically encumbered."

In international academic relations, the predominance of English has profound consequences. A large proportion of textbooks in the world are published in English and designed either for the internal English-speaking market (United Kingdom, United States, Australia, and so forth) or for an international market. In both cases, students around the world are not

only obliged to reach a high level of competence in English to pursue their studies, but they are also dependent on forms of Western knowledge that are often of limited value and extreme inappropriacy to the local context. As Jernudd (1981) suggests, the modern discipline of linguistics, with its very particular ways of studying formal properties of language, generally serves needs different from those of many Third World countries, where diverse questions concerning language use are often far more appropriate. Yet, as he explains, linguistics is often exported to and taken up in those countries “because it is an internationally visible, modern approach to the study of language (and that not the least because it is available through the medium of English), and because the new countries’ universities model themselves on Western counterparts” (p.43). Similarly, Altbach (1981) argues that much technological expertise in India has been inappropriate because “much of Indian science is oriented toward metropolitan models, because of the use of English, because of the prestige of Western science, and because of the foreign training of many key Indian researchers” (p.613).

Other writers have claimed an even more fundamental role of English in the (re)production of global inequalities. Naysmith (1987), for example, suggests that English language teaching “has become part of the process whereby one part of the world has become politically, economically and culturally dominated by another” (p.3). The core of this process, he argues, is the “central place the English language has taken as *the* language of international capitalism” (ibid., 3). Such a position, which suggests that English is an integral part of the global structures of dependency, has been explored at length by Robert Phillipson. He argues that *linguicism* — “the ideologies and structures which are used to legitimate, effectuate and reproduce an unequal division of power and resources (both material and non-material) between groups which are defined on the basis of their language (i.e., of their mother tongue)” (1988, p.339) — is best seen within the broader context of *linguistic imperialism*, “an essential constituent of imperialism as a global phenomenon involving structural relations between rich and poor countries in a world characterised by inequality and injustice” (ibid., 339).

Most significantly, Phillipson’s work demonstrates the limitations of arguments that suggest that the current position of English in the world is an accidental or natural result of world forces. Rather, through his analysis of the British Council and other organizations, Phillipson makes it clear that it has been deliberate government policy in English-speaking

countries to promote the worldwide use of English for economic and political purposes. The British Council report for 1960–61, for example, draws a direct parallel between the advantages of encouraging the world to speak English (with the help of American power) and the history of U.S. internal policies for its immigrant population: “Teaching the world English may appear not unlike an extension of the task which America faced in establishing English as a common national language among its own immigrant population” (cited in Phillipson, 1988, p.346). Ndebele (1987) also suggests that “The British Council ... continues to be untiring in its efforts to keep the world speaking English. In this regard, teaching English as a second or foreign language is not only good business, in terms of the production of teaching materials of all kinds..., but also it is good politics” (p.63). Given the connections outlined in this section between English and the export of certain forms of culture and knowledge, and between English and the maintenance of social, economic, and political elites, it is evident that the promotion of English around the world may bring very real economic and political advantages to the promoters of that spread. Indeed, Skutnabb-Kangas and Phillipson (1989) conclude that “it has been British and American government policy since the mid-1950s to establish English as a universal ‘second language’, so as to protect and promote capitalist interests” (p.63).

Of primary importance to those of us working in English language teaching is the connection between our work and this global spread of English. Phillipson (1986) states that a primary purpose of his work is to gauge “the contribution of applied linguists and English Language Teaching Experts in helping to legitimate the contemporary capitalist world order” (p.127). As I have suggested elsewhere (1990b; Chapter 9), it is incumbent on applied linguists to explore the interests served by our work. If we start to accept some of the critical perspectives outlined here, we must surely start to raise profound questions about our own practices. Certainly, these perspectives suggest that we must be highly suspicious of claims that the spread of English is natural, neutral, or beneficial. In the next sections, I shall explore these questions further, by reexamining the ways in which we understand international relations, and by exploring questions of language and discourse. In doing so, I will raise not only the issue of English being in the world but also the extent to which the issue of the world being in English can be taken up. I hope both to draw attention to some of the limitations of the work I have summarised in this section and to extend

the analysis by exploring the relationship between language, culture, and discourse.

Understanding the world

Although there is of course a vast range of writing on the questions of international relations, development, and international communication, it is possible to establish two broad orientations. The first, which is still by far the predominant one and has been variously labeled as traditionalist, realist (as opposed to idealist), conservative, liberal, or bourgeois, has its origins in European post-Renaissance thought, especially the work of Kant, Rousseau, and Hobbes. It takes the principal actors in the world to be aggressive nation states (inherently aggressive because of natural human aggression in the Hobbesian view, aggressive as a result of social corruption of the noble primal state according to Rousseau, or aggressive to the extent that the regime was corrupt in Kant's view), and the major concern in international relations to be that of avoiding war through strategic weapon deployment or diplomacy (see Holsti, 1985).

After the Second World War, this view of the world was coupled with a notion of development that divided the world into developed and underdeveloped nations, with the process of development assumed to be a linear evolutionary path involving the development of industry and technology and a set of 'modern' values in the population. This road to development included the learning of modern forms of governmental organization and the need to overcome the limitations of "primitive" or "traditional" cultures. (This same orientation can be seen in the programmes for refugees described by Tollefson [1989] in the previous section.) This could be achieved, it was thought, by helping to provide industrial equipment and advanced technology and by setting up mass education and communication systems that would help inculcate the modern values deemed necessary to develop.

Although this view of the world is still the predominant one in much of the "developed" world, there has been one major challenge to its conception of global relations. This came about in part because of a crisis in U.S. relationships with the world after Vietnam and a shift in confidence in academic circles during the 1960s; but most of all it was the result of the realization in much of the Third World that development aid was not all that it claimed to be. As Gibbons (1985) puts it, "The Third World itself

began to experience a measure of disenchantment, when it discovered that development aid was not really aid, but a business investment camouflaged to look like development aid" (p.40). From these concerns, a critical response emerged that drew largely on neo-Marxist analyses of the distribution of global wealth. The principal questions came to be problems of modernization, exploitation, and inequality within a world capitalist system. *Dependency theory* suggests that within a global capitalist system, development and underdevelopment are inversely related within and between nations. Dependency, therefore, describes the causal relationship between the development of the central/metropolitan areas at the expense of the concomitant underdevelopment of the peripheral/satellite areas of the globe (see Frank, 1966; Galtung, 1971; Preston, 1986).

From this perspective, then, the focus shifted from competing nation states to unfair distribution of wealth within a global capitalist system; barriers to development were no longer internal limitations imposed by culture and knowledge but rather external conditions imposed by the global economy; the prime actors were no longer political elites but rather class dynamics within center-periphery relations. This raised important questions about the role of education and international communication in the maintenance of global inequalities. Altbach (1981) argued that current intellectual centers have a massive influence over the international academic system, providing educational models, publishing books and journals, and setting the research agenda, thus reducing universities in many parts of the world to little more than "distributors of knowledge" (p.602). Profound questions were also raised about international communications, with analyses showing that both in terms of quantity — a massive flow from First to Third World countries — and in terms of quality — representations of the Third World showed it as violent, backward, and disease-ridden as opposed to the modern, clean, and democratic First World — there was once again a colossal structure that maintained global inequalities (see Galtung, 1985; Gibbons, 1985; Schiller, 1985; Mowlana, 1986; Meyer, 1988).

This second major framework, then, has raised questions of neo-colonialism and imperialism in the world, suggesting that there is a constant reproduction of economic, political, educational, cultural, and communication inequality. Although I think such analyses have far more to say about global relations than the states-centric conservative and liberal analyses, they also have a number of shortcomings, and it is important to

try to overcome these. I now wish to try to go beyond this socioeconomic determinism in a way that will allow me not only to locate English critically in the world but also to locate the world critically in English. As Walker (1984) has suggested, in the neo-Marxist framework there is a "radical reduction of all human action to the same common denominators required by a positivist conception of knowledge" (p.191). I feel that if we are to move towards an understanding of English in the world, we need to avoid the limitations of structuralism and positivism not only in our views of language but also in our understanding of the world.

The general epistemological crisis in the social sciences has also started to effect how we conceptualize global order. In the era of postmodern and poststructuralist thought, when fundamental questions are being raised about the whole Enlightenment project and the very notion of modernity and its most cherished beliefs in positivism, in the rational, unified subject, in the dichotomy between knowing subject and known objects, and in universal truths, it is not only the traditional understanding of world order that is coming under scrutiny, but also the deterministic and reductionist views of more critical thinking. A diverse range of critical work from the philosophy of science, feminist theory, Third World scholars, and other critical theorists has opened up fundamental questions as to the nature of the predominant paradigms of Western knowledge. It has been convincingly argued that the unitary concept of progress and development, the predominance of positivism in the social sciences, and the claims made to forms of rationality and objectivity, are all modes of thought particular to the European origins of the Enlightenment and to the social, cultural, and political conditions that gave rise to that mode of thinking. In attempts to show how all our thinking is constructed by particular social, cultural, and historical forces, rather than reflecting some universal truths, there has been a recognition of the fundamental roles of language and culture. Walker (1984), for example, argues that in looking at international relations we must start with the assumption that "social and political change is both reflected and constituted by language" (p.185).

In his study of global relations, Worsley (1985) suggests that "the concept of culture has been virtually ignored by those social scientists who reduce the study of society to political economy or the study of social structure" (p.41). Furthermore, in going beyond the predominant social scientist paradigms, we need, as Worsley (1985) and Wuthnow, Hunter, Bergesen, and Kurzweil (1984) argue, to avoid not only the view

that culture is separate from the social but also the view that it is causally *secondary*, being in Marxist terms part of the superstructure, which is dependent on the socioeconomic realities of the infrastructure. What I am referring to, then, is not the conservative elitist view that identifies culture with a small range of aesthetic products, not the Marxist view that reduces culture to a reflection of socioeconomic relations, and not the liberal pluralist view common in much English language teaching, which takes cultures to be sets of stable beliefs, values, and behaviour that can be taught as an adjunct to a language syllabus. Rather, I am referring to a sense of culture as the process by which people make sense of their lives, a process always involved in struggles over meaning and representation.

Once we elevate culture to a prominent position in our understanding of the world, a number of key issues arise. Of great significance have been the implications of Said's (1978) seminal work on Orientalism, in which he shows how the "Orient" was constructed in the discourse of Western writers as an essentialized and homogeneous entity. As Walker (1984) suggests, this thinking has posed fundamental questions about how we understand culture, how we view the problem of the dominance of modes of Western thought, how, in looking at the Other, we often do little more than reconstruct ourselves. Once we start to see all knowledge as socially constructed, then, as Gendzier (1985), for example, has shown, it becomes clear how North American thinking on development and modernization has reflected Cold War ideology and liberal democratic theory far more than it has ever reflected the lived realities of the people and cultures with which it has purported to deal. Clifford (1988) asks whether it is indeed possible "to escape procedures of dichotomizing, restructuring, and textualizing in the making of interpretive statements about foreign cultures and traditions" (p.261).

Although Clifford suggests that the "culture concept" may have "served its time" (p.274), and should perhaps be replaced by a vision of "powerful discursive formations globally and strategically deployed" (ibid., 274), he nevertheless suggests some hope if we consider culture not so much as organically unified or traditionally continuous, not just as received from language, tradition, or environment, but as a "negotiated, present process," as "*made* in new political-cultural conditions of global relationality" (pp.273-274). In considering the importance of culture in global relations, it is important, too, to consider that, as I suggested in the introduction, the traditional boundaries of the world are slipping. Thus, as

Appadurai (1990) argues, "The new global cultural economy has to be seen as a complex, overlapping, disjunctive order, which cannot any longer be seen in terms of existing center-periphery models" (p.6). I am suggesting, therefore, that the tendencies towards socioeconomic determinism and universality in dependency theory run the risk of assuming that a universal theory of socioeconomic relations can account for all global relationships and that people are passive consumers of hegemonic cultural forms.

I am arguing here for an avoidance of totalizing theories of social and cultural reproduction in favour of a critical paradigm that acknowledges human agency and looks not only at how people's lives are regulated by language, culture, and discourse but also at how people both resist those forms and produce their own forms. Important to this discussion are the particular interests of the international discourses on development, democracy, freedom, modernization, education, politics, and so on, in structuring the way people make sense of and act in the world. Interesting new directions for work can be seen, for example, in Escobar's (1985) argument that by using Foucault's insights into the nature of discourse as a conjunction of power/knowledge relationships, and by conducting a genealogy (rather than just an archaeology) of the discourse of development, we can come to a radical reinterpretation of the effects of development theory and practice:

Without examining development as discourse we cannot understand the systematic ways in which the Western developed countries have been able to manage and control and, in many ways, even create the Third World politically, economically, sociologically and culturally; and that, although underdevelopment is a very real historical formation, it has given rise to a series of practices (promoted by the discourses of the West) which constitute one of the most powerful mechanisms for insuring domination over the Third World today. (p.384)

It is Escobar's contention, then, that not only does this discourse of development constitute a powerful means of effecting domination and economic exploitation, but that it is also only through the dismantling of this discourse and constructing of a counter-discourse that Third World countries will be able to pursue some different form of development.

In light of Escobar's comments, it is tempting to consider the whole global system in terms of Foucault's (1979) powerful metaphor of the *panopticon*, the "transparent, circular cage, with its high tower,

powerful and knowing” (p.208). Thus, we can see how the Third World is subjected to a form of *surveillance* — a “normalizing gaze” that “compares, differentiates, hierarchizes, homogenizes, excludes” (1979, p.183) — by the “powerful and knowing” central tower, the Western intellectual and political institutions that construct discourses on the Third World, and which, by the nature of their surveillance, lead the objects of that surveillance to become the “principle of [their] own subjection” (p.203). And, just as Rahim (1986) suggests that English became the language of the panopticon in colonial India, so I would like to suggest that English today is the language of the global panopticon. (It is also perhaps not entirely coincidental that the great Utilitarian, Jeremy Bentham, not only gave us the concept and the word panopticon but was also the originator of the word *international*.)

Of significance to the issues I wish to address in this paper are, on the one hand, the continued acknowledgement of inequalities and dependencies between First and Third World countries, and on the other, an attempt to conceptualize these relationships in a way that avoids the reductionist and deterministic tendencies inherent in looking predominantly at socioeconomic relationships. Of fundamental importance is the elevation of notions of culture and discourse as principal factors in our understanding of the world. Although not belittling the importance of economic and material inequalities, I would argue that it is also crucial to understand how discourses construct and regulate our realities and operate through a diverse range of international institutions. Once we move beyond a view of the world as made up of competing states or as reducible to a set of socioeconomic relations, in favour of a view that also tries to account for diverse cultures and discourses constituting our subjectivities, then it also starts to become clear that language, and especially any international language, may play a far greater role in the world than had heretofore been considered. Importantly, too, this view suggests that people around the world are not merely passive consumers of culture and knowledge but active creators. In the next section I shall explore the relationship between international discourses and English, and I shall discuss the importance of counter-discourses formed in English.

Discourse, counter-discourse, and the world in English

Now that I have outlined the limitations that I see with some of the

critical approaches to international relations and have suggested some directions that I wish to pursue in conceptualizing the globe, it may be reasonably clear that some of the critical perspectives on EIL are also open to similar criticisms. Thus Phillipson's (1986) theory of linguistic imperialism, based as it is on Galtung's (1971, 1980) theory of structural imperialism, runs the risk of becoming deterministic in its reliance on infrastructural determinants of language rights. Although I want to acknowledge the very great importance of work such as Phillipson's in its description of the structures of global language inequality, I also want to avoid what seems to be a foreclosure of discussion and possibilities by naming the spread of English as linguistic imperialism.

Phillipson describes a massive structure of linguistic imperialism and suggests ways of trying to counter this through language-planning policies. My position, however, is that we cannot reduce language spread to an imperialism parallel to economic or military imperialism. What I want to examine are the *effects* of the spread of English, how people take up English in their daily lives, what is done with "the world language which history has forced down our throats" (Achebe, 1975, p.220). By taking up the concept of discourse I am suggesting that the implications of the spread of English may be even greater than suggested in structuralist analyses because of the connection between English and international discourses, and that it may be almost impossible to solve these problems through language-planning policies since, as Luke, McHoul, and Mey (1990) argue, "while language ... can be 'planned', discourse cannot." And yet I also want to suggest that the concept of discourse allows for the construction of counter-discourses in English and may offer remarkable potential for change.

Language plays a central role in how we understand ourselves and the world and thus all questions of language control and standardization have major implications for social relations and the distribution of power. I think Shapiro's (1989) discussion of "language purism," a particular aspect of language planning and standardization, states this issue clearly:

At many levels, a society's approach to the Other is constitutive of the breadth of meaning and value it is prepared to tolerate. Language purism is a move in the direction of narrowing legitimate forms of meaning and thereby declaring out-of-bounds certain dimensions of otherness. It is not as dramatic and easily politicized as the extermination of an ethnic minority or even so easily made contentious as the proscription of various forms of social deviance. But the

Other is located most fundamentally in language, the medium for representing selves and other. Therefore, any move that alters language by centralizing and pruning or decentralizing and diversifying alters the ecology of Self-Other relations and thereby the identities that contain and animate relations of power and authority, (p.28)

Once we start to deal with language as always political, never neutral, its relationship to other forms of power becomes easier to perceive.

Kachru (1986) quotes the Nigerian novelist Chinua Achebe (1975) in support of his arguments for the legitimation of the new Englishes. Achebe argues that it is neither necessary nor desirable for an African writer to be able to use English like a native speaker. Rather, he argues that English “will be able to carry the weight of my African experience. But it will have to be a new English, still in communion with its ancestral home but altered to suit its new African surroundings” (p.223). But what do we mean when we talk about a new English? I want to argue that this is a far more complex question than simply a case of new words, new syntax, or new phonology, that Achebe is concerned not so much with the structural diversity of English as with the cultural politics of new meanings, the struggle to claim and to create meanings in the political arenas of language and discourse. Significantly, Achebe’s remark follows a quotation from the African-American writer James Baldwin, who argues that

My quarrel with English has been that the language reflected none of my experience. But now I began to see the matter in quite another way... Perhaps the language was not my own because I had never attempted to use it, had only learned to imitate it. If this were so, then it might be made to bear the burden of my experience if I could find the stamina to challenge it, and me, to such a test. (Cited in Achebe, 1975, p.223)

Achebe and Baldwin are referring to a political struggle over meaning, and it is in this domain that the notion of new Englishes becomes interesting. As Mazrui (1975) demonstrates, the relationship between English and politics is always complex. Although English has been one of the major languages of colonialism and neo-colonialism in Africa, a language linked to oppression, racism, and cultural imperialism, it was also the language through which opposition to the colonizers was formed. “Among the functions of the English language in the Commonwealth must indeed be included a function which is unifying. What are often overlooked are some of the *anti*-Commonwealth tendencies which are also part of the

English language" (1975, p.191). On the eve of an election in Nairobi, Mazrui relates, the Kenyan political leader Tom Mboya stood in front of a vast crowd and recited the poem "If" by Rudyard Kipling. What are we to make of the use of a poem by one of the great apologists of imperialism in a political speech by a vehement opponent of imperialism and colonialism? According to Mazrui, "The cultural penetration of the English language was manifesting its comprehensiveness. That was in part a form of colonization of the African mind. But when Rudyard Kipling is being called upon to serve the purposes of the Africans themselves, the phenomenon we are witnessing may also amount to a decolonizing of Rudyard Kipling" (p.209).

What starts to emerge from these instances is a sense that language is a site of struggle, that meanings are always in flux and in contention. The process of using language against the grain, of the empire writing back to the centre (see Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin, 1989), of using English to express the lived experiences of the colonized and to oppose the central meanings of the colonizers, is a crucial aspect of global language use. In the rarefied atmosphere of structuralist linguistics, especially transformational grammar, the creation of new meanings is merely a result of the generation by an internal language machine of new sentences. If, however, language is seen in its cultural and political context, meanings are forged in the contested terrain of social interaction. "Engaged with the realities of power," Terdiman (1985, p.38) argues, "human communities use words not in contemplation but in *competition*. Such struggles are never equal ones. The facts of domination, of control, are inscribed in the signs available for use by all members of a social formation." Thus, as Morgan (1987) puts it, the world is always/already in the word.

In looking, therefore, at postcolonial literature, at forms of "writing back" in the language of the colonizers, I wish to avoid the same liberal pluralism of the writing on the new Englishes that we looked at earlier and that takes as its central concerns a notion of diversity and the legitimation of other standards. I am not here concerned with legitimating other forms of Commonwealth literature or "New literatures in English" so that they can be incorporated into the canon of English. Rather, I am interested in the ways in which these literatures in English are rich in struggles over meaning and opposition to the central definitions. As Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin (1989, p.189) suggest, "A canon is not a body of texts *per se*, but rather a set of reading practices." Thus, the question is not so much one of

replacing, validating, or incorporating new forms of English language or literature, but rather of rethinking our understanding of language practices.

I am trying to articulate here a relationship between English and global relations that avoids reducing it either to a coincidental conjunction — English just happens to be the language in which various discourses are expressed — or to a structural determinism — the nature of the English language determines what discourses can be expressed. Rather, the power/knowledge relationships of discourse operate according to or in conflict with the power relationships always/already in the words of the language. This relationship is of course constantly in flux, and since it suggests that both language and discourse are constitutive of as well as constituted by each other, it also implies that language and discourse have been constituted by and have been constitutive of the history of their connections as well as the present process of their conjunction. Neither can be separated from their present cultural and political context or from their historical formation.

Discourses and languages can both facilitate and restrict the production of meanings. When we look at the history and present conjunction of English and many discourses of global power, it seems certain that those discourses have been facilitative of the spread of English and that the spread of English has facilitated the spread of those discourses. It is in this sense that the world is in English. The potential meanings that can be articulated in English are interlinked with the discourses of development, democracy, capitalism, modernization, and so on. And if we accept the argument that subjectivities are constructed in discourse (see, for example, Weedon, 1987), then we can see how the spread of English is not only a structural *reproducer* of global inequalities, but also *produces* inequality by creating subject positions that contribute to their own subjectification. But it is also at this point that possibilities for resistance present themselves in alternative readings of Rudyard Kipling, postcolonial struggles in English, and the formation of counter-discourses.

Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin (1989) identify two elements to writing back: *abrogation*, a denial and refusal of the colonial and metropolitan categories, of the standards of normative or 'correct' usage, of the claims to fixed meanings inscribed in words; and *appropriation*, the process by which the language is seized and replaced in a specific cultural location. This is similar to what I have elsewhere (1990a) called a *diremptive/redemptive project*, *diremption* being the challenge to the hegemonizing

character of prevailing Western discursive practices, and redemption being the emancipation of subjugated knowledges and identities that have been submerged beneath or marginalized by the predominant discursive practices and power/knowledge relationships. It is by engaging in the struggle to oppose the centre's claim to control over meaning and to create new meanings in opposition to the hegemonizing character of Western discourses and English that counter-discourses can be formed. It is at this moment, Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin (1989, p.87) suggest, as "the myth of centrality embodied in the concept of a 'standard language' is forever overturned ... that English becomes *english*."

I have been trying to suggest in this section, then, that if we elevate language, culture, and discourse to a central role in the (re)production of global inequalities, the relationship between English and these inequalities becomes on the one hand stronger but on the other more open to resistance. If we see the relationship between power/knowledge in discourse and the power inscribed in words and produced in the struggle over meaning, we can start to understand not only the extent to which English is in the world and the extent to which it appears to run parallel to many forms of global oppression, but also the ways in which the world is in English, the ways in which the history of conjunctions between various discourses and English creates the conditions for people's complying with their own subjugation. Thus, I have tried to maintain many of the critical elements of more structuralist descriptions of the world, while linking English more closely to forms of ideological coercion and allowing at the same time for ways of understanding resistance and other possibilities. In the final section I shall try to suggest what implications such a view holds for teaching English around the world.

English teachers and the worldliness of English

I have suggested that the predominant paradigms of analysis of the spread of English around the world have by and large failed to problematize the causes and implications of this spread. They have dealt primarily with descriptions of varieties of English and have paused only to debate the questions of standardization and intelligibility. The spread of English is taken to be natural, neutral, and beneficial. English language teachers, therefore, have been poorly served by a body of knowledge that fails to address the cultural and political implications of the spread

of English. More critical analyses, however, show that English threatens other languages, acts as a gatekeeper to positions of wealth and prestige both within and between nations, and is the language through which much of the unequal distribution of wealth, resources, and knowledge operates. Furthermore, its spread has not been the coincidental by-product of changing global relations but rather the deliberate policy of English-speaking countries protecting and promoting their economic and political interests. Thus, I have argued, English is in the world and plays an important role in the reproduction of global inequalities.

I have also suggested that when we consider the importance of language, culture, and discourse in how we make sense of the world (and how the world makes sense of us), another aspect of the worldliness of English emerges: the extent to which the world is in English. By considering the relationship between language and discourse, it is possible to go beyond an understanding of the structural concordance of English and forms of global inequality to understand how people's subjectivities and identities are constituted and how people may comply with their own oppression. This, however, is by no means a deterministic thesis; it is not the structure of English that is important here but the politics of representation. And it is in this locus of struggle over meaning that counter-discourses can be formulated.

Peirce's (1990) explanation of the difference between predominant views of EIL and a view that deals with the politics of meaning illustrates the issue well:

To interpret People's English as a dialect of international English would do the movement a gross injustice; People's English is not only a language, it is a struggle to appropriate English in the interests of democracy in South Africa. Thus the naming of People's English is a political act because it represents a challenge to the current status of English in South Africa, in which control of the language, access to the language, and teaching of the language are entrenched within apartheid structures. (p.108)

What, then, are the implications of all this for teachers and applied linguists? Rogers (1982) argues that, given the falsity of the hopes that English teaching provides, we should try to discourage the teaching of English. As the responses to Rogers's article rightly suggest, however, to deny people access to English is an even more problematic solution (Abbott, 1984; Prodromou, 1988). Although I think we should support language-

planning policies aimed at maintaining languages other than English, there are also limits to the effectiveness of such policies. Phillipson's (1988, p.353) "anti-linguicist strategies" may only be part of the picture. As long as English remains intimately linked to the discourses that ensure the continued domination of some parts of the globe by others, an oppositional programme other than one that seeks only to limit access to English will be necessary.

Elsewhere (Pennycook, 1989b), I have argued that local forms of opposition can indeed be taken up. Following Foucault's (1980, p.81) formulation, I suggested that by asking what forms of knowledge have been disqualified and subjugated by the dominant discourses, we could attempt to bring about the "insurrection of subjugated knowledges." More generally, I would suggest that counter-discourses can indeed be formed in English and that one of the principal roles of English teachers is to help this formulation. Thus, as applied linguists and English language teachers we should become political actors engaged in a critical pedagogical project to use English to oppose the dominant discourses of the West and to help the articulation of counter-discourses in English. At the very least, intimately involved as we are with the spread of English, we should be acutely aware of the implications of this spread for the reproduction and production of global inequalities.

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Chapter 16

English, Politics, Ideology: From Colonial Celebration to Postcolonial Performativity

This chapter is based on an article that first appeared in T. Ricento (Ed.)(2000),
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Since this paper aims to deal with questions of ideology in relationship to language policy, it is important that we distinguish between at least two different meanings of ideology in the context of global language spread. When we talk of the *ideological* implications of the global spread of English, there are (at least) two different interpretations of what may be meant by this. First, ideological may be used here in a general sense to mean “political”. In this fairly popular sense of the term, ideological implications refer to a critical and political analysis of the effects of the global spread of English. Although some people would disagree that the spread of English has political implications, for many of the writers discussed here, such a position would appear to be an unashamedly a priori assumption. We may disagree on how we analyse the ideological effects of English, but we share a similar view that the global spread of English has immense and complex political implications, and that these need to be addressed. Thus, in discussing the global spread of English, we can’t escape ideological positions; and to claim, as does Crystal (1997) that one is not going to deal with ideological questions is to do exactly the opposite: those who claim that they are not going to deal politically or ideologically with the spread of English are in fact doing what they claim they are not: they are taking an ideological position on the global spread of English, albeit a bland liberal one.

The second understanding of the meaning of ideological implications is a far trickier one. This sense of ideological seems to imply that the spread of English has ideological effects on people, that is to say, English is the purveyor of thoughts, cultures and ideologies that affect the ways in which people think and behave. Such a notion needs to be treated with a

great deal of caution. It implies that we can map relations between English and various cultures, discourses or ideologies. In its strongest version, this view might suggest that English produces inherent ideological effects on its users. A more subtle analysis would try to show ways in which ideologies related to English are imposed on, received by, or appropriated by users of English around the world. If the first of these ways of viewing ideology is more an analysis of the “structural power” of English, the second is an analysis of the “discursive effects” of English.

1. Divergent frameworks

In this paper I shall discuss these two ways of viewing the notion of ideology in relationship to six different frameworks for understanding the global position of English: *colonial-celebration*, a traditional view that sees the spread of English as inherently good for the world; *laissez-faire liberalism*, which views the spread of English as natural, neutral and beneficial, as long as it can coexist in a complementary relationship with other languages; *language ecology*, which focuses on the potential harms and dangers of the introduction of English to multilingual contexts; *linguistic imperialism*, which points to the interrelationships between English and global capitalism, “McDonaldization” and other international homogenising trends; *language rights*, which attempts to introduce a moral imperative to support other languages in face of the threat imposed by English; and *postcolonial performativity*, which seeks to understand through contextualised sociologies of local language acts how English is constantly implicated in moments of hegemony, resistance and appropriation.

2. Colonial-celebration

I do not intend to dwell on this position in detail since a number of us have already documented it at length (see, for example, Bailey, 1991; Phillipson, 1992; Pennycook, 1998b). Simply put, this is a position that trumpets the benefits of English over other languages, suggesting that English has both intrinsic (the nature of the language) and extrinsic (the functions of the language) qualities superior to other languages. I use the term colonial in conjunction with celebratory here because I believe these celebrations of the spread of English, its qualities and characteristics, have a long and colonial history, and form part of what I have elsewhere called the

“adherence of discourses” (1998b): the ways in which particular discourses adhere to English.

Such discourses have tremendous continuity over time, from the Anglicist rhetoric of writers such as Macaulay in the 19th century, to Lugard early this century, and on to views such as those of Claiborne (1983, pp.3–4), who asserts that since “the English-speaking peoples have plundered the world for words”, they now have “the largest, most variegated and most expressive vocabulary in the world”. And thus, “Like the wandering minstrel in *The Mikado*, with songs for any and every occasion, English has the right word for it — whatever ‘it’ may be”. Thus, “It is the enormous and variegated lexicon of English, far more than the mere numbers and geographical spread of its speakers, that truly makes our native tongue marvellous — makes it, in fact, a medium for the precise, vivid and subtle expression of thought and emotion that has no equal, past or present”. Although I am giving this position short thrift here, it is worth observing that it is backed up by a very long history of glorifying English, and that it remains extremely popular, as shown by the public response to writers such as Honey (1997).

In terms of the two senses of ideological that I outlined earlier, this view would seem to suggest that the global spread of English does indeed have ideological implications (though it is unlikely that they would ever be called such). In terms of the first sense of ideological, they are less likely to be acknowledged: English may have cultural implications but culture can (and should) be kept separate from politics. In the second sense, however, the implication is that the spread of English has clear ideological effects; and these are good effects. From this colonial-celebratory position, English brings all the advantages of a superior language: culture, knowledge, wealth and happiness. This position, therefore, is bound to promote English for the larger benefit of the globe.

3. Laissez-faire liberalism

The dominant academic line on these matters espouses what I call a liberal laissez-faire attitude. Based on a mixture of general political liberalism and more specific academic apoliticism — a view that academic work should somehow remain neutral — this approach will either deny ideological implications of the global spread of English, or suggest that they are not our concern. The most recent example of this line of thinking

is David Crystal's (1997) globally marketed book on the global spread of English. What Crystal tries to argue for is a complementarity between a support for the benefits of English as a global means of communication and the importance of multilingualism, between the dual values of "international intelligibility" and "historical identity". On one level, of course, this is an estimable position. But this very seductiveness makes its social and political naivety dangerous.

One problem here is Crystal's simplistic view of complementary language use: English will be used for international and some intranational uses, while local languages will be used for local uses. As Dua (1994, p.132) points out, looking at the context of India, such a view is quite inadequate: "the complementarity of English with indigenous languages tends to go up in favour of English partly because it is dynamic and cumulative in nature and scope, partly because it is sustained by socioeconomic and market forces and partly because the educational system reproduces and legitimizes the relations of power and knowledge implicated with English". All we need in this way of thinking is to celebrate universalism while maintaining diversity. The TESOL organization also reflects this liberal idealism in its mission statement "to strengthen the effective teaching and learning of English around the world while respecting individuals' language rights".

This liberal-laissez-faire stance uncomfortably echoes views such as those of Hogben (1963, pp.28-29), who claims that all language planners agree that we need a bilingual world "in which one language has priority by common consent as the sole medium of informative communication between speech communities which properly prefer to retain their native habits of discourse for reasons which have little or no relevance to the exacting semantic demands of science". As Dua (1994, p.133) cogently argues, such views immediately condemn other "home" languages to a less significant role. This view is already one nail in the coffin of other languages. In the context of the relationship of English to Indian languages, he points out that "In order to bring about the fundamental change in the complementarity of English ..., it is necessary to learn from the history of English. It must be realized that language is basically involved with class, power and knowledge".

By the time Crystal's book is being reviewed by John Hanson, the former director-general of the British Council, we are told "English speakers, relax: English is streets ahead and fast drawing away from the rest

of the chasing pack... On it still strides: we can argue what globalisation is until the cows come home — but that globalisation exists is beyond question, with English its accompanist. The accompanist is, of course, indispensable to the performance” (1997, p.22). Hanson has, of course, slipped here from the more general liberalism and apoliticism espoused by Crystal, back into a colonial-celebratory mode. But that is the very problem with this liberal laissez-faire approach: it allows such slippage to happen so easily because it has no general theory of society or politics beyond individual liberalism. It is not so much that a liberal view of the world does not have “good intentions” but rather that as Williams (1992, p.226) describes the frequent problem with sociolinguistics, there is “evidence of an overriding desire to support the underdog, accompanied by a sociological perspective which reflects the power of the dominant”. As Luke, McHoul, and Mey (1990, pp.26–27) explain, many linguists and educational planners have seen their task “as an ideologically neutral one”. Thus, while maintaining a “vener of scientific objectivity” language planning has “tended to avoid directly addressing larger social and political matters within which language change, use and development, and indeed language planning itself are embedded”.

In terms of what it has to say about the two forms of ideological implications, the liberal laissez-faire tends to be the most silent. It suggests that we should not engage in ideological/political discussions of language and that we should make freedom of choice our central mode of understanding. Everyone is free to do what they like with English, to use English in beneficial ways and to use other languages for other purposes. This view, then, which is doubtless the dominant framework in TESOL, has virtually nothing to say about ideological implications of the global spread of English. While the colonial celebratory mode discussed above may appear more obnoxious in its disregard for other languages and cultures and its overt glorification of English, the liberal laissez-faire mode may nevertheless be the more insidious because of its seductive freedom-of-choice arguments.

4. Language ecology

The notion of language ecology emphasizes the importance of “the cultivation and preservation of languages” (Phillipson and Skutnabb-Kangas, 1996, p.441) in a way parallel to how we understand natural

ecologies. Mühlhäusler (1996) has developed this idea considerably and shows how the introduction of languages and literacy into particular language ecologies may have devastating effects on other languages and their uses. He argues that an ecological approach to language diversity reframes how we think about language maintenance since it focuses not on the preservation of individual languages but rather on the “structured diversity” of languages in relation to each other (1996, p.322). From this point of view the problem with the spread of English is a complex disruption to an ecology of languages.

The notion of language ecology is in many ways a very useful one since it appeals to a notion of environmental protection that is shared by many. The promotion of diversity and the protection of species may be a useful way for promoting language protection. Furthermore, the idea that the introduction of a language into a particular ecology of languages may have serious effects on those languages is a powerful argument that militates against any simple view that one more language might not make a difference. In Australia, for example, many of us are aware of the devastating effects of the introduction of European animals (rabbits, foxes, pigs, goats, etc) into the delicate ecology of Australian wildlife. This image then allows us to draw a powerful parallel between, for example, ‘feral’ goats eating kangaroos and wallabies out of their natural habitats, and ‘feral’ European languages destroying the rich linguistic ecologies of Aboriginal Australia. And yet there are also drawbacks with an ecology metaphor, since it relies so heavily on a notion of what is “natural”, and relies therefore on what may at times appear a conservative notion of preservation. To the extent that it may lack a broader social and political theory, it may end up relying primarily on a belief in the preservation of a natural order. Conservation may easily slide into conservatism.

In terms of the two questions to do with ideology, it addresses the first in terms by and large of an appeal to ‘environmentalism’ and preservation. But at the same time it makes significant points about the effects of the introduction of other languages. Already we can see here that the liberal *laissez-faire* approach is inadequate since it cannot deal with the complexity suggested by this notion of ecology. If one views the erosion of linguistic diversity as a political issue, then a language ecology perspective certainly has a political position on this. In terms of the second question, a language ecology perspective has less to say. The argument that the introduction of a language or literacy may greatly affect what other languages get used for

suggests that the ideological effects of the global spread of English language and literacy lie not so much in ideological messages carried by English but in the disruption of local cultural and ideological possibilities.

5. Linguistic imperialism

A term that Skutnabb-Kangas (1988, 1998) makes central to her view of the inequitable allocation of language rights is ‘linguicism’. Linguicism, she argues — akin to racism and ethnicism — is a sort of “linguistically argued racism” (1988, p.13; 1998, p.16), a process by which an unequal division of power is produced and maintained according to a division between groups on the basis of the language they speak. Phillipson (1992) has taken up this term and looked specifically at one form of such linguicism, namely what he calls “linguistic imperialism”, and particularly English linguistic imperialism. It is important to view Phillipson’s arguments on linguistic imperialism in this light, for although his concerns about the global spread of English can be taken on their own, they are also deeply connected with this threat to linguistic human rights.

Phillipson’s attempt to theorize what he calls “English linguistic imperialism” is doubtless the best known attempt to map out such relations. What Phillipson tries to do is to show that there are significant relationships between frameworks of global imperialism — that is to say continuing relationships of global inequality — in terms, following Galtung (1980), of economic, political, military, communicative (communication and transport), cultural and social imperialism — and the global spread of English. English linguistic imperialism Phillipson defines in the following way: “the dominance of English is asserted and maintained by the establishment and continuous reconstitution of structural and cultural inequalities between English and other languages” (1992, p.47). That is to say, the dominant role of English in the world today is maintained and promoted through a system both of material or institutional structures (for example through English maintaining its current position as the dominant language of the Internet) and of ideological positions (arguments that promote English as a superior language).

Phillipson is generally very convincing in his demonstration of how English has been promoted and supported by a range of institutions, particularly the British Council. He also makes convincing arguments about the ideological underpinnings that support English, the arguments

that construct English as a superior and beneficial language to all. Here, then, we have another crucial argument: English has been continually spread and supported for very particular political and economic goals, and, through its constant promotion threatens the linguistic human rights of speakers of other languages. Phillipson's position has received a lot of criticism from many different directions. I think the important point with Phillipson's view is to understand what it can and cannot do. As he suggests, the issue for him is "structural power" (1992, p.72), not intentions, and not local effects. He is interested in "English linguistic hegemony" which can be understood as "the explicit and implicit beliefs, purposes, and activities which characterize the ELT profession and which contribute to the maintenance of English as a dominant language" (73). Thus, it is the ways that English is promoted through multiple agencies and to the exclusion of other languages that is the issue.

In terms of the two senses of ideology, this view clearly presents us with a political and critical account of the global spread of English. It also has things to say about discursive effects, but in a particular way that I think is often misunderstood. To the extent that he is interested in discursive effects, this is in terms of people accepting the ideological positions in support of English. Thus Phillipson does have things to say about discursive effects but they are not so much about the effects of the spread of English as about the effects of the ideological support for the spread of English. The spread of English is more a result of the discursive effects, rather than the discursive effects being a result of the spread of English. Phillipson and Skutnabb-Kangas (1996, p.441) point out that "As English is the dominant language of the U.S., the UN, the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, many other world policy organizations, and most of the world's big businesses and elites in many countries worldwide, it is the language in which the fate of most of the world's citizens is decided, directly or indirectly." This is an important observation about structural power, but not necessarily about what the effects of such decisions being made in English might be.

This point is frequently misunderstood (perhaps at times by Phillipson himself?). The problem is, in part, that the notion of linguistic imperialism is in many ways too powerful. If it is only used to map out ways in which English has been deliberately spread, and to show how such policies and practices are connected to larger global forces, it works. But

the moment it slips into apparently implying ideological effects of such promotion, it runs into dangers. Thus it is not a position that can tell us about the discursive effects of the spread of English but rather a position that can tell us about the continuing possibilities for such effects to happen. But here, by quite rightly problematising the notion of choice, Phillipson runs the danger of implying that choices to use English are nothing but an ideological reflex of linguistic imperialism. Such a position, it might be said, lacks a sense of agency, resistance, or appropriation.

6. Language rights

Rather than an argument only for the maintenance of language ecologies, we now have an argument that languages are threatened by linguistic imperialism, and particularly English imperialism. What we might suggest, then, is a language ecology model needs the addition of a political or moral view that goes beyond the argument that the altering of an ecology or the reduction of diversity are in themselves unacceptable. Indeed, Tsuda (1994) and Phillipson and Skutnabb-Kangas (1996) insist that a linguistic human rights perspective should form the cornerstone of an ecology of language paradigm. (And Mühlhäusler, 1996, it should be noted, adds the notion of linguistic imperialism to his view of language ecology.) Reviewing various documents on human rights, Phillipson and Skutnabb-Kangas (1996) show that there is little provision for the positive right to education in a mother tongue. Thus, Skutnabb-Kangas (1998, p.12) argues, “we are still living with linguistic wrongs” which are a product of the belief (“monolingual reductionism”) in the normality of monolingualism and the dangers of multilingualism to the security of the nation state. Both, she suggests, are dangerous myths. “Unless we work fast”, she argues, “excising the cancer of monolingual reductionism may come too late, when the patient, the linguistic (and cultural) diversity in the world, is already beyond saving”. What is proposed, then, is that the “right to identify with, to maintain and to fully develop one’s mother tongue(s)” should be acknowledged as “a self-evident, fundamental *individual* linguistic human right” (22). These “universal linguistic human rights should be guaranteed for an *individual* in relation to the *mother tongue(s)*, in relation to an *official language* (and thus in relation to bilingualism), in relation to a possible *language shift*, and in relation to *drawing profit from education* as far as the medium of education is concerned” (1998, p.22; emphasis in original).

This, then, is a powerful argument in favour of the support for diversity in terms of fundamental human rights. What it adds crucially to the discussion so far is a *moral* standpoint from which diversity can be supported. Powerful though such an argument is, there are also a number of problems. It often assumes too simple a dichotomy between those who have language rights and those who do not: "Linguistic majorities, speakers of a dominant language, usually enjoy all those linguistic human rights which can be seen as fundamental, regardless of how they are defined. Most linguistic minorities do not enjoy these rights. It is only a few hundred of the world's 6–7,000 languages that have any kind of official status, and it is only speakers of official languages who enjoy *all* linguistic human rights" (Phillipson, Rannut, Skutnabb-Kangas, 1994, pp.1–2; emphasis in original). It also relies on problematic assumptions about the necessary effects of English, and the possibility of working with a notion of universal rights (Pennycook, 1998a). Thus, it is perhaps worth considering Coulmas' (1998, p.71) claim that the notion that language shift is necessarily a catastrophe, based as it is on a "nineteenth-century romantic idea that pegs human dignity as well as individual and collective identity to individual languages", may be a passing ideological fashion. Furthermore, as Rassool (1998, p.98) argues, the complex, interconnected nature of the modern world suggests that continued appeal to the moral basis of universal rights may no longer have adequate credibility: "in the light of these dynamic changes taking place globally and nationally can the argument for a universalizing discourse on cultural and linguistic pluralism be sustained?" Thus, like Phillipson's notion of linguistic imperialism, the notion of universal linguistic rights may be too much a dream of modernist universalism to continue to have currency and legitimacy in the current global context.

In terms of the two ideological questions, it clearly takes a strong stand on the politics of the global spread of English to the extent that it can be shown that English poses a threat to linguistic diversity and rights. Thus, a language rights perspective, like a language ecology perspective, is concerned primarily with the support of diversity. If the global spread of English can be shown to be a threat to such diversity, language rights provide a powerful moral argument against support for English. In terms of the second understanding of ideology, again like the language ecology framework, it has less to say about the actual ideological effects of English than about the destruction of other cultural and ideological possibilities if language rights are not upheld. But when linked to an analysis of the

incursions into local languages and cultures caused by English, it again can provide a moral argument against the threats to diversity.

7. Postcolonial performativity

One further way of thinking about these questions is in terms of what I call postcolonial performativity. This view acknowledges the significance of all these last three perspectives — linguistic ecology, linguistic human rights, and linguistic imperialism — but in trying to explore further what I earlier (1994) termed the ‘worldliness of English’, it works with concepts of appropriation and performance. The notions of appropriation and hybridity have been crucial to postcolonial studies, which as Loomba (1998, p.173) suggests, “have been preoccupied with issues of hybridity, creolisation, *mestizaje*, in-betweenness, diasporas and liminality, with the mobility and cross-overs of ideas and identities generated by colonialism.” Attempts to understand postcolonialism, then, have been concerned not only with a critique of the ‘metropolitan’ categories of knowledge and culture, but also with an attempt to understand how languages, cultures, knowledge and identities have been taken over, appropriated, adapted, adopted and reused. Postcolonialism also demands that we work contextually. What role English plays in particular contexts needs to be understood in terms of specific sociologies of those contexts. If we start to pursue such questions in terms of local contexts of language, it becomes possible to consider using English not so much in terms of some inevitable, essential commonality, but rather — as with Judith Butler’s (1990) understanding of gender as something performed rather than pre-given — as another form of ‘performativity’.

Thus we need both a more complex understanding of globalization and a more complex understanding of language than those offered by the frameworks above. Appadurai (1990, p.296) suggests that the “new global cultural economy has to be understood as a complex, overlapping, disjunctive order, which cannot any longer be understood in terms of existing center-periphery models”. This position moves towards the “conceptualization of global culture less in terms of alleged homogenizing processes (e.g., theories which present cultural imperialism, Americanization and mass consumer culture as a proto-universal culture riding on the back of Western economic and political domination) and more in terms of the diversity, variety and richness of popular and local discourses, codes and practices which resist and play-back systematicity

and order” (Featherstone, 1990, p.2). From this point of view, both the liberal approach of Crystal with its global and local languages in mutual relationship, or the more critical view of Phillipson and others, with its local diversity threatened by global homogeneity, may be inadequate. Thus, while never losing sight of the very real forces of global capital and media, we need, at the very least, to understand the response to cultural spread and not assume its instant effects.

This means, first, viewing the global dominance of English not ultimately as an *a priori* imperialism but rather as a product of the local hegemonies of English. As Foucault (1980, p.94) puts it in the context of arguing for a notion of power not as something owned by some and not by others but as something that operates on and through all points of society, “Major dominations are the hegemonic effects that are sustained by all these confrontations”. Any concept of the global hegemony of English must therefore be understood in terms of the complex sum of contextualised understandings of local hegemonies. Thus, for example, Dua’s (1994) analysis of the ‘hegemony of English’ in India points to all the complex ways in which English operates in relation to indigenous languages, in education, language policy, mass media, and so on. And such local hegemonies contribute towards a larger position of hegemony. But such hegemonies are also filled with complex local contradictions, with the resistances and appropriations that are a crucial part of the postcolonial context.

Second, therefore, this position suggests we need to understand how postcolonial subjects are not mere reflexes of colonialism and neocolonialism but rather are resistant, hybrid beings using aspects of indigenous languages and cultures as well as colonial languages such as English for multiple purposes. Butler (1997, p.158) asks “What is the performative power of appropriating the very terms by which one has been abused in order to deplete the term of its degradation or to derive an affirmation from the degradation, rallying under the sign of ‘queer’ or revaluing affirmatively the category of ‘black’ or of ‘women’?” The same questions need to be asked of English in the global context, so that, for example, the “Africanization of the English language” is not merely a question of identifying a local variant of English, but rather “must definitely include the deracialization of English. Black aesthetics has to rescue blackness from the stifling weight of negative metaphor” (Mazrui and Mazrui, 1998, p.29).

In terms of the two ideological frameworks, this perspective has

something to say about both. It suggests that the global spread of English has political implications and these need to be addressed. But it also insists that such effects need to be understood through contextual sociologies rather than a priori assumptions about imperialistic effects. Thus it offers a political standpoint both on the structure of linguistic imperialism and on the agency of resistance. In terms of the second understanding of ideology — the discursive effects of English — it also acknowledges that English may have effects in terms of the cultural baggage that comes with English, but it suggests that this can have no absolute or necessary effects, that it will always be changed, resisted, twisted into other possibilities. And it asks not merely whether ideology is imposed or resisted, but what is produced in such relationships. And thus, as Claire Kramsch (1993) suggests, we need to start thinking here of what is produced in cultural encounters, not just homogeneity or heterogeneity, imperialism or resistance, but rather what ‘third cultures’ or ‘third spaces’ are constantly being created.

8. Conclusion

In conclusion, then, I would like to suggest that we cannot escape viewing the global spread of English in political (or ideological) terms. In this sense it has clear ideological implications, and these can be addressed by looking through a variety of political lenses. The *laissez-faire* liberal perspective, which attempts to deny a political or ideological dimension to such questions, needs to be strongly resisted. So too, of course, does the colonial-celebratory framework, with its vehement support for English. The powerful perspectives on these questions brought by language ecology, linguistic imperialism, and language rights frameworks point to the significance of understanding the ideological context of the spread of English. But, in terms of adducing ideological implications as possible discursive effects of English, we need, I believe, to move towards a framework of postcolonial performativity. While global theories may frame our problematic, the issue has to be one of local contexts and particular configurations of language, culture, knowledge and power.

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Chapter 17

Beyond Homogeny and Heterogeny: English as a Global and Worldly Language

This chapter is based on an article that first appeared in C. Mair (Ed.)(2003), *The politics of English as a world language* (pp.3–17). Amsterdam: Rodopi.

The acute problem of English as a language of global discommunication

In a recent article in the *Barrier Daily Truth* (Broken Hill, 5 January 2001) there is the following story under the headline “Doctor couldn’t spell ‘acute’”: “A Hong Kong doctor left the word ‘acute’ out of a dying heart patient’s diagnosis because he didn’t know how to spell it [...]”. I assume that this report, which originally appeared in the *South China Morning Post*, has been picked up by this rather obscure newspaper from this small outback Australian mining town because of its amusing (a doctor who can’t spell) yet significant (fatal misdiagnosis) details. The story continues: “The patient was treated for a less-serious condition as a result and died in hospital hours after going to Dr Chau Chak-lam with chest pains.” The report goes on to explain that the patient, Chiu Yiu-wah, was admitted only as an “urgent” case, two steps down from the “critical” case, as a result of the referral letter.

At the inquest, the doctor admitted that he “should have put the word ‘acute’” on the instructions to the hospital. He “had acute angina pectoris in mind” but had omitted the word ‘acute’. But here we get to the interesting point that elevates this story from a sad but — with the benefit of distance — also faintly amusing story: “I was not sure about the translation,” Dr Chau explained to the inquest, “I did not know the English spelling.” As the story explains, “asked by the coroner why he did not use Chinese, Chau said he was following the common practice in Hong Kong of using English in referral letters.” Unfortunately, the brief story stops there; we don’t get to hear more about this practice, its history, its possible link to other deaths. All we have is two Chinese names —

and I'm assuming these are both Cantonese speaking, as was probably the ambulance driver and the nurses and doctors¹ at the hospital — and an avoidable death. It looks as if highlighting the issue of the doctor not being able to spell 'acute' misses the point: It was more that he couldn't think of the English translation. And why indeed should he, as a Cantonese doctor with a Cantonese patient in a Cantonese city? If we're looking for examples of English as a killer language, this might be a good candidate.

Let me jump to South Africa. Athalie Crawford's study of communication between patients, nurses and doctors in Cape Town (RSA) health services highlights "the problem posed by doctors being linguistically unequipped to care for Xhosa-speaking patients, whose numbers continue to grow rapidly as people move to town from the rural areas" (1999, p.27). Here we see the complexities of relations lying behind a 'language barrier'; at issue here are questions of language and power within medical contexts as well as within the whole broader context of South African society. "It is not possible," suggests Crawford, "to isolate the patient disempowered in terms of the language barrier from the whole biomedical discourse in which patients occupy a disempowered position" (29). Neither is it possible to see issues of language, interpretation and medical discourse as separate from the class, gendered and racial relations of South Africa: "The patients are positioned at the bottom, largely passive bodies whose own version or narrative of their illness is not considered central to the processes of diagnosis and formulation of a realistic treatment strategy. The nurses, often also used as (unpaid) interpreters in South Africa where a wide gulf of social class, race, language, and gender frequently separates doctor from patient, occupy a conflicted and ambivalent position intersecting the space between them" (29).

This gives us, then, a more complex picture than the newspaper sketch of a patient dying because his doctor couldn't spell 'acute'. Here we see more clearly how language is embedded in social relations and indeed is part of the system that perpetuates inequality. And, as Crawford argues, change can only be brought about by addressing questions of language as well as other social, economic and political concerns: "To fashion a new integrated social order out of a severely traumatized past, to accept and work with the reality of black suppression and rage at white domination, requires, among other things, a sophisticated grasp of the social meaning of the use of a particular language, and a commitment to overcome the discrimination against and exclusion from power of those who speak

languages other than English” (32). While on the one hand, then, we may want to acknowledge the usefulness of English as a language of global communication, we clearly also need to acknowledge it as the language of global miscommunication, or perhaps ‘dis’communication. And I do not mean this in any trivial fashion — I am not merely talking here of misunderstanding, but rather of the role of English as a language that is linked to inequality, injustice, and the prevention of communication.

For my final example of English and medical discommunication, I would like to turn to a ‘fictional’ passage from Han Suyin’s 1956 novel *And the Rain my Drink*, which draws on her own experiences as a doctor in pre-independence Malaya:

Among the doctors few can speak to all the patients, for in Malaya a university education, by its very insistence upon excellence in English, hampers a doctor from acquiring the vernacular languages of this country.

And thus at night, when the patients confide in the darkness and in their own tongue what they have withheld from physician and nurse, I begin to understand the terror, the confusion, the essential need to prevaricate of those who are always at someone else’s mercy, because they cannot communicate with those who decide their fate, except through an interpreter.

In the process, how many deviations, changes, siftings, warpings, and twistings; how many opportunities for blackmail and corruption, before, transformed, sometimes unrecognisable, the stories of the poor who do not speak English reach their rulers, who are hand-picked, among their own peoples, on the basis of their knowledge of English. (1961 [1956], p.31)

These brief stories — a newspaper story about a death in Hong Kong, a study of communication in Cape Town hospitals, a novel set in pre-independence Malaya — are interestingly inter-connected. All speak to the range of contexts into which English has penetrated; all speak to the ways in which English becomes linked to forms of institutionalized power; all speak to the ways in which English functions as a class-based language; all speak to the dichotomization between local, multiple vernacular languages and the monolingualism of the language of power; all speak to the ways in which English is as much a language of global discommunication as it is a language of global communication.

English and globalization

The above examples, drawn from one interconnected domain —

language use in medical contexts — but from diverse contexts, point to the many ways in which English has become a language (though not the only language) of global disparity and discommunication. Such a role, of course, needs to be seen in terms of the complex interplay between the local and the global. It does matter that the language in the examples is English, as one of the major players in global relations. It also matters that these contexts are in Hong Kong of China, South Africa and Malaya, all places that have felt the insidious effects of British colonialism and its socially and ethnically divisive policies. It matters, too, that the domain is medicine, as one that has become based on very particular formations of knowledge and practice, so that its practitioners work with forms of supposedly universal or global, rather than locally derived, knowledge.

There are many domains in which English plays similar roles. The role of English in business and the economy is one of the most salient. As Elmer Ordóñez (1999) put it in a discussion of the role of ‘English for Global Competitiveness’ at a 1995 conference in the Philippines:

English continues to occupy the place of privilege — it being the language of the ruling system, government, education, business and trade, and diplomacy [...] Now this conference seeks to reinforce the hegemony of English in this country by making it *globally competitive* [...] *English for global competitiveness* fits into the type of education that would conform to the requirements of an export-oriented economy pushed by the IMF-World Bank for the Philippines. (19)

Ordóñez goes on to suggest that

The role of Philippine education [...] seems to be that of supplying the world market economy with a docile and cheap labor force who are trained in English and the vocational and technical skills required by that economy. As it is we do have a decided advantage in the export market of domestic helpers and laborers. Cite their knowledge of English as that advantage. (20)

Again we can see here the continued effects of colonialism (the particular effects of the USA after the Spanish), the ways in which English is embedded in local institutional contexts (an education system that continues to favour English), and how these local contexts interrelate with broader global concerns such as IMF/World Bank pressures to develop particular types of economy, and the fact that the continuing poverty of the Philippines means that it exports its own people as cheap labour with a

knowledge of English. Domestic helpers from the Philippines are popular in Hong Kong of China and Singapore in part because they can interact with children in English, something which is seen as a particular advantage in these two former colonies with their English-dominant language policies and dependence on global trade.

So how do we start to make sense of these interrelationships between English and the local and global? Writers from different ends of the political spectrum are often united in their agreement that English and globalization go hand in hand. Where they differ is in terms of the effects of such globalization. Thus, reviewing David Crystal's (1997) book on the global spread of English, Sir John Hanson, the former Director-General of the British Council, is able to proclaim: "On it still strides: we can argue about what globalisation is till the cows come — but that globalisation exists is beyond question, with English its accompanist. The accompanist is indispensable to the performance" (Hanson, 1997, p.22). Robert Phillipson (1999), by contrast, in his review of the same book, opts for a critical rather than a triumphalist evaluation:

Crystal's celebration of the growth of English fits squarely into what the Japanese scholar, Yukio Tsuda, terms the Diffusion of English Paradigm, an uncritical endorsement of capitalism, its science and technology, a modernisation ideology, monolingualism as a norm, ideological globalisation and internationalisation, transnationalisation, the Americanisation and homogenisation of world culture, linguistic, culture and media imperialism. (274)

There is not much point here in considering further the conservative and liberal positions of Hanson and Crystal, since they have very little of use to say about globalization and English (though we should not at the same time be lulled into believing that these popular ideas are insignificant). Clearly Phillipson's position on the diffusion of English, or 'linguistic imperialism' (1992), is more useful if we want an understanding of globalization as an economic, social, cultural and political process. This I will call the *homogeny position* (an argument that the global spread of English is leading to the "homogenisation of world culture"). And yet, as I have argued elsewhere (eg., 2001), although Phillipson's framework crucially adds a critical and political framework within which we can understand the global spread of English in relationship to global forms of inequality, it is also important to understand what it can and cannot do. As he suggests, the issue for him is "structural power" (72) rather than local effects; he is

interested in “English linguistic hegemony” which can be understood as “the explicit and implicit beliefs, purposes, and activities which characterize the ELT profession and which contribute to the maintenance of English as a dominant language” (73). Thus, it is the ways in which English is promoted through multiple agencies and to the exclusion of other languages that is the issue. What this lacks, of course, is a view of how English is taken up, how people use English, why people choose to use English. Such a position cannot account for a sense of agency, resistance, or appropriation. What Phillipson shows, therefore, is how and for what purposes English is deliberately promoted and spread, with the underlying assumption that the language is a crucial part of the homogenizing process of globalization. What he does not show is the effects of that spread in terms of what people do with English.

The second position, which I shall call the *heterogeny position*, is epitomized by Braj Kachru’s notion of *world Englishes*. Here we get the other side of the coin, Kachru’s interests being in the “implications of pluricentricity [...], the new and emerging norms of performance, and the bilingual’s creativity as a manifestation of the contextual and formal hybridity of Englishes” (1997, p.66). Thus the world Englishes paradigm has focused on the ways in which English has become locally adapted and institutionalized to create different varieties of English (different Englishes) around the world. But, while the homogeneity argument tends to ignore all these local appropriations and adaptations, this heterogeny argument tends to ignore the broader political context of the spread of English. Indeed, there is a constant insistence on the neutrality of English, a position that avoids all the crucial concerns around both the global and local politics of the language. Furthermore, by focusing on the standardization of local versions of English, the world Englishes paradigm shifts the locus of control but not its nature, and by so doing ignores power and struggle in language. As Suresh Canagarajah (1999) points out, while Kachru’s position is a useful counter to the centrist arguments of some linguists, his challenge “does not go far enough, since he is not fully alert to the ideological implications of periphery Englishes. In his attempt to systematize the periphery variants, he has to standardize the language himself, leaving out many eccentric, hybrid forms of local Englishes as too unsystematic. In this, the Kachruvian paradigm follows the logic of the prescriptive and elitist tendencies of the center linguists” (180).

Both the homogeneity and heterogeny positions, therefore, miss crucial

aspects of the global spread of English. The examples I discussed at the beginning, for example, cannot be easily accounted for in terms of either model. And while a combination of the two might seem a desirable option, it is not clear that such a combination would be possible. So, how can we start to account for the constant reciprocity between globalization and localization? How can we get beyond the one-way homogenizing model of Phillipson and the heterogenous dispersion model of Kachru? How can we account, to take an example from a different domain, for the processes by which beer production became centralized in large breweries in many parts of the world, was then decentralized after beer drinkers protested against homogenized beer, and has now become part of a globalized process of localization, in which heterogeneous beer production is being pursued globally? How can we understand ways in which popular culture in North America emerges as a form of protest against mainstream culture, is coopted by media marketing, is spread around the world, and is appropriated by local groups who are now globally doing local forms of the global?

New Way New Life: Naya Zindagi Naya Jeevan²

If we are looking for new Englishes, we could do worse than starting with the Asian Dub Foundation's CD *Community Music* (2000, London Records 90), even if (or especially since) Jamaican-style rap sung by young British men of South Asian background is not often deemed to be a standard form of new English. As they sing in their song "New Way, New Life":

And now we're walking down de street
 Wid a brand new pride
 A spring inna de step
 Wid our heads held high
 Young Asian brothers an sisters
 Moving forward, side by side
 Naya Zindagi Naya Jeevan
 New Way New Life

The phrase "Naya Zindagi Naya Jeevan" means "new way, new life" in Hindi and Urdu. It was the title of a BBC programme in the UK in the 1970s aimed at Indian and Pakistani immigrants. Here these second-generation South Asians recall how this programme "Kept our parents

alive/Gave them the will to survive/Working inna de factories/Sometimes sweeping de floor". But now a new generation has arrived:

And we're supposed to be cool
 Inna de dance our riddims rule
 But we knew it all along
 Cos our parents made us strong
 Never abandoned our culture
 Just been moving it along
 Technology our tradition
 Innovation inna the song
 Now de struggle continues
 To reverse every wrong
 New heroines an heroes
 Inna de battle we belong
 When we reach de glass ceiling
 We will blow it sky high
 Naya Zindagi Naya Jeevan
 New Way New Life

What is interesting, it seems to me, is the mixtures and ironies here. While their parents kept them strong, never abandoning their culture, they have been moving it along — indeed, not just shifting it along, but rather shifting it into a quite different space, an African-Caribbean rap celebration of the new life of second-generation South Asian youths in London, a space that their factory-working parents who watched *Naya Zindagi Naya Jeevan* on TV in the 1970s might find it hard to accept as an extension of the cultures they have maintained. This fluid mixture of cultural heritage (a transformed version of South Asian cultures) and popular culture (an appropriated style of London-Caribbean but also global rap), of change and tradition, of border crossing and ethnic affiliation, of global appropriation and local contextualization, is in many ways what the new global order is about. This is neither homogenization nor heterogenization.

Similar contexts can be found in Zadie Smith's novel *White Teeth*. As Millat and Majid, the twin sons of Bengali parents, walk down a street, they start 'taxing' objects as they pass:

Millat and Majid jumped into action. The practice of 'taxing' something, whereby one lays claims, like a newly arrived colonizer, to items in a street that do not belong to you, was well known and beloved to both of them. 'Cha, man! Believe, I don't want to tax dat crap,' said Millat with the Jamaican accent that

all kids, whatever their nationality, used to express scorn. (145)

Later, Smith describes *Raggastanis* who

spoke a strange mix of Jamaican patois, Bengali, Gujarati and English. Their ethos, their manifesto, if it could be called that, was equally a hybrid thing: Allah *featured*, but more as a collective big brother than a supreme being, a hard-as-fuck geezer who would fight in their corner if necessary; Kung Fu and the works of Bruce Lee were also central to the philosophy; added to this was a smattering of Black Power (as embodied by the album *Fear of a Black Planet*, Public Enemy); but mainly their mission was to put the Invincible back in Indian, the Bad-aaaass back in Bengali, the P-Funk back in Pakistani. (200)

This echoes the work of Ben Rampton's extensive study of what he calls 'crossing', "the use of language varieties associated with social or ethnic groups that the speaker does not normally 'belong' to" (1995, p.14). As he shows, Jamaican creole, Panjabi, Asian English and standard English (and note that SE is included here as a resource usable for certain effects) were used by different speakers for different effects and allegiances: "these linguistic enunciations of group identity *traversed* the boundaries of biological descent [...] crossing involved the active ongoing construction of a new inheritance from within multiracial interaction itself" (297). And again, as Rampton shows, one important site for such verbal interaction was around popular music.

From a cultural-imperialist framework, the global spread of rap and hip-hop is clearly orchestrated by the major recording companies, even if the sentiments of rap music may run counter to larger cultural and political agendas. A closer look at contexts of its spread and use, however, suggests a more complex picture. As Bent Preisler points out, although it may have been true in the past, it is no longer the case in many EFL contexts that English is learned only through formal, classroom contexts. Rather,

informal use of English — especially in the form of code-switching — has become an inherent, indeed a defining, aspect of the many Anglo-American-oriented youth subcultures which directly or indirectly influence the language and other behavioural patterns of young people generally, in Denmark as well as in other EFL countries. It is impossible to explain the status of English in, and impact on, Danish society (as this is reflected, for example, in advertising and other areas of the Danish media) without understanding the informal function of the English language, and indeed its sociolinguistic significance, in the Anglo-American-oriented subculture. (1999, p.244)

Preisler goes on to argue that there is far less variation in the forms of 'English from above' ("the promotion of English by the hegemonic culture for purposes of 'international communication'") than in 'English from below' ("the informal — active or passive — use of English as an expression of subcultural identity and style") (259), and argues that "the social forces of the subcultural environment are [...], generally speaking, more successful than the classroom at ensuring the learning of active functional variation in English" (260).

As an example, he lists the vocabulary of a group of Danish hip-hop "street dancers", which includes techniques and styles of break-dancing (electric boogie, windmills etc.), rap and DJ (ragamuffin, scratch etc.), graffiti (tag, bombing etc.) and hip-hop mythology (battle, biting etc.).

Terms used by the Danish hip-hop group 'Out of Control'

Domains of hip-hop	Terminology
Techniques and styles of break-dancing	<i>Boogie, windmills, back spin, head spin, turtle, cracking, waves, isolation, backspreads, locking, skeets, etc.</i>
Rap and DJ	<i>Ragamuffin, scratch, mixer, cut-backs, cross-fader, break-beat, etc.</i>
Graffiti	<i>Tag, bomb, jams, cipher, burn-off, wild-style, straight-letters, piece, throw-up, whole-cars, windows, etc.</i>
Hip-hop mythology	<i>Battle, biting, wanne-be, dope, pusher, graffiti-trip, hang-out, low-life, riot, stick-up, etc.</i>

Adapted from Preisler (1999)

Rather strangely, Preisler backs away from the interesting implications of this by arguing that "the form of English taught in an EFL country should be determined only by the degree in which it will enable non-native speakers to cope with the linguistic aspects of internationalisation as it affects their own lives" (263) and that this should therefore be "Standard English in its two main regional forms" (264): i.e., Standard British or American English. He goes on to suggest that "If English is learned simply as a lingua franca — i.e., if the teaching of EFL is not firmly rooted in the cultural context of native speakers — there is a danger that it will become unidiomatic [...] With the evolution of a multiplicity of culturally autonomous Englishes, Standard English maintained as an instrument of cross-cultural communication will only be effective at the level of

communicative competence to the extent that it is based on shared cultural assumptions" (265).

But all of this seems to miss the point that hip-hop is a form of globalizing culture that is being appropriated. It is a form of cross-cultural communication. These Danish kids have mastered a domain of international English that indeed puts them in touch with other kids around the world. Global rap/hip-hop language is a form of international English.³ If this is part of a fast-globalizing world in relationship to English, then this is what we need to start to deal with in English classes. If engaging with forms of rap and hip-hop exposes learners to varieties of English, or "active functional variation", then these are probably far more useful pedagogically than more homogeneous forms of standardized English. Since these are the forms of popular culture in which young people are investing, then it is these that, as educators, we need to start engaging with. And as part of this emerging picture of globalization and English, this is clearly reducible neither to homogenizing effects of globalization nor to heterogenizing forms of adaptation, but, rather, involves complex interaction among global forms and intermixed local forms.

Awad Ibrahim's (1999) research on the ways in which African students studying in a Franco-Ontarian school in Canada identify with forms of hip-hop adds another dimension to this picture. As he shows, these students, entering the racialized world of North America, 'become Black' and start to redefine their identities in terms of the available social and cultural categories on the new continent. In doing so, they increasingly identify with forms of black culture and black language, particularly hip-hop and Black English. Rap and hip-hop, he shows, are "influential sites in African students' processes of becoming Black, which in turn affected what and how the students learned" (364). The choice of these cultural forms and the position on the margins associated with being black was "simultaneously an act of investment, an expression of desire, and a deliberate counterhegemonic undertaking". Rap, he goes on to suggest, "must be read as an act of resistance" (365-366).

In terms of a pedagogical and curricular response to these observations, Ibrahim insists that curricula need to engage with rap, hip-hop and other forms of black popular culture: "In the case of African youths, whose language and identity are we as TESOL professionals teaching and assuming in the classroom if we do not engage rap and hip-hop?" (366). There are two sides to this: on the one hand, the need to incorporate

'minority' linguistic and cultural forms into the classroom: "To identify rap and hip-hop as curriculum sites in this context is to legitimise otherwise illegitimate forms of knowledge" (366); on the other, the importance of getting those in dominant cultural groups (teachers, other students) to "be able to see multiple ways of speaking, being, and learning" (367). He concludes that "maybe the time has come to close the split between minority students' identities and the school curriculum and between those identities and classroom pedagogies, subjects and materials" (367).

This, then, takes this argument further: We are dealing once again with the global reach of rap and hip-hop, but in another configuration. Here we are seeing popular multiculturalism, the identification with particular cultural forms as part of a process of changing identities. If we take Ibrahim's suggestions seriously, our curricula need to engage with forms of popular culture, not, as he points out, as an uncritical adoption, but as a process of critical investigation. And here we also see English intimately tied up with this. As with Preisler's street dancers, this isn't a standard international form of English, but a mixture of the global and the local, forms of English that are moving internationally, yet are also taken up as a form of resistance, mixed with other languages, appropriated. Thus, what we see here is that the question is not globalization or localization, homogeneity or heterogeneity, English or mother tongues, but the need to engage with the mixed, hybrid, cultural codes of the street.

Meanwhile back in Australia, MC Trey (*Island Rappers*, SBS, 4 June 1999), a Fijian-Australian rapper, explains that

I'm into hip-hop because it has all those elements that you can express yourself, you know, like in Fiji, they have, you know, their art and their dancing, and their music, you know, and I feel that hip-hop has that. It's one of the only modern art forms where you've got, you know, your breaking, your DJ-ing, graffiti, your MC-ing, you know, your story-telling.

She goes on:

I feel that MC-ing is definitely an extension of oral tradition, like just in the islands they used to sit around the kava bowl, and their story-telling, you know, a lot of it was passed down through word of mouth, they didn't have much documentation.

It is worth dwelling on the significance of these arguments for a moment. Here we have hip-hop in English being claimed as akin to a form of

cultural maintenance or revival. This is a form of hip-hop that reflects the oral traditions of Fiji, the art and carving (via graffiti), the dancing and the music. As with the Asian Dub Foundation, this pride in a cultural heritage is one that may be hard for a previous generation to identify with: South Asian cultures being moved along through Jamaican rap; Fijian cultures being extended through hip-hop. Once again, there is no space here for either a simple homogenizing thesis or a simple heterogenizing thesis. This is a far more complex space.

Global and worldly Englishes

What framework might help us better understand some of these complexities? One useful way forward can be found in the work of Walter Mignolo (2000). Drawing on the distinction (used by the Brazilian sociologist and cultural critic Renato Ortiz and the Martinican philosopher and writer Edouard Glissant) between globalization and *mundialización*, Mignolo suggests that the first may be seen as a series of overlapping global designs, as a five-hundred-year history of European designs for the world: the Christian mission to bring enlightenment to the world, the Civilizing attempt to spread European culture, the Development model to promote particular political and economic behaviours, and the Global Market framework for interdependent trade and communication. It is interesting to note that the globalization of English has long been mapped onto these phases:

Ours is the language of the arts and sciences, of trade and commerce, of civilization and religious liberty [...]. It is a store-house of the varied knowledge which brings a nation within the pale of civilization and Christianity [...]. Already it is the language of the Bible [...]. So prevalent is this language already become, as to betoken that it may soon become the language of international communication for the world. (Read, 1849, quoted in Bailey, 1991, p.116)

The second term, which I am here translating as *worldliness*,⁴ may be seen in terms of “local histories *in* which global histories are enacted or where they have to be adapted, adopted, transformed, and rearticulated” (Mignolo, 2000, p.278). This, then, is the site of resistance, change, adaptation and reformulation. It is akin to what Canagarajah (1999) describes as a ‘resistance perspective’, highlighting the ways in which people in postcolonial contexts “may find ways to negotiate, alter and oppose political structures,

and reconstruct their languages, cultures and identities to their advantage. The intention is not to *reject* English, but to *reconstitute* it in more inclusive, ethical, and democratic terms" (2). And this is not merely a process of appropriation and hybridization (processes commonly associated with the heterogenization position) but rather a "celebration of bi or pluri languaging", a focus on "the crack in the global process between local histories and global designs, between 'mundialización' and globalisation, from languages to social movements" (Mignolo, 2000, p.250). It is, then, a focus on the constant movement back and forth across languages.

On the one hand, then, we have a way of focusing on the process of globalization that does not merely reduce it to homogenization. This is a far more complex version of the spread of English, its institutionalization, and its role relative to other languages, than some versions of globalization would suggest. But it is also a version that allows for critique of this process: It does highlight the politics, the inequalities, the cultural effects of English. On the other hand, we have the worldliness of English, which allows us to understand critically both the ways in which it may operate in medical settings in South Africa, Hong Kong of China and Malaya, and ways in which it may be taken up, appropriated and changed in the fast, mixing world of popular culture. "How many deviations, changes, siftings, warpings, and twistings; how many opportunities for blackmail and corruption, before, transformed, sometimes unrecognisable, the stories of the poor who do not speak English reach their rulers, who are hand-picked, among their own peoples, on the basis of their knowledge of English?" "MC-ing is definitely an extension of oral tradition [...] Hip hop's like documentation of your life, what your experiences, what your thoughts, your philosophies, you know, it's reality-based [...]" "And now we're walking down de street / Wid a brand new pride / A spring inna de step / Wid our heads held high / Young Asian brothers an sisters / Moving forward, side by side / Naya Zindagi Naya Jeevan / New Way New Life" ...

Notes

1. Of course, not all doctors would be Cantonese-speaking, being British, Indian, or from elsewhere. But, again, it is the language of the few that dictates the usage for the many.
2. Bhaskaran Nayar has informed me that it should be "Nayi Zindagi, Naya Jeevan"

(since *Zindagi* is feminine, it has to take the feminine form of the adjective). I am also indebted to Bhaskaran for explaining some of the multiple layers of meaning in this phrase.

3. It also occurs in other languages and in quite similar hybrid ways, as in current French rap with its mixture of French, North African Arabic, and Caribbean creoles.
4. Mignolo uses the French, Spanish and Portuguese terms. I have chosen to use the term 'worldliness', which I used in earlier attempts (eg., 1994) to deal with these issues, though I then used it to cover both globalization and worldliness. It may be a more effective term in the more limited sense I am trying to give it here.

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Chapter 18

Global Englishes, Rip Slyme and Performativity¹

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INTRODUCTION: A GLOBAL, POST-INDUSTRIAL SIGNIFYING PRACTICE

If we seek a global phenomenon involving language use, rap/hip-hop² is a good candidate. As Levy (2001, p.134) suggests, hip-hop constitutes 'a global urban subculture that has entered people's lives and become a universal practice among youth the world over ... From a local fad among black youth in the Bronx, it has gone on to become a global, post-industrial signifying practice, giving new parameters of meaning to otherwise locally or nationally diverse identities.' Thus, although there is a tendency in some quarters to want to define rap/hip-hop as essentially African American (see Rose, 1994), as referring to 'urban youth culture in America' (Smitherman, 2000, p.268), suggesting, therefore, that appropriations elsewhere are either parodies of African American culture or nothing but reflexes of cultural imperialism, there also seem good reasons to investigate further how this 'global urban subculture', this 'global, post-industrial signifying practice' operates.

This article looks at the currently available sociolinguistic tools to explore a domain such as global rap — with specific reference to Japan — and discusses various concerns that this opens up. As Williams (1992) and Cameron (1995, 1997) have observed, sociolinguistics has operated all too often with fixed and static categories of class, gender and identity membership as if these were transparent givens onto which language can be mapped. Cameron argues that a more critical account suggests that 'language is one of the things that *constitutes* my identity as a particular kind of subject' (1995, p.16). If we view 'language' here to mean both language use in general and particular languages themselves, the type of performance

of language we see in domains such as rap — where English is frequently mixed in with local languages — needs to be understood in ways that do not start with prior social definitions of who we are.

Since these criticisms were made, a growing body of work in sociolinguistics has opened up far more fluid ways of thinking about language, identity and belonging. Key here has been Rampton's (1995) work on 'crossing' — ways in which members of certain groups use forms of speech from other groups — or 'styling the Other' — 'ways in which people use language and dialect in discursive practice to appropriate, explore, reproduce or challenge influential images and stereotypes of groups that they *don't* themselves (straightforwardly) belong to' (1999, p.421). Instead of focusing on a 'linguistics of community', (which is often based on a circularity of argument that suggests that a speaker of x community speaks language y because they belong to x, and the fact that they speak y proves they are a member of x), this work focuses more on a 'linguistics of contact' (cf. Pratt, 1987), 'looking instead at the intricate ways in which people use language to index social group affiliations in situations where the acceptability and legitimacy of their doing so is open to question, incontrovertibly guaranteed neither by ties of inheritance, ingroup socialisation, nor by any other language ideology' (Rampton, 1999, p.422).

Significant too in this work has been the focus on popular culture, word play, and contextual interaction. As Hill suggests, the 'kaleidoscopic, ludic, open flavor' of much of the language use described profoundly challenges the methods of mainstream sociolinguistics 'by transgressing fundamental ideas of "speakerhood"' (1999, pp.550–551). Hill's studies (1995, 1998) of what she calls 'mock' or 'junk' Spanish show how certain (invented) Spanish terms enter the Anglo-American world with a range of implications for the production and maintenance of an invented Hispanic world. As Cutler's study of a white American teenager's identification with hip-hop culture shows, this can be a contested space that 'may not match the standards of authenticity laid out in traditional sociolinguistics' (Cutler, 1999, p.439). This work, and other related concerns with both linguistic boundary construction (e.g. Gal and Irvine, 1995) and different domains of hip-hop (Adams and Winter, 1997; Cutler, 1999; Newman, 2005), raise key questions about communication, community, contact, identity and play.

I want to suggest, however, two particular gaps that need to be filled.

First, although this new sociolinguistic orientation focuses on contact rather than community, it still stays commendably community-oriented; that is, much of this work looks at crossing within closely ethnographised communities. What is not yet easily dealt with is the mixing that comes about as a result of transcultural global flows (see Appadurai, 1996). Hill (1999) addresses this issue specifically when she points out that ‘these phenomena extend beyond such networks of young people, ramifying outward through mass-media tokens of styling that are exploited in youth-oriented marketing, and turning up in surprising places both in geographical and social space as well as in the space of genre and register’ (Hill, 1999, p.543). As she goes on to suggest, we need to get beyond the localized concept of ‘speech community’ or ‘field site’, located as they are in modernist concepts of identity and location, and instead ‘attack the problem of the precise situatedness of such phenomena in the flow of meaning with macro-analytic theoretical tools’ (1999, p.543).

Second, the sociolinguistic domain that does deal with the ‘big picture’ of global language use, and in particular the global spread of English, remains largely tied to an earlier era of sociolinguistics, in which identities are pre-given and tied to nationalities. Thus, in spite of the recent work in sociolinguistics that, as discussed above, has opened up far more dynamic ways of looking at language use and identity, the weight of earlier sociolinguistic theorizing still holds sway in a great deal of work on global English, which is still caught between arguments about homogeneity and heterogeneity, between arguments based on liberal accommodationism, linguistic imperialism or linguistic hybridity that do not allow for sufficiently complex understandings of what is currently happening with global Englishes (see Pennycook, 2004). What, for example, do we make of this from Japanese rappers Rip Slyme?

*Bring Your Style*³

Lyrics

Yo Bringing That, Yo Bring
Your Style
人類最後のフリーキーサイド

Transliteration and translation

Yo Bringing That, Yo Bring Your Style
Jinrui saigo no furiikiisaido

Yo Bringing That, Yo Bring Your Style
The last freaky side of the human race

We clearly have examples of commonly used elements of rap in English — particularly the use of ‘Yo’, a term commonly used in rap/hip-hop slang,

and originating in African American Vernacular English (AAVE)⁴ — suggesting the direct influence of borrowings from U.S.-based rappers. The use of English in Japanese (and other regional) music is not uncommon. The use of ‘Yo Bringing That, Yo Bring Your Style’ can be seen as a form of ‘styling the Other’, or as I would prefer to call it here ‘performing the Other’. This line, however, occurs in juxtaposition with Japanese — *jinrui saigo no furiikiisaido* — yet Japanese that is itself mixed. While the first part of the phrase uses Japanese *kanji* for the ‘human race’ and ‘last’, the second part employs both *katakana* (used generally for the transcription of non-Japanese words) and *hiragana* (used mainly for Japanese morphemes and grammatical items). In *furiikiisaido* we have a created, English-based word (*saido* (side) is commonly used, *furiikii* (freaky) less so). The question, then, is what sort of identity is being fashioned in the performance and the reception of such lyrics? What type of Japaneseness, global citizenry, and rap identities are produced in these moments of global English?

The overly simple view that English is for international communication and local languages for local identities (cf. Crystal, 1997) surely does not even come close to accounting for what is going on here. Thus, although Hanson’s review of Crystal’s book does at least give us a musical metaphor to work with, this surely does little more than celebrate the triumph of English: ‘On it still strides: we can argue about what globalisation is till the cows come — but that globalisation exists is beyond question, with English its accompanist. The accompanist is indispensable to the performance’ (Hanson, 1997, p.22). This position is grounded in a liberal politics of accommodation, assigning to English a role of global communication while other languages are condemned to do the homework of identity.

Phillipson (1999, p.274), however, drawing on Tsuda’s (1994) work in his review of the same book, presents us with another problematic position: ‘Crystal’s celebration of the growth of English fits squarely into what the Japanese scholar, Yukio Tsuda, terms the Diffusion of English Paradigm, an uncritical endorsement of capitalism, its science and technology, a modernisation ideology, monolingualism as a norm, ideological globalisation and internationalization, transnationalization, the Americanization and homogenisation of world culture, linguistic, culture and media imperialism ...’ Here, while we at least get a more complex view than one of English as a tinkling on the keys while globalization

marches on, we are presented with English as intimately bound up with the 'homogenisation of world culture'. Of course, it is tempting to acknowledge some of Tsuda's and Phillipson's concerns when we hear Japanese rap in English repeating common rap tropes such as 'RS5 is in the House' [Banzai], but this 'homogeny' position is also surely too simple. While it points very clearly to the problematic institutional domination of English and its many negative side effects — the 'structural power' (Phillipson, 1992, p.72) of English or 'English linguistic hegemony' — it does not show how English is taken up, how people use English, nor why people choose to use English. Such a position cannot account for a sense of agency, resistance, or appropriation.

A third position, which we might call the *heterogeny position*, is epitomised by the notion of *world Englishes*. Here we get the other side of the coin, the interests being in the 'implications of pluricentricity ..., the new and emerging norms of performance, and the bilingual's creativity as a manifestation of the contextual and formal hybridity of Englishes' (Kachru, 1997, p.66). Thus the world Englishes paradigm has focused on the ways in which English has become locally adapted and institutionalized to create different varieties of English (different Englishes) around the world. But, while the homogeny argument tends to ignore all these local appropriations and adaptations, this heterogeny argument tends to ignore the broader political context of the spread of English. As Canagarajah (1999a, p.180) points out, while Kachru's position is a useful counter to the centrist arguments of some linguists, his challenge 'does not go far enough, since he is not fully alert to the ideological implications of periphery Englishes. In his attempt to systematize the periphery variants, he has to standardize the language himself, leaving out many eccentric, hybrid forms of local Englishes as too unsystematic. In this, the Kachruvian paradigm follows the logic of the prescriptive and elitist tendencies of the center linguists.'

On the issue of whether there is such a thing as Japanese English, Yano (2001) is fairly clear, suggesting that English 'will probably never be used within the Japanese community and form part of the speaker's identity repertoire. There will not be a distinctly local model of English, established and recognizable as Japanese English, reflecting the Japanese culture and language' (Yano, 2001, p.127). It is not my intention here to critique Yano's work itself but rather to suggest that the broader body of work on which it draws — the world Englishes (WE) paradigm — has

a number of shortcomings that lead to statements such as this. This is also not to deny that the WE paradigm has been extremely important and successful in helping our thinking on the sociolinguistics of the global spread of English: by looking at the development of multilingualism, by questioning the status of errors and divergent language forms, and by focusing on issues of native speaker norms and bilingual creativity, it has indeed done a great deal for our thinking about norms and standards in different Englishes. But, at the same time, it has tended to operate with a limited and limiting conceptualization of globalization, national standards, culture and identity.

Looking at Rip Slyme's lyrics, it seems to me that we have to acknowledge that English *is* being used within the Japanese community: although their music is certainly also available in Singapore and, like a lot of music in the region, has a following in Korea and other parts of South-East Asia, it does not seem to be the case that English is used here for 'international communication'. Rather it is part of the indexical use of English to signify identification with certain cultural affiliations. And as such, it *is* part of these users' identity repertoires. This raises a number of intriguing questions: what then do we mean by the 'Japanese community' and to what extent might we say that the rap of Rip Slyme is 'reflecting the Japanese culture and language'? While Rip Slyme is clearly heavily influenced by global rap, it seems problematic to exclude the possibility that this Japanese rap is simultaneously global and, at the same time, expressive of Japanese language and culture: Japanese rap in English is part of Japanese language and culture.

It may be tempting to exclude language use such as this, arguing that it is indeed just a reflection of U.S. culture, or that, as music, it cannot be included as part of ordinary language use. But such exclusions, as Canagarajah (1999a) and Parakrama (1995) insist, are part of the problem that the WE paradigm focuses only on standardized norms of English in limited domains. What follows concerns the need to think beyond liberal accommodationism, linguistic imperialism and world Englishes in order to understand in greater depth what is happening in the relationship between the global spread of English and popular culture. At the very least we need a critical understanding of globalization, a focus on popular cultural flows, and a way of taking up performance and performativity in relationship to identity and culture. First, is a discussion of some central concerns about the WE paradigm.

THE CIRCULAR ARGUMENTS OF WORLD ENGLISHES

That the work on world Englishes is intended to be seen as part of sociolinguistic theory is clear from the comments of its foundational protagonist, Braj Kachru. In his paper 'Standards, codification and sociolinguistic realism: The English language in the outer circle', for example, he argues that 'the sociolinguistic aspects of English in its international context are still not well understood' (Kachru, 1985, p.11). The sociolinguistics of world Englishes has not been carried out, Kachru suggests, because of: attitudinal restrictions on how sociolinguists view the relationship between linguistic norms and actual language use; theoretical shortcomings of a monolingual model of analysis; and logistical problems relating to the scale of the global spread of English (and see also Kachru and Nelson, 1996). Kachru is indubitably right on this score, and he and the many others who have worked on world Englishes have certainly gone some way to correcting this imbalance. But the WE paradigm has also suffered from various limitations which raise questions for its ability ever to get at the 'sociolinguistic realism' it claims as its goal.

I have discussed these issues at greater length elsewhere (Pennycook, 2002) and shall here give a brief summary of the key concerns. Most importantly for the issues I am addressing are: the descriptive adequacy of the three circles; the focus on varieties of English along national lines; and the exclusionary divisions that discount 'other Englishes'. There are other concerns with which I shall not deal in any detail here, including the problems of methodology — accused of being anecdotal by Dasgupta (1993) and a form of 'narrative linguistics' by Görlach (1999) — and the way in which the main 'methodological strategy', as Dasgupta (1993, p.135) suggests, is to compare local forms with 'metropolitan English', thus always making peripheral difference dependent on variation from the Englishes of the centre circle rather than viewing them as systems in themselves. According to Krishnaswamy and Burde (1998, p.150), 'a few Indian loan words and fossilized expressions found in Indians' use of English do not constitute a valid base to claim "Indianization" of English ...'.

Also of concern is the rather strange insistence within this paradigm on the social, cultural, and political neutrality of English (see for example, Kachru, 1985, 1986). As Parakrama (1995, p.22) points out, these repeated claims are strangely repetitive, bizarre and inaccurate, hiding as they do a range of social and political relations: 'These pleas for the neutrality of

English in the post-colonial contexts are as ubiquitous and as insistent as they are unsubstantiated and unexplained.' Dua (1994, p.7) also takes exception to these claims, arguing that the notion of 'neutrality' 'can be questioned on both theoretical as well as empirical grounds', English being both 'ideologically encumbered' and 'promoted to strengthen its hegemonic control over the indigenous varieties'. In his debate with Rajagopalan (1999) over the merits of linguistic imperialism and linguistic hybridity arguments, Canagarajah (1999b, p.210) argues that while linguistic imperialism may be problematic, a world Englishes perspective that promotes the neutrality of English leads to an unhelpful 'business as usual' line: 'We are urged to bury our eyes ostrich-like to the political evils and ideological temptations outside'.

Probably the best-known and most often cited dimension of the WE paradigm is the model of concentric circles: the 'norm-providing' inner circle, where English is spoken as a native language (ENL), the 'norm-developing' outer circle, where it is a second language (ESL), and the 'norm-dependent' expanding circle, where it is a foreign language (EFL). Although only 'tentatively labelled' (Kachru, 1985, p.12) in earlier versions, it has been claimed more recently that 'the circles model is valid in the senses of earlier historical and political contexts, the dynamic diachronic advance of English around the world, and the functions and standards to which its users relate English in its many current global incarnations' (Kachru and Nelson, 1996, p.78). Yano (2001, p.121) refers to this model as the 'standard framework of world Englishes studies'. Yet this model suffers from several flaws: the location of nationally defined identities within the circles, the inability to deal with numerous contexts, and the privileging of ENL over ESL over EFL.

First, and most disconcertingly, it constructs speaker identity along national lines within these circles. As Krishnaswamy and Burde (1998, p.30) argue, if Randolph Quirk represented 'the imperialistic attitude' to English, the WE paradigm represents a 'a nationalistic point of view', whereby nations and their varieties of English are conjured into existence: 'Like Indian nationalism, "Indian English" is "fundamentally insecure" since the notion "nation-India" is insecure' (Krishnaswamy and Burde, 1998, p.63). If this suggests that speakers within a country belong in a particular circle and speak a particular national variety (or don't, if their country happens to be in the rather large expanding circle), it also, as Holborow (1999, pp.59-60) points out, 'fails to take adequate account of

social factors and social differences *within* the circles'. Thus language users are assigned to a particular variety of English according, on the one hand, to their nationality and, on the other, to the location of that nation within a particular circle. Australians speak English as a native language, Malaysians speak it as a second language, and Japanese use it as a foreign language. The problem is that it depends very much who you are: a well-educated Chinese Malaysian in Kuala Lumpur may speak English as a 'second' or 'first' language, while a rural Malay may know English only as a distant foreign language. Parallel relations can be found in Australia and Japan, and indeed wherever we care to look around the world.

Second, despite claims to the contrary, it continues to privilege native speakers over non-native speakers, and then ESL speakers (nationally defined) over EFL speakers (nationally defined) (see Graddol, 1997). Although the WE paradigm has significantly questioned the status of native speakers in deciding what counts as English and what does not, it has not gone far enough in questioning the divide itself. It continues to maintain that the core Englishes are spoken by native speakers (NS) while the peripheral Englishes are spoken by non-native speakers (NNS). This, as U.N. Singh (1998, p.16) points out, is one of the more 'fantastic claims' of this line of thinking. More recently, there has been a softening on this position, so that it is now conceded that we may talk of 'genetic nativeness' in the inner circle and 'functional nativeness' in the outer circle (see Yano, 2001). But none of this calls into question either the circular argument that locates 'nativeness' according to these circles, or the very divide itself. And a division between genetic and functional nativeness is surely based on an insidious division, a point that Salikoko Mufwene takes up in his discussion of the distinction between 'native' and 'indigenized' varieties.

Mufwene (1994, 1998) laments that this distinction discounts pidgins and creoles: 'I still find the opposition "native" versus "indigenized English" objectionable for several reasons', particularly because 'the distinction excludes English creoles, most of which are spoken as native languages and vernaculars' (1994, p.24). Furthermore, 'the label "non-native" seems inadequate and in fact reflects some social biases, especially when it turns out that there are some ethnic/racial correlates to the distinction "native" versus "non-native English" as applied in the literature on indigenized Englishes' (Mufwene, 1998, p.119). Thus, while usefully challenging the central privilege of the NS to define the norms and standards of English, it has generally failed to question the NS/NNS dichotomy in any profound

fashion, and indeed has supported an insidious divide between native and indigenized English. The WE paradigm also excludes numerous contexts where language use is seen as too complex (Jamaica and South Africa are two examples given from the outset; many others are similarly excluded). The crucial point here, then, is that in spite of talk of clines and varieties, the indigenized new Englishes remain the codified class dialects of a small elite, while a vast range of other Englishes spoken across much broader sections of the population, including creoles and many other forms of language use, are excluded. This is also why Rip Slyme are excluded *a priori* from using English to express Japanese language and culture, or from having English in their identity repertoire.

While this position within the WE paradigm means that the global spread of English is taken more or less as a given — an historical effect of colonialism — it also means that struggles around what counts as a variety of English are overlooked. As Parakrama (1995, pp.25–26) argues, ‘The smoothing out of struggle within and without language is replicated in the homogenizing of the varieties of English on the basis of “upper-class” forms. Kachru is thus able to theorize on the nature of a monolithic Indian English ...’ According to Parakrama (1995) and Canagarajah (1999a), this focus in world Englishes on codified varieties — so-called Indian English, Singaporean English, and so on — spoken by a small elite pushes aside questions of class, gender, ethnicity and popular culture. While claiming ground as an inclusionary paradigm, it remains insistently exclusionary, discounting creoles, so-called basilectal uses of languages, and, to a large extent, all those language forms used in the ‘expanding circle’, since as uncodified varieties, non-standard forms still hold the status of errors.

Crucially, then, for the current argument, as a sociolinguistic theory, the WE paradigm is far too exclusionary to be able to account for many uses of English around the world. It ‘cannot do justice to those Other Englishes as long as they remain within the over-arching structures that these Englishes bring to crisis. To take these new/Other Englishes seriously would require a fundamental reevaluation of linguistic paradigms, and not merely a slight accommodation or adjustment’ (Parakrama, 1995, p.17). If Dasgupta’s (1993, p.137) lament that ‘... seldom have so many talented men and women worked so long and so hard and achieved so little’ is perhaps rather overstated, Krishnaswamy and Burde’s (1998, p.64) call for ‘a reinvestigation of several concepts currently used by scholars’ needs serious consideration. At the very least, we need to break away from the

constrictive circles with their many exclusions and to start to think more seriously about globalization, popular culture and Other Englishes.

GLOBALIZATION AND CULTURAL FLOWS

As I have already suggested, views of globalization in relation to English that suggest that the latter is nothing but an accompanist to the inevitable march of globalization, or, on the other hand, that it is a key tool in the global turn towards the hamburger, or that it is an uncontested and neutral class dialect around the world, are all suspect. How, then, can we start to understand the globalization side of this relationship? According to Fairclough (2000, p.165), globalization can be seen as 'the tendency for economic, social, political and cultural processes to take place on a global scale rather than within the confines of particular countries or regions'. This we might see as the base-line definition: many things occur on a larger scale than they did before. According to Giddens (1999, p.10), globalization is 'in many respects not only new, but also revolutionary', and incorporates not only economic processes but political, technological and cultural as well. Kubota (2002) meanwhile suggests three related processes: 'Globalization implies increased local diversity influenced by human contact across cultural boundaries as well as speedy exchange of commodities and information ..., cultural homogenization influenced by global standardization of economic activities and a flow of cultural goods from the centre to the periphery', and increased nationalism as a form of protection (Kubota, 2002, p.13). She suggests these tensions translate into three dimensions of language education in Japan: increased local community diversity; the prevalence of English; and increased linguistic and cultural nationalism.

An ongoing controversy in discussions of globalization, however, concerns whether we view it as just another phase of capitalist expansion or whether it represents a fundamentally new moment in global relations. On the one hand, there is the argument that capital has always been global in its reach — European imperialism sought to create global access to resources, global distribution networks and global markets for their products. On the other hand is the argument that current globalization is something fundamentally new, involving new arrangements of states, new forms of communication, new movements of people, and so forth. Attempts to locate globalization historically are often rejected because

they construct this history only in terms of capital and because they then discount the radical changes that are currently underway. Thus, Hardt and Negri argue that 'sovereignty has taken a new form, composed of a series of national and supranational organisms united under a single logic of rule. This new global form of sovereignty is what we call Empire.' (2000, p.xii). Most analyses, they suggest, fail to account for 'the novelty of the structures and logics of power that order the contemporary world. Empire is not a weak echo of modern imperialisms but a fundamentally new form of rule' (Hardt and Negri, 2000, p.146).

Mignolo (2000, p.236), on the other hand, views globalization as part of a long historical process, arguing that 'The current process of globalization is not a new phenomenon, although the way in which it is taking place is without precedent. On a larger scale, globalization at the end of the twentieth century (mainly occurring through transnational corporations, the media, and technology) is the most recent configuration of a process that can be traced back to the 1500s, with the beginning of transatlantic exploration and the consolidation of Western hegemony.' Mignolo maps out this process as a series of overlapping European designs that continue to coexist: the Christian design on the world does not appear to be any weaker in the 21st century than it was in the 16th century (indeed, it may be far stronger; see Pennycook and Coutand-Marin, 2003), but it now coexists with civilizing, developing and capitalizing missions. These designs are not driven by capital or territorial gain alone; while the political economy of colonialism was a crucial element in the expansions of European and other empires, they were also driven by other missions. Each design-era can be conceptualized in terms of its economic, political, cultural and ideological goals.

There is one further important consideration, however. Although this view rightly locates globalization within a history of European and American imperialism, at the same time it runs the danger of not acknowledging the diversity of global forces and locations of globalization: there have been other influential empires and global forces during this period, such as the roles played by China, Russian and Japanese empires, or Islam, to mention only a few. The current locus of what Hardt and Negri call 'Empire' is a diversified and multi-located set of forces. Expanding and redefining Mignolo's categories, I suggest we have now entered a fifth phase of globalization. On top of the previous four — Discovering/Christianizing, Enlightening/Civilizing, Developing/Conceptualizing and

Universalizing/Capitalizing eras — we have now arrived at the Globalizing/Corporatizing design, in which globalization takes over from universal and international concepts of the world. It is the corporatization of many levels of society — from business to many aspects that had formerly been seen as part of the state (education, health, transport) — that predominates within a new neo-liberal politics for the world.

I am suggesting, then, that it is indeed possible to accommodate both historical continuity and contemporary disjuncture. Viewing Empire as part of the contemporary corporatizing designs on the world, we are then able to use Hardt and Negri's insights into the ways that unlike the old imperialism(s), which were centred around the economic and political structures and exchanges of the nation state (indeed, the two were in many ways mutually constitutive), the new Empire is a system of national and supranational regulations that control and produce new economies, cultures, politics and ways of living. Appadurai is 'convinced that the nation-state, as a complex modern political form, is on its last legs' (1996, p.19). From this point of view, while the state has by no means disappeared as a significant player in people's lives, analyses of global relations (or global Englishes) that focus on either imperialism in its old form, or national identities and languages, are radically out of step with the currently corporatizing world.

For Hardt and Negri (2000, p.393), these new conditions produce new forms of opposition because of the direct confrontation between Empire and people: 'Empire creates a greater potential for revolution than did the modern regimes of power because it presents us, alongside the machine of command, with an alternative: the set of all the exploited and the subjugated, a multitude that is directly opposed to Empire, with no mediation between them.' While this view is helpful in indicating how the new modes of power and the withering of old mediational forces such as the state may lead to alternative confrontations, it remains caught within the logic of confrontation and revolution. It is indeed the case that a globalized and corporatized world indicates new forms of opposition and resistance, and that these will not be realized through nostalgic longing for old forms of identification (regrouping round old nationalisms, or formulating opposition as if globalization were simply imperialism writ large), but current globalization demands new ways of thinking about change.

To this picture of historical continuity and disjuncture, we need to

add various further dimensions. First, as Appadurai notes, 'we are functioning in a world fundamentally characterized by objects in motion. These objects include ideas and ideologies, people and goods, images and messages, technologies and techniques. This is a world of flows' (2001, p.5). To Appadurai's picture of 'global cultural flows' — ethnoscapas, mediascapas, technoscapas, financescapas and ideoscapas — it may be worth adding *linguascapas*, in order to capture the relationship between the ways in which some languages are no longer tied to locality or community, but rather operate globally in conjunction with these other scapes. Second, when we turn our focus particularly on issues of culture within current modes of globalization, it is important to acknowledge Appadurai's central argument that 'globalization is not the story of cultural homogenization' (1996, p.11). It is a 'deeply historical, uneven and even *localizing* process. Globalization does not necessarily or even frequently imply homogenization or Americanization', since 'different societies appropriate the materials of modernity differently' (Appadurai, 1996, p.17).

To conclude, I am suggesting various key concerns which we need to consider in any discussion of globalization, which:

- needs to be understood in terms of both historical continuity and historical disjuncture: the currently globalizing/corporatizing world is both a product of the history of Euro-American and other designs on the world, and a radical departure from those conditions;
- needs to be understood both critically — in terms of new forms of power, control and destruction — and in its complexity — in terms of new forms of resistance, change, appropriation and identity;
- cannot be reduced to old arguments about homogeneity or heterogeneity, or nation states and imperialism, but instead needs to be viewed in terms of translocalizations and transcultural flows.

RAPLISHES, SEMIOTIC RECONSTRUCTION AND PERFORMATIVITY

In summary, while the boundaries of sociolinguistic thought have been usefully traversed in some domains — questioning ways in which language, culture, nation and identity have been mapped onto one another — most work in the area of world Englishes has failed to develop any complex understanding of current global conditions, continuing to

operate with states-centric models of language analysis while excluding divergent Other Englishes. Thus, when the 'multicultural character of English' is revealed in the way in which 'English represents the Nigerian culture' through the writing of Chinua Achebe and others, or when in the writing of Alan Paton, English 'represents South African culture' (Kachru, 1985, p.20), we find multiculturalism equated with multinationalism, as monolithic national cultures are represented through the 'high culture' activities of English language writers. The notion of world Englishes is in some ways akin to what Hutnyk calls the 'liberal exoticist enthusiasm' (2000, p.12) for hybridity in World Music, the 'global sampling' (2000, p.22) of WOMAD festivals.

My point here, of course, is not to discount post-colonial writing in English and the questions it raises for the ownership of English, but to seek a more complex, contemporary understanding of cultural production in relationship to English, nations, culture, representation and the world. As Scott (1999, p.215) argues, the 'real question before us is whether or not we take the vernacular voices of the popular and their modes of self-fashioning seriously, and if we do, how we think through their implications'. While rap and hip-hop are only one site amongst many forms of popular culture that we might explore here, they are of particular interest because of their global popularity, complex politics, use of language, and perceived status as forms of resistance music. According to Condry (2001, p.222), 'Japanese hip-hop and other versions around the world are interesting in part because they help us understand the significance of what seems to be an emerging global popular culture'. Responding to challenges that rap/hip-hop is on the one hand indelibly tied to African American culture and, on the other, nothing but a reflection of the imperialism of U.S. media, Mitchell (2001, pp.1-2) argues that 'Hip-hop and rap cannot be viewed simply as an expression of African-American culture; it has become a vehicle for global youth affiliations and a tool for reworking local identity all over the world'.

It is important to understand these transcultural flows as occurring both within inequitable relations of language, culture, power and money, and at the same time as always potentially reworkable. As Pennay (2001, p.128) comments in his discussion of rap in Germany, 'Regrettably, the flow of new ideas and stylistic innovations in popular music is nearly always from the English-speaking market, and not to it'. Similarly, Jacqueline Urla points out that 'unequal relations between the United

States record industry and Basque radical music mean that Public Enemy's message reaches the Mugurza brothers [of Basque rap group *Negu Gorriak*] in Irun, and not vice versa' (Urla, 2001, p.189). Nevertheless, studies of local uses of rap suggest that it is used in multiple ways: Akindes (2001, p.95) argues that by bridging elements of the political self-determination movement with popular culture, the Hawaiian hip-hop of Sudden Rush has become 'a liberatory discourse for Hawaiians seeking economic self-determination in the form of sovereignty. Sudden Rush ... have borrowed hip hop as a counter-hegemonic transcript that challenges tourism and Western imperialism.' Furthermore, as Mitchell points out, the directions and origins of these flows may be complex: Sudden Rush, for example, have been influenced not only by U.S. rap but also by other Pacific Island and Aotearoa-New Zealand hip-hop that constitutes a 'Pacific Island hip-hop diaspora' and a 'pan-Pacific hip-hop network that has bypassed the borders and restrictions of the popular music distribution industry' (Mitchell, 2001, p.31).

Sociolinguistic work on rap/hip-hop, as in cultural studies, has tended to focus on North American contexts. Thus Cutler (1999), for example, looks at a white upper-middle-class New York teenager who used features of African American Vernacular English (AAVE) as part of his identification with hip-hop; Adams and Winter (1997) meanwhile focus on gang graffiti in Phoenix, Arizona. Smitherman (2000) and Alim (2003) both focus on the relationships between AAVE and rap lyrics, while Newman's (2005) recent study of generic structure and identity in a high-school crew of Latino and African-diaspora adolescent rap artists is also in New York. Ibrahim's (1999) research shows how a group of African students in a Canadian school start to redefine their identities in terms of the available social and cultural categories on the new continent, 'becoming Black' and identifying with forms of hip-hop as they enter the racialized world of North America. Rap and hip-hop, he suggests, are 'influential sites in African students' processes of becoming Black, which in turn affected what and how the students learned' (Ibrahim, 1999, p.364). The choice of these cultural forms and the position on the margins associated with being Black was 'simultaneously an act of investment, an expression of desire, and a deliberate counterhegemonic undertaking'. Rap, he goes on to suggest, 'must be read as an act of resistance' (1999, pp.365–366).

Looking at language use outside North America, Preisler (1999, p.244) argues that it 'is impossible to explain the status of English in, and

impact on, Danish society (as this is reflected, for example, in advertising and other areas of the Danish media) without understanding the informal function of the English language, and indeed its sociolinguistic significance, in the Anglo-American-oriented subculture.’ Using the example of the vocabulary of a group of Danish hip-hop ‘street dancers’, vocabulary which includes techniques and styles of break-dancing (electric boogie, windmills, etc.), rap and DJ (ragamuffin, scratch, etc.), graffiti (tag, bombing, etc.) and hip-hop mythology (battle, biting, etc.), Preisler goes on to argue that there is far less variation in the forms of ‘English from above’ (‘the promotion of English by the hegemonic culture for purposes of “international communication”’) than in ‘English from below’ (‘the informal — active or passive — use of English as an expression of subcultural identity and style’) (1999, p.259). If we are looking, then, for some notion of emergent global Englishes, the language of hip-hop — or even ‘raplishes’ — may be one of the best candidates.

As I suggested earlier, this paper is intended to lay out what I see as possible future directions for research in this area, rather than as a description of readily available tools. Returning to Rip Slyme for a moment, it is worth noting that the main weight of their lyrics is carried by intriguing and complex plays and references in Japanese. Thus, unlike other popular singers from the region, such as Korean rapper, Tasha (n.d.), who uses predominantly English lyrics with Korean choruses, English for Rip Slyme plays a more peripheral role. But is it just a scattering of English for popular effect or can we also find moments of identity-fashioning that suggest English plays a more complex role than mere mimicry and iconic placement? Let us compare the following:

Lyrics

By the Way

By the Way Five Guy’s Name (×3)

Five Guy’s Name is Rip Slyme 5

Tokyo Classic

錦糸町出 Freaky ダブルの Japanese

Transliteration and translation

By the Way Five Guy’s Name (×3)

Five Guy’s Name is Rip Slyme 5

Kinshichoo de freaky daburu no Japanese

Freaky mixed Japanese from

Kinshichoo

As I suggested earlier, it is not uncommon to find this mixture of English and Japanese lyrics; indeed the use of English in Japanese popular culture

already has a considerable history. The first lines come from the track, 'By the Way', a song mixing English and Japanese, but with this English-language chorus. It is interesting to note here, however, that while the 'Yo, Bringing That, Yo Bring Your Style' line discussed earlier is closer to a direct mimetic practice (echoing AAVE both lexically and phonologically), these lines are much more 'Japanese' in style: 'by the way' is commonly taught as the English equivalent of the more widely used Japanese *tokoro de*, a phrase that might fit the register of rap better than the discordant 'by the way'; the pronunciation of 'by the way' and 'five guy's name' (with its four or more syllables) as well as the syntax of the latter also readily locate this as Japanese-influenced English. Thus while the lyrics are in English and perform the activity not uncommon to rap of self reference (announcing the name of the crew),⁵ they also locate themselves phonologically and syntactically as Japanese performances in English. While the English of 'Yo, Bringing That' links them to the global flow of rap, 'By the Way' appears to draw on their own English competencies, thus using English more symbolically than mimetically.

The second line 'Freaky double Japanese from Kinshichoo' however, locates these Japanese rappers in a different way. Here again we see a mixture of *kanji*, *katakana*, *hiragana*, and *romaji*/English. By naming Kinshichoo (a suburb of Tokyo) and by doing so in *kanji*, Rip Slyme locate their Japaneseness explicitly, yet at the same time they use the English word for Japanese, seeming in the same instant to refashion their identity from the outside. This Japanese identity is then both 'freaky' and 'double', the latter a recently coined term to describe people of mixed origin. It seems that this term may refer both literally to crewmember Ilmari, who, according to their website,⁶ is of Japanese and Finnish parentage, and more generally to this 'doubling' of identity that runs throughout these lyrics (the track Tokyo Classic is itself about globalization, identity and location). In a sense, then, this use of Japanese and English — Japanese which may locate these rappers as decidedly local (from Kinshichoo) or which may signal their sense of cultural mixing, and English that at times explicitly echoes African American English while at other times seems more Japanese in its usage — seems to constantly pull back and forth, to flow itself across the boundaries of identity.

Two key concepts that can help us to think this through further are *semiotic reconstruction* and *performativity*. First, returning for a moment to the issue of native speakers and world Englishes, it is worth considering

Kandiah's (1998, p.100) argument that most approaches to the new Englishes miss the crucial point that these Englishes 'fundamentally involve a radical act of semiotic reconstruction and reconstitution which of itself confers native userhood on the subjects involved in the act'. The crucial point here, then, is that it is not so much whether or not one is born in a particular type of community but rather what one does with the language. At the point of semiotic reconstruction, Rip Slyme become native users of a new raplish, a blend of Japanese and English that cannot be predefined as a first, second or foreign language, and cannot be deemed to be representing or not representing a pre-existing Japanese culture. It is in the performance that the identity is created.

Performativity gives us important ways of understanding this (for further discussion, see Pennycook, 2004). As Butler (1990, p.25) suggested in her work on the performativity of gender, 'gender proves to be performative — that is, constituting the identity it is purported to be. In this sense, gender is always a doing, though not a doing by a subject who might be said to pre-exist the deed'. Performativity, then, following Butler, can be understood as the way in which we perform acts of identity as an ongoing series of social and cultural performances rather than as the expression of a prior identity. As she goes on to argue: 'Gender is the repeated stylization of the body, a set of repeated acts within a highly rigid regulatory frame that congeal over time to produce the appearance of substance, of a natural sort of being' (Butler, 1990, p.33). Taking this up within studies of language and gender, Cameron suggests that 'Whereas sociolinguistics traditionally assumes that people talk the way they do because of who they (already) are, the postmodernist approach suggests that people are who they are because of (among other things) the way they talk' (1997, p.49). The question for language and gender studies, then, is not how men and women talk differently, as if males and females pre-existed their language use as given categories of identity, but rather — recalling Austin (1962) — how to do gender with words.

The notion of performativity opens up several important dimensions of language use. First, it suggests that languages themselves are better viewed from an anti-foundationalist perspective. By this I mean that the ontological status of languages and grammars as pre-given objects of study becomes suspect. According to Hopper (1998) 'there is no natural fixed structure to language. Rather, speakers borrow heavily from their previous experiences of communication in similar circumstances, on similar topics,

and with similar interlocutors. Systematicity, in this view, is an illusion produced by the partial settling or *sedimentation* of frequently used forms into temporary subsystems' (Hopper, 1998, pp.157–158). From this point of view, it is no longer useful to look for varieties of English (world Englishes) as variants on a central linguistic monolith. Rather, English is a sedimentation of semiotic (re)constructions.

Second, performativity questions the notion of prior, pre-given identities. It is not that people use language varieties because of who they are, but rather that we perform who we are by (amongst other things) using varieties of language. Performativity in post-colonial contexts can be understood as a form of the '(re)writing of English, Spanish, Dutch, French and Portuguese; ... the (re)invention of musical sound; and a plethora of other act(ion)s that make clear a notion of fashioning and invention of the self' (Walcott, 1997, p.99). The importance of this observation in terms of understanding transcultural flows and global Englishes is telling. English is used to perform, invent and (re)fashion identities across borders. Thus in performing their acts of semiotic reconstruction, it is no longer useful to ask if Rip Slyme are using Japanese English to express Japanese culture and identity as if these neatly pre-existed the performance. Nor is it useful to consider that they are just dupes of consumerist global culture. We do of course need to see Rip Slyme's use of English as heavily influenced by the global spread of rap/hip-hop — just as Preisler's (1999) Danish hip-hopppers were conversant with a large hip-hop vocabulary — but this also suggests that when we talk of global English use, we are talking of the performance of new identities.

And third, we can start to take the 'performance' of performativity more seriously. It is important to note here, as Butler points out, that 'performativity is neither free play nor theatrical self-presentation; nor can it simply be equated with performance' (1993, p.95). Thus, it is not a question of simply putting on an identity at will: rather this gives us important ways of understanding the local contingencies of identity formation. But at the same time, this also allows us to consider those forms of performance — such as music — often discarded as 'inauthentic' language use. It is clear that Rip Slyme's lyrics are put together for very particular effects — cultural, aesthetic, commercial — and as such are very much 'performed'. Yet it is also clear that their music is a performance of global and local rap/hip-hop; and such performance is part of the larger performative aspect of identity refashioning.

Zuberi (2001, p.195) argues that popular music ‘stages identifications, imagines subjectivities, and performs community’. Zuberi’s interest is in the ways in which changing and contested notions of what it is to be British are produced and performed, particularly in the context of global ‘digitally enabled diasporic consciousness’. However, my interest here is in how the global role of rap in relationship to English produces particular understandings of what it means to partake in multilayered modes of identity at global, regional, national and local levels. How does the use of English work as it locates its users both as part of the global imagined community of English users and as participants in the global music industry, creating links through the ‘international language’ and yet relocating through its juxtaposition with Japanese? How do these new global raplishes work as tools for the performance of identities?

NOTES

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2. Although definitions differ — in some contexts, for example, hip-hop is understood to be a ‘softer’ version of ‘hard’ rap — rap can generally be understood as the particular musical style at the centre of the broader cultural phenomenon of hip-hop, which includes break-dancing, graffiti, DJ-ing, and various forms of clothing, talking and acting (see Rose, 1994; Shuker, 2002). As the Japanese site ‘Nip Hop’ puts it, ‘Hip-hop is a culture without a nation. Hip-hop culture is international. Each country has its own spin on hip-hop. Japan has one of the most intense hip-hop cultures in the world ... Japanese Hip-Hop has its own culture, but a culture that has many similar aspects of Hip-Hop around the world. These aspects include the DJ, MC, dancers and urban artists (taggers, spray paint art)’. See <http://www.gjigaijin.dreamstation.com/Introduction.html>
3. The lyrics in this paper are all quoted from tracks as written on the CD sleeve of Rip Slyme’s 2002 CD *Tokyo Classic*. I am indebted to Emi Otsuji for her assistance with these lyrics.
4. See, for example, the online rap dictionaries at:
<http://www.rapdict.org/terms/>
<http://www.frumious.demon.co.uk/rapdic05.html>

5. The name Rip Slyme, by the way, appears to be a play on the name of one of their first releases, 'Lips Rhyme'. Such word plays, common in rap, take on an interesting dynamic in this context of r/l word plays in Japan.
6. See for example <http://www.ripslyme.com/>

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Chapter 19

The Myth of English as an International Language

This chapter is based on an article that first appeared in Makoni, S. & A. Pennycook (Eds.)(2007), *Disinventing and reconstituting languages* (pp.90–115).

Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.

Having striven for many years to come to grips with some of the hard questions that need to be asked about the role of English in the world — the cultural politics of English as an international language, implications of the global spread of English, colonial language policies and English and critical approaches to English language teaching — I here intend to address an issue that might seem contradictory when placed alongside these concerns. Although the effects of the global spread of English are of very real concern (we don't have to accept all of Phillipson's (1992) imperialistic claims to nevertheless acknowledge that there are widespread social, cultural, educational, economic and political effects), it is at the same time much less clear that English itself is equally real. While it is evident that vast resources are spent on learning and teaching something called English, and that English plays a key role in global affairs, it is less clear that all this activity operates around something that should be taken to exist in itself.

As Ndebele (1987) remarks, the 'very concept of an international, or world, language was an *invention* of Western imperialism' (1987, pp.3–4; my emphasis). Lurking behind such claims are sentiments similar to Phillipson's (1992) that English as an international language (EIL) has been created, promoted and sustained to the benefit of Western powers, global capitalism, the developed world, the centre over the periphery, or neoliberal ideology. Yet what if we take the notion of invention seriously here and question not only the underlying interests behind the global spread of English but also the ontological implications of its invention? To raise such a question is not merely to deal with the implications of a pluralisation of Englishes — though the very notion of the global spread of English is undeniably unsettled once we accept that the appropriation and development of different Englishes around the world divides English

into a plurality of languages — since a pluralisation strategy falls short of posing the more crucial question: Why should we accord any particular ontological status to something called English? As Reagan (2004, p.42) puts it, ‘there is, or at least there may well be, no such thing as English.’

Ontological and Empirical Arguments

Let us consider for a moment the grounds on which we might consider there to be such a thing as English. We might start with arguments based around reference and common sense: why would we have a term ‘English’ if it didn’t refer to anything? But this doesn’t take us very far: There are many terms (elves, fairies, democracy, freedom and so on) that don’t refer to anything very real. A more likely argument, perhaps, is a ‘common sense’ one: Surely if people all over the world claim to use English, then we should accept that claim. This we have to take a bit more seriously, though to appeal to majority belief doesn’t tell us anything much about the existence of what is believed in. The majority of Americans believe in a Christian god and the majority of people in the world believe in some god or another; this doesn’t prove the existence of god. In fact, for any sceptical thinker, the contradictory nature of these beliefs and the fact that they are majority beliefs are reasons precisely to be suspicious.

It might be argued, again on the grounds of common sense, that since people around the world are apparently able to communicate with each other in English, then it’s obvious that English exists. Or, from the other side of the coin, since people around the world can’t understand each other, they must be speaking different languages. On the face of it, these might appear reasonable arguments, but on closer investigation, it becomes clear that, as with many of these lines of reasoning, they assume as premises what they set out to demonstrate. Thus, to claim that in order to communicate successfully we need a thing called a common language (assuming, therefore, both the successful effects of communication as well as the grounds for its effects), or to assert that if we don’t understand each other, we must therefore be using different languages (assuming therefore both the unsuccessful effects of communication and the nature of the impediments to communication), is to have already presupposed that languages exist as distinct entities that facilitate or hinder communication.

Most arguments of this nature can be seen as rationalist ontological arguments, that is, arguments based on rational rather than empirical

grounds. In this tradition of thinking, a version of St. Anselm's ontological argument might be worth a try. If, by analogy with God, English is a language greater than which no language can be conceived, then, if such a language fails to exist, a greater language (which also exists) can be conceived. Yet, as the argument proceeds, this is absurd since nothing can be greater than a language greater than which nothing can be conceived. The conclusion must therefore be that a language (English) greater than which no language can be conceived must exist. Such arguments are notoriously hard to refute — though many attempts have been made, notably by Kant (1781/1998) in his *Critique of Pure Reason* — and have been reiterated in various forms throughout the rationalist tradition, from Descartes to Leibnitz (and, perhaps, on to the rationalist school of linguistics and its foremost exponent, Chomsky). While refutation in their own terms may be hard, they can nevertheless be rejected on the grounds that they are simply not *persuasive*, that is to say they do not provide a convincing argument for those who do not believe in the existence of God or English in the first place: they only provide a form of internal rational argument for the already faithful. Ontological arguments about English in the rationalist tradition are not going to take us very far.

A more obvious starting point, perhaps, is the empirical. Simply put, we might say that English exists in the words, grammar, lexicon, speech of all those books, dictionaries and grammars of English. Such a position, however, presents us with several problems. If we try to define the existence of a language according to its existence in such codifications, we are then left with an awkward argument as to the existence of all those languages that have not been thus codified. It is perhaps possible to argue that codified and standardised languages are the norm and that the proof of the existence of all languages awaits only their mass codification. Yet, as any basic understanding of literacy development will tell us (e.g. Mühlhäusler, 1996), the codification of languages is not so much a process of writing down what already exists as it is a process of *reducing* languages to writing. Thus, whatever may pre-exist dictionary and grammar writing, it cannot be defined on the basis of such texts. Most obviously, however, the process of writing dictionaries of languages is a process of invention par excellence. To argue that the vast materiality of the *Oxford English Dictionary* (OED), for example, attests to the size and existence of English is to overlook the point that this was yet another of those massive projects of Victorian invention.

Winchester's popular history of the OED, *The Meaning of Everything*, clearly locates the development of the dictionary in the context of 19th century empire building:

Huge ships, immense palaces, bridges and roads and docks and railways of daunting scale, brave discoveries in science and medicine, scores of colonies seized, dozens of wars won and revolts suppressed, and missionaries and teachers fanning out into the darkest crannies of the planet — there seemed nothing that the Britain of the day could not achieve. And now, to add to it all — a plan for a brand new dictionary. A brand new dictionary of what was, after all, the very language of all this greatness and moral suasion and muscularly Christian goodness, and a language that had been founded and nurtured in the Britain that was doing it — the idea seemed no more and no less than a natural successor to all of these other majestic ventures of iron and steam and fired brick. (Winchester, 2003, p.43)

And yet, while Winchester thus eloquently depicts English as an imperial project, constructed like bridges, encouraged to spread like missionaries, colonising like armies, the implications of this construction are not taken up. Prior to this imperial project, English is still seen as a vast entity just waiting to be described:

No one had ever thought of making a list of all the words and noting down what they seemed to mean — even though from today's perspective, from a world that seems obsessed with a need to count and codify and define and make categories for everything, there seems no rational reason why this might have been so. (Winchester, 2003, p.18)

English, in this view, pre-exists its description as a set of words that are already part of English. Yet this realist claim overlooks the obvious process by which English was produced by such activities, and to allege, as many do, on this basis that English has more words than other languages (see Pennycook, 1998) is akin to claiming that the British Empire included a vast number of territories prior to colonisation. Colonisation produced the empire as dictionary writing produced the language.

In his discussion of 'the myth of standard English,' Harris (1988, p.1) points out that it is a 'self-fulfilling prophecy'. The view of standard English held by the creator of the *Oxford English Dictionary*, James Murray, was based on 'a myth which had been *invented* to serve the purposes of a typically Victorian brand of national idealism' (Harris, 1988, p.26; my emphasis). As Willinsky (1994) has shown at length, the OED and other

great Victorian projects of invented tradition 'retroactively assembled a historical foundation for a nation worthy of a global empire' (Willinsky, 1998, p.120). Thus, the 'making of the OED provides its own lessons in how English was imagined as a civilising beacon, a light to guide lesser peoples out of their own dark ages' (Willinsky, 1998, p.200). Any argument, therefore, that English can be taken to exist because of its representation in reference books fails to take into account either the process by which reference books invent languages or the circularity of any argument that proposes that, since something is 'in English,' then English exists, and if English exists, then all these uses are clearly 'in English'.

Empirical linguists might sensibly eschew such arguments based on prior codings of the language and base a belief in languages instead on the ability of the scientific methodology of linguistics to determine the existence of the object. From this line of thinking, a line is drawn between subjective and objective, or political and scientific, approaches to understanding language. Thus Dixon (1997, p.7) argues that 'Once political considerations are firmly discarded, it is generally not a difficult matter to decide whether one is dealing with one language or more than one in a given situation.' Here, then, linguistic positivism arrogates for itself the ability to distinguish languages as separate entities while disregarding the views of the speakers themselves. The conceit of such a view has of course been widely questioned, especially by linguistic anthropologists who draw our attention to language ideologies and regimes, and thus the need to understand language culturally (Blommaert, 1999; Kroskrity, 2000). Linguistics in this vein sets itself an impossible task here, both empirical and epistemological, since it is at least commonplace in most accounts of language variation to acknowledge that languages are political rather than ontological categories.

The epistemological impossibility of describing a language is also a major impediment for an empirical justification for the belief in the existence of English. If a real attempt were made to describe and identify all and every utterance produced under the name of English, the project would be both physically and temporally implausible (corpus linguistics only makes this marginally less so). Descriptive linguistics has of course never operated this way but has instead posited a core (grammar/lexicon) from which deviations are deemed varieties. Yet the impossibility of accounting for English variation through a description of a supposed core, or of making the core a product of the variation renders this too

an untenable proposition. Why should we believe that two utterances, mutually incomprehensible, spoken in different ways, with different meanings, by people on opposite sides of the world, with no connection to or knowledge of each other, should be considered to be part of the same thing, system, language, English, simply because this label is loosely applied to these moments of language use?

One other linguistic argument that might be applied to explain the existence of English is a structuralist one. Languages are defined by their differences, and so English exists because of its relationship to all that it is not. Such an argument may suggest the relative existence of English, but obviously collapses if we question the hermetic systems of structuralism (all languages exist in relation to each other but not to anything else) or when we consider that it is not only English but all languages that are under question here. To argue that something is English because it is not French, Cornish or Greek is to be caught in a structuralist circularity. One might hold out hope for biological or neurological demonstrations of the representation of languages in the brain, yet these are much more effective at telling us about ways in which language in general operates than about the separability and identification of different languages. Research on bilingual aphasia (Paradis, 2004), for example, may in fact tell us more about the impossibility of distinguishing languages as discrete systems than the possibility of mapping separable neurological systems.

An alternative approach to this linguistic realism is to opt for the phenomenological argument that languages exist only to the extent that speakers perceive them to do so. By contrast with Dixon's rejection of what people say they speak, a phenomenological approach suggests that this may be the most important consideration, leading to the vast divergence between linguists' languages (6500) and peoples' languages (40,000) (see *Ethnologue*). Giving such absolute priority to the observing subject, as Foucault (1970) pointed out, however, is to oppose the impossible realism of structuralism with the impossible idealism of phenomenology. The phenomenological insights of 'native speaker intuition' have been a notoriously unreliable grounding for understanding language. Yet, while an argument that we can take English to be what people perceive it to be is probably unhelpful in terms of establishing claims to what English is, this may nevertheless provide some insights into the ways that English may be more usefully understood as a product of the will to certain goods and identities rather than as a linguistic system.

Constructions and Myths

What, then, if we take seriously the proposition that English does not exist? Surely this takes us into the rather difficult position of having to account for what it is that all those English users, English textbooks, English departments, are really doing. Here we need to explore further two important ways of talking about non-reality: construction and myth. Just as it is difficult to account for the existence of something called English, so it is also important to consider carefully what we might mean by its non-existence. Let us turn, then, to the notion of *myth*. A useful place to start is with Roland Barthes' (1957/1972, p.142) classic *Mythologies*, in which he argues that myth 'has the task of giving an historical intention a natural justification, and making contingency appear eternal.' Barthes goes on,

Myth is constituted by the loss of the historical quality of things: in it, things lose the memory that they once were made. The world enters language as a dialectical relation between activities, between human activities, between human actions; it comes out of myth as a harmonious display of essences. A conjuring trick has taken place; it has turned reality inside out, it has emptied it of history and has filled it with nature, it has removed from things their human meaning so as to make them signify a human insignificance. (Barthes, 1957/1972, pp.142–143)

Myth, therefore, is 'depoliticised speech,' where the 'political' is understood as 'describing the whole of human relations in their real, social structure, in their power of making the world' (Barthes, 1957/1972, p.143). Myth, he argues

... does not deny things, on the contrary, its function is to talk about them; simply, it purifies them, it makes them innocent, it gives them a natural and eternal justification, it gives them a clarity which is not that of an explanation but that of a statement of fact. (Barthes, 1957/1972, p.143)

Barthes' understanding of myth raises a number of important points for an understanding of the construction of English. If we wish to argue that there is no such thing as English, we may be claiming, for example, that languages are constructions. Many would be happy to acknowledge that standard English was constructed in the sense that it was actively standardised or produced rather than having either immutable historical, or natural evolutionary, origins. On this view, languages are the products

of social actors, and particular versions of languages, such as standard languages, are the very particular constructions of overt political activity. This version of construction potentially leaves languages as real entities while questioning any argument that suggests they have some status outside the social, cultural and political forces that make them. We might call this a general social constructionist position, a view common enough in the social sciences. Thus, while sociolinguists such as Trudgill (1999) can point to the historical process of standardisation that produced standard English, he is also happy to accord standard English a relatively unproblematic ontological status. Standard English, Trudgill (1999, p.118) tells us, is a variety of English; it is the variety normally used in writing; it is the variety associated with education systems and therefore 'the variety spoken by those who are often referred to as "educated people".' It has no connection to accent, register or style, but rather is a dialect defined by various grammatical rules. From this perspective, then, although the processes by which a variety of English became standard English might be seen as a form of social construction, the object that resulted — standard English — is an objectively describable entity, a variety of English with a set of rules, used by a certain group of people.

A further step in this thinking, however, suggests that this construction itself produced a metalanguage rather than a language, or put another way, that the standardisation of English produced not so much standard English but rather discourses about standard English. Milroy (1999, p.18), for example, suggests that 'standard languages are fixed and uniform-state idealisations' and that 'no one actually speaks a standard language' (Milroy, 1999, p.27). As he points out, in addition to this idealisation, there is a standard language culture that inculcates and maintains a set of beliefs about standard English. He goes on to argue that 'language experts' have failed to appreciate either their role in supporting standard language ideologies or that 'what is involved is only superficially a debate about language and is more fundamentally a debate about ideologies' (Milroy, 1999, p.23). Thus, from this point of view, the construction of standard English was a project that produced a set of beliefs about the supposed objects enshrined in dictionaries, grammars, and style manuals; it did not produce a 'real thing' called 'standard English'.

This understanding of construction adds an important dimension to the discussion so far: Like the first notion of construction, it draws our attention to the ways in which the supposedly natural (the existence

of languages, of English, of standard English) has to be understood historically; it points to the ways in which myths work by constantly talking about things, by constantly assuming the existence of things; it highlights the idea of heroic stories that tell us about the origins or nature of various phenomena, or explain how something came to be. From this perspective, the question of reality is put on hold. As Watts (1999, p.73) notes in his discussion of the myth of standard English, the notion of myth should not be taken to imply 'a false, unfounded or wrong-headed belief in the origin of a phenomenon' but rather as narratives that 'contain elements of reality in them since they derive from the past experiences of a group.' This position on myth is somewhat akin to the poststructuralist turn to discourse: if we cannot gain unmediated access to the real world, let us focus instead on the modes of representation (discourse) through which the world is constructed, on the naturalisations of language and the productions of metalanguage.

Construction and myth present us with several ways of addressing issues of reality. First, a social constructionist position aims to challenge views that suggest non-social origins to social phenomena: ideas, ideologies, research and knowledge all have their origins in social and cultural fields. Social constructionism is largely interested in challenging radical realist or foundationalist arguments that suggest an objective status outside human action. The notion of invention, viewed from this perspective, suggests that languages may exist, but they do so only as a product of human interests. This first meaning is linked to our basic concern about the very real invention of languages. Many languages were the products of specific processes of invention. While this position may usefully counter claims such as Dixon's (1997) that we can put aside political definitions of language and engage only with the scientific/linguistic, it does not necessarily challenge the ontological status of languages as social constructions, or the significance of the construction of metalanguages through which languages are made. Social constructionism, then, is useful only insofar as it dispels foundationalist myths of origin by showing how human action has produced current entities and beliefs about those entities.

A second position, which we might term ontological constructionism, is concerned with a more radical epistemology that suggests that the notion of 'language' does not refer to any real object. This position consequently goes further than merely suggesting that languages have been constructed:

it suggests that the notions of languages themselves are constructions. Languages and the metalanguages that attend them are very particular cultural orientations towards understanding the world that produce what they purport to describe. Rather than suggesting therefore that different languages have been invented within particular contexts, this position argues that the very notion of languages themselves is an invention. Thus not only were languages invented but they were invented on invented terrain. There are no languages. And thus, the question of whether there is such a thing as English is not about a special case for English as a result of its widespread use or division into different varieties, but rather about English as the currently most significant invention amid all the other invented languages of our times.

To this position, however, it is important to add another dimension, which we might call historical constructionism, or the acknowledgement that the effects of repeated construction and reconstruction are very real. Although languages were invented on invented terrain, and although the dubious attempts to trace the linear linguistic origins of languages do so along invented genealogies, these inventions have a reality for the people who deal with them. In his discussion of Anderson's (1983) imagined communities, Žižek (1993, p.202) argues that to emphasise:

in a 'deconstructionist' mode that the Nation is not a biological or transhistorical fact but a contingent discursive construction, an overdetermined result of textual practices, is ... misleading; such an emphasis overlooks the remainder of some *real*, nondiscursive kernel of enjoyment which must be present for the Nation qua discursive entity-effect to achieve its ontological consistency. (Žižek, 1993, p.202)

The point here, then, is that it is not enough just to suggest that language is not a biological or transhistorical fact but a contingent discursive construction, since this fails to account for people's engagement with the concept of language, the pleasure that is to be had in the belief in the ontological consistency of language. This is not, it should be noted, another version of the old ideology-as-false-consciousness argument, which would suggest that people are ideologically duped into believing in language, but rather an argument that the historical construction of language creates realities that we need to deal with.

Finally, we also need to deal with discursive constructionism, or the realisation that languages are produced in different ways at different times.

In the same way that Appadurai (1996) sees the modes of production of locality shifting under changing global conditions, so I would argue that the modes of production of language are at a very particular juncture. If the current understanding of languages was invented and maintained during an era of nation-building, modernity and a particular framing of identity, the global changes in recent years suggest new forms of construction. This is one reason why invention, disinvention and reconstruction of languages is so important at this current moment. It is also why a focus on English is of particular significance, since English is subject to a set of discursive formations that are quite different from those at different historical moments. And this is where the notion of myth is so important, since it draws our attention to the ways in which stories are constantly being told about English.

As Woolard (2004, p.58) notes, 'the history of languages often function as Malinowskian charter myths, projecting from the present to an originary past a legitimization of contemporary power relations and interested positions'. Malinowski's insight here was to view myths in terms of the ways in which they validate current social customs and institutions. A typical myth about a people's origins not only 'conveys, expresses and strengthens the fundamental fact of local unity and of the kinship unity of the group of people' but also 'literally contains the legal charter of the community' (Malinowski, 1954, p.116). Thus, myths justify social orders, institutions and languages; they define not only an imagined origin but also a current status, both orthodoxy and orthopraxy. And the charter myth of English, invoking certain origins, histories and lineages legitimates the current status of English, imagining into being a language that has spread from its insular origins into a world language. It is on this that I intend to focus in the next part of this chapter, looking briefly at the ways stories are told about English that constantly reconstruct it in particular ways.

English as Mythical Hero

Work such as Bailey's (1991) cultural history of English presents us with a broad picture of the cultural production of English. In light of both the focus of this book and this long history of producing myths around English, it is interesting to look at statements such as Read's (1849) not just as prescient and triumphalist but also as productive of the mythology of English:

Ours is the language of the arts and sciences, of trade and commerce, of civilisation and religious liberty. ... It is a store-house of the varied knowledge which brings a nation within the pale of civilisation and Christianity. ... Already it is the language of the Bible ... So prevalent is this language already become, as to betoken that it may soon become the language of international communication for the world. (Read, 1849, cited in Bailey, 1991, p.116)

I have already written extensively on myths about English as an international language, arguing for example that the myths of the global spread of English as natural (having evolved into the global language without overt political action), neutral (as disconnected to social, economic and political concerns) and beneficial (as being inherently beneficial to all that learn and use it) are untenable (Pennycook, 1994). I have also argued that the many myths about English as a 'marvellous tongue' need to be seen as 'cultural constructs of colonialism,' with a long history of colonial promotion and contemporary production (Pennycook, 1998).

The effect of the ongoing myth-making around English is not only to produce particular images about English, but also through their constant reiteration to incessantly invoke a thing called English. Myths about English put English into discourse. One of the casually insidious ways in which the notion of English as an international language (EIL) is employed is in the counts of English speakers/users around the globe (see for example Crystal, 1997; Kachru, 1986). Figures based on language policies, educational programs and estimates of use are added together to produce a figure of more than one billion users of English. But what sense does this make? Does this not have more to do with English myth-making than any useful description of global language use? Particularly salient today are claims that English is merely a 'language of international communication' rather than a language embedded in processes of globalisation; that English holds out promise of social and economic development to all those who learn it (rather than a language tied to very particular class positions and possibilities of development); and that English is a language of equal opportunity (rather than a language that creates barriers as much as it presents possibilities). Although my central focus here is on the ways such myths put English into discourse rather than on debunking such myths, it is worth looking at each briefly in terms of the collusionary, delusionary and exclusionary effects of English. This thing called English colludes with many of the pernicious processes of globalisation, deludes many learners through the false promises it holds out for social and material gain,

and excludes many people by operating as an exclusionary class dialect, favouring particular people, countries, cultures and forms of knowledge.

It would seem hard to deny that English, in a sense, colludes with globalisation. One of the problems in drawing these connections, however, has been the tendency to paint a simplistic version of globalisation. Thus, reviewing David Crystal's (1997) book on the global spread of English, Sir John Hanson, the former Director-General of the British Council, is able to proclaim: 'On it still strides: we can argue about what globalisation is till the cows come — but that globalisation exists is beyond question, with English its accompanist. The accompanist is indispensable to the performance' (Hanson, 1997, p.22). Phillipson, by contrast, in his review of the same book, takes a more critical line, suggesting that 'Crystal's celebration of the growth of English' is tied to:

an uncritical endorsement of capitalism, its science and technology, a modernisation ideology, monolingualism as a norm, ideological globalisation and internationalisation, transnationalisation, the Americanisation and homogenisation of world culture, linguistic, culture and media imperialism ... (Phillipson, 1999, p.274)

If Hanson's and Crystal's position simply fails to engage with questions of globalisation and English, Phillipson's position rather problematically presents us only with an image of homogenisation within a neocolonial global polity (which I have elsewhere categorised as the 'homogeny' position on global English; see Pennycook, 2003b; Chapter 17). Given that there is now a vast range of work looking at the complexities of globalisation (e.g. Appadurai, 1996; Hardt & Negri, 2000; Mignolo, 2000), studies of global English deserve better than this. At the very least, we need to understand how English is involved in global flows of culture and knowledge, how English is used and appropriated by users of English round the world, how English colludes with multiple domains of globalisation, from popular culture to unpopular politics, from international capital to local transaction, from ostensible diplomacy to purported peace-keeping, from religious proselytising to secular resistance. The incessant invocation of 'English as an international language' avoids the obligation to deal with the complexity of English in relation to globalisation while simultaneously reiterating the existence of English as being in the world.

With respect to English as a delusionary language, there are many myths that surround English as a language that will better people's lives.

A common view, as expressed in an article in the *EL Gazette* (1999) a few years ago, suggests that the widespread introduction of English into primary sectors around the world should lead to the alleviation of poverty. Next to a picture of laughing children on the front page is the claim that 'English is key to a better life for the poor'. An editorial on the next page explains further that 'for many of the world's poorest people, *English can hold the key to escape from grinding poverty*' (emphasis in original). And finally on page 3 the article itself carries the title 'English language could be the key to a better life for the underprivileged', and the subtitle 'The benefits of primary English language teaching are finally being recognised'. But the key question we need to look at here is what the effects of English education might actually be. In order to understand this, we need to look at English in terms of class, and thus at poverty alleviation not in terms of individual escape from poverty but in terms of larger social and economic relations (Appleby *et al.*, 2002). We need to be clear about whether we are looking at individual rights to English or whether we are looking at how access to English can alleviate poverty across a broader domain. The question, then, is how English may be related to economic change. As Tollefson (2000, p.8) warns, 'At a time when English is widely seen as a key to the economic success of nations and the economic well-being of individuals, the spread of English also contributes to significant social, political, and economic inequalities.' There is something rather bizarre in the belief that if everyone learned English, everyone would be better off.

Bruthiaux (2002, pp.292–293) argues convincingly that for many of the world's poor English language education is 'an outlandish irrelevance' and 'talk of a role for English language education in facilitating the process of poverty reduction and a major allocation of public resources to that end is likely to prove misguided and wasteful.' Grin (2001), one of the few to study the relationship between English and economic gain in any depth, argues that there is also an issue of diminishing returns here, since the more people learn English, the less the skill of knowing English will count. And bringing a sophisticated economic analysis to the question of global English, Lysandrou and Lysandrou (2003, p.230) argue that 'the embrace of the English language is to the detriment of the majorities of communities the world over insofar as it contributes to their systematic dispossession'. Thus we need to distinguish very clearly between individually-oriented access arguments about escape from poverty, and class-oriented arguments about large-scale poverty reduction. The challenge here is to get beyond

liberal arguments for access, and look instead at the broad effects of educational provision in all their complexity. We need to ask what constellation of concerns comes to bear in the contextual relationships among what I call, following Janks (2000), dominion (the contingent and contextual effects of power), disparity (inequality and the need for access), difference (engaging with diversity) and desire (understanding how identity and agency are related). Without such analyses of English, the myth of English as a language of development and opportunity will continue to make English a delusionary language. And these constant calls for English as a solution to poverty not only hold out few prospects for change for the recipients of such policies but also reinforce a belief in the existence of English.

And finally, rather than offering opportunity for all, English operates as a deeply exclusionary language. Tollefson suggests that:

For those who already speak English, the economic value of the language translates directly into greater opportunities in education, business and employment. For those who must learn English, however, particularly those who do not have access to high-quality English language education, the spread of English presents a formidable obstacle to education, employment, and other activities requiring English proficiency. (Tollefson, 2000, p.9)

As Ramanathan's (2005) study of English medium (EM) and Vernacular education in India shows, English is a deeply divisive language: English and power circulate through the social system, 'producing a *selective tradition* that actively *dilutes* Vernaculars and Vernacular ways of knowing, learning and teaching' (Ramanathan, 2005, p.38; emphasis in original). While Vernacular languages and cultures are thus denigrated and excluded, the education system 'dovetails with the values and aspirations of the elite Indian middle class: not only are all tertiary disciplines within their reach, they also bring with them cultural models that resonate with the thought structures of EM classrooms and institutions' (Ramanathan, 2005, p.112). While English opens doors to some, it is simultaneously a barrier to learning, development and employment for others, and thus keeps out far more than it lets in. The myths that surround English as a language of opportunity, advancement and equality are beliefs that have profound effects for the (mis)education of many around the world. Addressing these collusionary, delusionary and exclusionary roles of English is only part of the story, however, since we also need to come to terms with the ways in

which these stories mythologise English more generally. The concerns I have outlined here are part of a larger imperative to investigate the sociological functions of 'the Myth of English as an international language' (Krishnaswamy & Burde, 1998, p.19).

English as Mythical Entity

To describe and refute such myths, therefore, is not a sufficient goal. Of greater significance are the ways in which such myths are incessant stories told about English, constantly putting English into discourses about education, development and poverty, chronicling English as a language of opportunity, equality and access. Such myths relentlessly construct the illusion of English, presenting the world with a view that there is an identifiable language called English. It might be assumed that the notion of a global entity called English is challenged by a World Englishes perspective, which suggests that English has now become a set of separable regional languages. From this perspective, at the very least, we have a plurality of Englishes. Yet the World Englishes perspective in fact does little more than pluralise the notion of English while at the same time positing a core entity that is English and excluding any other possibilities that destabilise this notion of global English in more fundamental ways. If we seek a more contextual and contingent understanding of language use, it becomes clear that both the monolithic presence of a language called English and the pluralistic belief in many Englishes are both myths. What we have instead are the 'language effects' of a particular set of claims about language and English.

The idea of World Englishes, then, seeks to challenge the notion of a monolithic English emanating from the central Anglo-institutions of global hegemony. While the homogeneity position outlined above suggests that English is playing a role in world homogenisation, here we get the other side of the coin, the *heterogeny position*, focusing on the 'implications of pluricentricity ..., the new and emerging norms of performance, and the bilingual's creativity as a manifestation of the contextual and formal hybridity of Englishes' (Kachru, 1997, p.66). Thus the World Englishes paradigm has focused on the ways in which English has become locally adapted and institutionalised to create different varieties of English (different Englishes) around the world. I have discussed many of the problems with World Englishes at greater length elsewhere (Pennycook, 2002, 2003a,

2003b, Chapter 17, Chapter 18), including the ubiquitous, insistent, unsubstantiated and unexplained 'pleas for the neutrality of English in the post-colonial contexts' (Parakrama, 1995, p.22), and the inadequacy of the concentric circles model to capture the complexity of Englishes, since it fails, as Holborow (1999, pp.59–60) points out, 'to take adequate account of social factors and social differences *within* the circles,' and meanwhile continues problematically to locate native speakers and their norms in the centre, and non-native speakers elsewhere.

For the discussion here, however, of particular concern is the way in which these new Englishes are constructed along nationalist and exclusionary lines. As Krishnaswamy and Burde (1998, p.30) observe, if Randolph Quirk represented 'the imperialistic attitude' to English, the World Englishes approach represents 'a nationalistic point of view,' whereby nations and their varieties of English are conjured into existence: 'Like Indian nationalism, "Indian English" is "fundamentally insecure" since the notion "nation-India" is insecure' (Krishnaswamy & Burde, 1998, p.63). As Dasgupta (1993, p.137) laments, '... seldom have so many talented men and women worked so long and so hard and achieved so little' since the linguistics on which it relies cannot capture the complexity of language use that it claims to investigate, a point emphasised by Krishnaswamy and Burde's (1998, p.64) call for 'a reinvestigation of several concepts currently used by scholars.' By focusing centrally on the development of new national Englishes, the World Englishes approach reproduces precisely those linguistic paradigms that fell into the trap of believing the nationalist dream. Thus, not only does it fail to take into account Anderson's (1983) understanding of the process of imagining communities, but it also misses the point that languages were part of this dialectical co-imagining.

As Bruthiaux (2003, p.161) points out, the descriptive and analytic inconsistency of the concentric circle model gives it little explanatory power. This 'superficially appealing and convenient model conceals more than it reveals' since it attempts to compare varieties of English, different speaker types and geographical locations all at once. Its use of inconsistent criteria to categorise so-called varieties of English is confounded by a 'primarily nation-based model.' Thus it overlooks difference within regions and ascribes variety based on postcolonial political history: where a nation state was created, so a variety emerged. Ultimately, concludes Bruthiaux (2003, p.161), 'the Three Circles model is a 20th century construct that has outlived its usefulness'. By positing these new Englishes,

it perpetuates the myth of national languages that the global spread of English allows us to start to rethink, and does so by focusing on a narrow selection of standardised forms in particular communities. As Parakrama (1995, pp.25–26) argues, ‘The smoothing out of struggle within and without language is replicated in the homogenising of the varieties of English on the basis of “upper-class” forms. Kachru is thus able to theorise on the nature of a monolithic Indian English.’ While appearing, therefore, to work from an inclusionary political agenda in its attempt to have the new Englishes acknowledged as varieties of English, this approach to language is remorselessly exclusionary.

The process of constructing these new national varieties of English therefore involves a host of exclusions. Mufwene (1994, 1998) laments that the distinction between native and indigenised varieties of English ‘excludes English creoles, most of which are spoken as native languages and vernaculars’ (Mufwene, 1994, p.24). This exclusion, he suggests, ultimately concerns the identity of creole speakers: ‘the naming practices of new Englishes has to do more with the racial identity of those who speak them than with how these varieties developed and the extent of their structural deviations’ (Mufwene, 2001, p.107). The inclusion of creoles, furthermore, would profoundly challenge the notion of World Englishes: Not only would it challenge the racist exclusion of the wrong sorts of speakers, but it would also challenge what is understood by language in general, and English in particular. As Sebba (1997, p.289) notes, following Mühlhäusler (1992), ‘the study of pidgins and creoles forces us to stop conceptualising language as a *thing*, an *object* which can be captured and put under a microscope and dissected using a set of tools developed by linguists.’ The dynamism of creoles, therefore, throws out a challenge to all study of languages as objects. This argument using the examples of creoles is not, it should be noted, an example of what Degraff (2005) calls ‘linguists’ most dangerous myth: the fallacy of creole exceptionalism,’ which posits creoles as different from other languages. Rather, it is the opposite: It takes creoles as the norm (and not by the strategy of reducing them to ‘real languages’) and asks other theories of language to justify themselves.

The inclusion of creoles within an understanding of English questions not only the reification of English and World Englishes as objects on which linguists can do their work, but also how we think about languages. Although much debated (see e.g. Degraffe, 2005; Mufwene, 2001), a broad consensus on creoles is that rather than being debased or distorted

versions of European (or other) languages, they are best conceived as mixed languages, possibly with a base in various grammatical systems from one set of languages, and a vocabulary drawn from one or more lexifying languages. An 'English creole' is therefore generally understood as a language with recognisably English words but a grammar derived from a range of sources including African languages, non-standard versions of English and other developmental processes. Such a notion immediately destabilises the concept of World Englishes, which by and large relies on a belief in a core, central grammar and lexicon of English (which is what makes new Englishes still English), with new Englishes characterised by a few grammatical shifts, new lexical items and different pragmatic and phonological features. In this view, divergences from the core are viewed as 'localisations' as long as the overarching system remains intact. English from a creole-inclusive point of view, however, not only embraces a wide variety of mutually incomprehensible uses of language but also potentially a wide variety of grammars. Creole languages have to be excluded from World Englishes, therefore, since they perforce destabilise the very definitions of language and grammar that underlie this version of a global language.

If it can be argued, furthermore, that African American English, for example, is a creole-based language derived from African languages with English lexifiers, which approaches standard American English at one end of the creole continuum (see Mufwene, 2001, for discussion; and similar arguments can be made for a host of other varieties of English such as Aboriginal English in Australia), then we clearly have not only the possibility of mutually incomprehensible versions of English with grammars from other languages, but also what may appear mutually comprehensible versions of the same language (American English) that are in fact languages with different histories that have come to take on the appearance of similarity. Once we accept this possibility, the argument that mutual comprehensibility may be a way of defining whether one is using the same language is challenged not only by the obvious difficulty that versions of some languages are not comprehensible to each other, but also by the notion that mutually comprehensible speakers may be using different languages. This is not the same as noting that speakers of politically divided language domains (say Swedish and Norwegian) may be able to understand each other; rather it raises the more interesting possibilities that speakers of apparently comprehensible versions of a language may be speaking very different languages. And once again, this

suggests that the World Englishes paradigm, while supposedly emphasising diversity, in fact has at its core an underlying emphasis on the constraining similarities of English.

Pluralisation of English, therefore, does not take us far enough and remains an exclusionary paradigm. Just as Makoni (1998) has argued that the concept of multilingualism may do little more than pluralise monolingualism, so I am suggesting that the concept of World Englishes does little more than pluralise monolithic English. The notion of World Englishes leaves out all those Other Englishes that do not fit the paradigm of an emergent national standard, and in doing so, falls into the trap of mapping centre linguists' images of language and the world on to the periphery. As Parakrama argues, the World Englishes approach to diversity in English:

cannot do justice to those Other Englishes as long as they remain within the over-arching structures that these Englishes bring to crisis. To take these new/other Englishes seriously would require a fundamental reevaluation of linguistic paradigms, and not merely a slight accommodation or adjustment. (Parakrama, 1995, p.17)

Similarly, Canagarajah argues that in Kachru's:

attempt to systematise the periphery variants, he has to standardise the language himself, leaving out many eccentric, hybrid forms of local Englishes as too unsystematic. In this, the Kachruvian paradigm follows the logic of the prescriptive and elitist tendencies of the center linguists. (Canagarajah, 1999, p.180)

The irony here is that while looking like a pluralist, localised version of English, this paradigm reinforces both centrist views on language and dangerous myths about English.

We need, then, to ask some rather different questions that go beyond strategies of pluralisation. Let us return to Harris' (1990, p.45) argument that 'linguistics does not need to postulate the existence of languages as part of its theoretical apparatus.' Surely at the heart of the problem of understanding English here is the continued belief in the existence of 'a language' called English. And this problem is not overcome simply by a strategy of pluralisation of Englishes since this does little more than reproduce the same normative linguistic paradigm. As Harris goes on to argue, the question here is whether

the concept of 'a language,' as defined by orthodox modern linguistics, corresponds to any determinate or determinable object of analysis at all, whether social or individual, whether institutional or psychological. If there is no such object, it is difficult to evade the conclusion that modern linguistics has been based upon a myth. (Harris, 1990, p.45)

And given the scale of English and the scale of work on English, it is tempting to conclude that what we have here is the mother of all myths: English as an international language. Indeed one reason for focusing on English here is to avoid the suggestion that strategies of disinvention apply to so-called multilingual or minority contexts. Strategies of disinvention and reconstruction apply to all languages, and especially those on which so much effort at invention has been spent.

If we take a step back from this myth, it is indeed puzzling to observe the extraordinary continuation of the idea that something called English exists, a myth perpetuated by strategies of exclusion and circularity. It is assumed a priori that there is such a thing as English. This view is reinforced by excluding those types of English and, as Mufwene (2001) notes, those types of speakers, that don't fit what is deemed to be English, and then employing the circular argument that, if it doesn't fit, it isn't English. A core system of English is assumed, with deviations from this core that destabilise the notion of system discounted. The World Englishes paradigm, while attempting to achieve sociolinguistic equality for its varieties, is not epistemologically different from this model of core, variation and exclusion. For a world English to be such, it must adhere to the underlying grammar of central English, demonstrate enough variety to make it interestingly different, but not diverge to the extent that it undermines the myth of English. If we acknowledge creole languages, however, if we refuse to draw a line down the middle of a creole continuum (exclaiming that one end is English while the other is not), if we decide that those 'Other Englishes' may be part of English, then we are not dealing with a language held in place by a core structure but rather a notion of language status that is not definable by interior criteria.

Conclusion: Language Effects and Mobilisations

Returning to and rewriting Barthes for a moment, we can suggest that the myth (or myths) of English as an international language (EIL) can be understood as making the local contingencies of English appear to

have broader ontological and temporal validity and a natural justification. The myth(s) of EIL erase the memory that English is a fabrication, that languages are inventions and that talk of English as an international language is a piece of intellectual slippage that replaces the history of this invention with a belief in its natural identity. The myth of EIL depoliticises English, and does so not by ignoring English but by constantly talking about it, making English innocent, giving it a natural and eternal justification, a clarity that is not that of a description but an assumption of fact. The myth of EIL deals not merely with the invention of English, but with the strategies that constantly keep that invention in place, with the relentless repetition of the stories and tales about this thing called English. We need to disinvent English, to demythologise it, and then to look at how a reinvention of English may help us understand more clearly what it is we are dealing with here.

Taking Hopper's (1998, p.157) proposition seriously that 'there is no natural fixed structure to language,' the idea of a core that defines English seems hard to maintain. This takes us into rather different territory. Kandiah (1998, p.100) points out that most approaches to the new Englishes miss the crucial point that these Englishes 'fundamentally involve a radical act of semiotic reconstruction and reconstitution which of itself confers native userhood on the subjects involved in the act.' Language use is centrally an agentive act, an act of reconstruction rather than act of reproduction, as an argument that languages have fixed structures that we repeat would suggest. Linking this notion to Le Page and Tabouret-Keller's (1985) proposition that linguistic and cultural identities are constituted through the performance of *acts of identity*, we can suggest that language use is not so much the repetition of prior grammatical structure but rather a semiotic restructuring as a claim to a particular identity.

Just as recent thinking (e.g. Butler, 1990; 1993) has focused on gendered and other identities in a non-foundational light, so may language itself be seen as a product of performative acts. It is instructive in this context to compare Butler's comments on gender with Hopper's discussion of *emergent grammar*: 'The subject is not *determined* by the rules through which it is generated because signification is *not a founding act, but rather a regulated process of repetition*' (Butler, 1990, p.145; emphasis in original). For Hopper, the apparent structure or regularity of grammar is an emergent property that 'is shaped by discourse in an ongoing process. Grammar is, in this view, simply the name for certain categories of observed repetitions in

discourse' (Hopper, 1998, p.156). Thus, just as Butler (1999, p.120) argues that identities are a product of ritualised social performatives calling the subject into being and 'sedimented through time,' so for Hopper (1998, p.158). systematicity 'is an illusion produced by the partial settling or *sedimentation* of frequently used forms into temporary subsystems'. And by analogy English is an illusion of systematicity produced by ritualised social and linguistic activities that have become sedimented through time.

Where, then, does this leave us? English is a social, ideological, historical and discursive construction, the product of ritualised social performatives that become sedimented into temporary subsystems. These social performatives are acts of identity, investment and semiotic (re)construction. That is to say, the temporary sedimentation of English subsystems is a result of agentic acts, particular moves to identify, to use and adapt available semiotic resources for a variety of goals. And given the global status of the English myth, acts of English identification are used to perform, invent and (re)fashion identities across innumerable domains. English, like other languages, does not exist as a prior system but is produced and sedimented through acts of identity. Similar to the way that we perform identity with words (rather than reflect identities in language), we also perform languages with words. What we therefore have to understand is not this 'thing' 'English' that does or does not do things to and for people, but rather the multiple investments people bring to their acts, desires and performances in 'English'. English as an international language is not merely a set of social, cultural and political myths about what English can do, but is also based on the untenable myth that there is a real world object called English.

It might be asked what use all of this might be to teachers, users, or learners of English. Surely it is not helpful to teachers and learners to read that this activity we are engaged in — whether it is writing an e-mail to a friend in English, going over the meanings of vocabulary in an English comprehension passage, practising a dialogue in English, writing a poem in English, conducting a business meeting in English, calling air traffic control at an international airport in English — is in fact a myth, that while we have always reasonably believed that this thing we know, use, learn, teach, is something called English, we have in fact been deluded. The teacher is teaching nothing, the student is learning nothing, and the language users are fooling themselves in believing that they are communicating through English. This is of course not the point of the

argument here. This project of disinvention is aimed neither to discredit the work of teachers, students, writers or poets, nor merely to engage in a form of linguistic deconstruction for its own sake. There is clearly a certain materiality to the products and processes of activities such as English language education; indeed, if we reflect for a moment on what people are currently doing around the world, after sleeping, eating and engaging in various forms of work, 'learning English' must surely account for quite a considerable part of current global human activity.

As Joseph (2002, p.44) suggests, however, this activity might best be conceived in terms of a verb, of doing things with language, in terms, perhaps, of Englishing. This is different from the engagement with:

the *institution* of the language, the noun-like thing that they ultimately cannot ignore, but must comprehend, grapple' with, accept in some respects and resist in others, as they construct their own linguistic identities simultaneously within it and in opposition to it. (Joseph, 2002, p.44)

It is clear that many people are engaged in activities such as 'teaching English,' 'learning English,' 'writing in English' and so forth, but much less clear what this implies about the institutional entity English. The argument here, then, is that once we grasp the implications of understanding languages as inventions, an alternative way forward presents itself for how we consider what it is we are doing. Thus, if we are concerned about the relation between English and lesser used languages, the way forward may be not so much in terms of language policies to support other languages over English but rather in terms of opposing language ideologies that construct English in particular ways.

Just as Butler (1993, p.12) describes her project as 'a poststructuralist rewriting of discursive performativity as it operates in the materialisation of sex', so my interest here is in a poststructuralist rewriting of discursive performativity as it operates in the materialisation of language. If Foucault (e.g. 1980) was concerned with the 'truth effects' of discourse, and Butler (1993) with the 'body effects' of discourse, we are here concerned with the 'language effects' of discourse, the ways in which languages are materialised through discourse. By analogy, then, with Foucault's (1980) argument that we need to give up asking if something is true or false and instead focus on the truth effects of making different epistemological claims, so we would do better to go beyond asking whether English exists or not, and rather focus on the 'language effects' produced by language industries. A range of

interested industries, from linguists to educationalists, from policy makers to publishers, constantly reproduce myths of English. This focus on language effects does not, I would argue, lessen the impact of something called the global spread of English but focuses our attention on the effects of the claims to the ontological status of English. While EIL may be a myth, the language effects of this myth are very real.

When we talk of English today we mean many things, and not many of them to do with some core notion of language. English is not so much a language as a discursive field: English *is* neoliberalism, English *is* globalisation, English *is* human capital. The question, then, is what is it that people do in their claims that something is English? Once we understand that languages are inventions and that we need to disinvent and reinvent what they are seen to be, we can start to work towards a quite different way of thinking about what English language teaching may be. The question then becomes not whether some monolithic thing called English is imperialistic or an escape from poverty, nor how many varieties there may be of this thing called English, but rather what kind of mobilisations underlie acts of English use or learning. In order to come to terms with such questions, we need a much more contextualised understanding of language as locally derived. Something called English is mobilised by English language industries with particular language effects. But something called English is also part of complex language chains, mobilised as part of multiple acts of identity; it is caught in a constant process of semiotic reconstruction.

Notes

1. Lysandrou and Lysandrou (2003) argue, however, that this does not mean that English should be opposed since (1) such dispossession occurs only in 'price space' as opposed to 'physical space'; and (2) the solution to such a role for English is an economic one, not one of language policy.

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Chapter 20

ELT and Colonialism

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INTRODUCTION

English expanded from a language spoken by about 6 million people in 1600, a little over 8 million in 1700, around 30 million in 1800, to about 120 million in 1900. Thus its growth can be seen first in the context of the growth of England as an imperial power, and second in the context of the spread of English as an imperial language. But the massive expansion in the global use of English, from just over 100 million in 1900 to a vast number (perhaps one billion) of users of English as a second language around the world, occurred in the context of decolonization, the decline of Britain as an imperial power, and the rise of the US as the new global power. This neo-colonial expansion of ELT will be discussed in the next section. In this section, I shall discuss some important concerns to do with ELT and colonialism. First of all, in spite of the expansion in the number of English users by 1900, it is important to understand that British colonial language policy was not massively in favor of spreading English.

Colonial language policies can be seen as constructed between four poles (for much greater detailed analysis, see Pennycook, 1998; 2000): First, the position of colonies within a capitalist empire and the need to produce docile and compliant workers and consumers to fuel capitalist expansion; second, the discourses of Anglicism and liberalism with their insistence on the European need to bring civilization to the world through English; third, local contingencies of class, ethnicity, race, and economic conditions that dictated the distinctive development of each colony; and fourth, the discourses of Orientalism with their insistence on exotic histories, traditions, and nations in decline. By and large, these competing discourses on the requirements for colonial education produced language policies broadly favoring education in local languages (Brutt-Griffler,

2002): Vernacular education was seen as the best means of educating a compliant workforce and of inculcating moral and political values that would make the colonial governance of large populations more possible. English was seen as a dangerous weapon, an unsafe thing, too much of which would lead to a discontented class of people who were not prepared to abide by the colonial system.

There are, of course, ample examples of imperial rhetoric extolling the virtues of English, from Charles Grant's argument in 1797 that:

the first communication, and the instrument of introducing the rest, must be the English language; this is a key which will open to them a world of new ideas, and policy alone might have impelled us, long since, to put it into their hands ... (Bureau of Education, 1920, p.83)

through Macaulay's infamous Minute of 1835 (1972), to Frederick Lugard's views on the use of English at Hong Kong University in the early part of the 20th century:

I would emphasize the value of English as the medium of instruction. If we believe that British interests will be thus promoted, we believe equally firmly that graduates, by the mastery of English, will acquire the key to a great literature and the passport to a great trade. (1910, p.4)

These arguments, however, had more to do with the construction of English as a language with particular benefits, an issue that will be discussed below, than with the expansion of English beyond a narrow elite.

The weight of argument by colonial administrators was much more in favor of education in local languages. In the 1884 report on education (Straits Settlements), E. C. Hill, the Inspector of Schools for the colony, explained his reasons against increasing the provision of education in English that went beyond concerns about the costs and the difficulties in finding qualified teachers to teach English:

As pupils who acquire a knowledge of English are invariably unwilling to earn their livelihood by manual labour, the immediate result of affording an English education to any large number of Malays would be the creation of a discontented class who might become a source of anxiety to the community. (p.171)

This position was extremely common and is echoed, for example, by Frank Swettenham's argument in the *Perak Government Gazette*:

I am not in favour of extending the number of 'English' schools except where there is some palpable desire that English should be taught. Whilst we teach children to read and write and count in their own languages, or in Malay ... we are *safe* (emphasis in original). (6 July 1894)

Thus, as Loh Fook Seng (1970) comments, "modern English education for the Malay then is ruled out right from the beginning as an unsafe thing" (p.114).

In an article on vernacular education in the State of Perak, the Inspector of Schools, H. B. Collinge (cited in Straits Settlements, 1894), explained the benefits of education in Malay as taking "thousands of our boys ... away from idleness," helping them at the same time to "acquire habits of industry, obedience, punctuality, order, neatness, cleanliness and general good behaviour." Thus, after a boy had attended school for a year or so, he was "found to be less lazy at home, less given to evil habits and mischievous adventure, more respectful and dutiful, much more willing to help his parents, and with sense enough not to entertain any ambition beyond following the humble home occupations he has been taught to respect" (p.177). And not only does the school inculcate such habits of dutiful labor but it also helps colonial rule more generally since:

if there is any lingering feeling of dislike of the 'white man', the school tends greatly to remove it, for the people see that the Government has really their welfare at heart in providing them with this education, free, without compulsion, and with the greatest consideration for their Mohammedan sympathies. (p.177)

Similarly, in Hong Kong, E. J. Eitel (Report, 1882), the Inspector of Schools, argued that by studying Chinese classics, students learn "a system of morality, not merely a doctrine, but a living system of ethics." Thus, they learn "filial piety, respect for the aged, respect for authority, respect for the moral law." In the Government schools, by contrast, where English books are taught from which religious education is excluded, "no morality is implanted in the boys" (p.70). Thus, the teaching of Chinese is:

of higher advantage to the Government ... boys strongly imbued with European civilization whilst cut away from the restraining influence of Confucian ethics lose the benefits of education, and the practical experience of Hong Kong is that those who are thoroughly imbued with the foreign spirit, are bad in morals, (p.70)

The implications of this understanding of colonial language policy are several. Education in vernacular languages was promoted both as a means of colonial governance and as an Orientalist project for the maintenance of cultural formations. While this has many implications for an understanding of mother tongue education and modes of governance (see Pennycook, 2002), it is also significant for the role of English both before and after the formal ending of colonialism. The effects of Anglicist rhetoric did not produce widespread teaching of English, but did produce widespread images of English as a superior language that could bestow immense benefits on its users, a topic to which I shall turn below. Meanwhile the language had been coveted and acquired by social and economic elites with whom the British were now negotiating independence. This was to have significant implications for the neo-colonial development of English in the latter half of the 20th century. Finally, however, although English teaching was relatively limited as an imperial project, the very scale of the empire and the ELT that did occur within it has ironically often been overlooked.

Thus, in spite of the relatively limited role of ELT within the British Empire, this new global position of English nevertheless had significant implications for the development of ELT. Indeed, the origins of a great deal of thinking about English and English language teaching have their origins in the colonial context rather than in what is often assumed to be their provenance in Britain itself. In his history of English language teaching, Howatt (1984, p.71) comments that ELT forked into two streams at the end of the 18th century; one being the development of ELT within the Empire, the other being the influence of continental Europe on ELT. Although Howatt is no doubt right in suggesting that to study the development of ELT throughout the British Empire would entail a vast and separate series of studies, it is a shame that he opts so completely for the European side of the fork, and even more so if one considers that it may indeed have been the imperial fork that was more significant. That is to say, it was not so much that theories and practices of ELT were developed in Britain (with a strong European influence) and then exported to the Empire, but rather that the Empire became the crucial context of development of ELT, from where theories and practices were then imported into Britain.

This argument is akin to Gauri Viswanathan's (1989) observation that although "the amazingly young history of English literature as a subject of study (it is less than a hundred and fifty years old) is frequently noted," far less appreciated is "the irony that English literature appeared as a subject in

the curriculum of the colonies long before it was institutionalized in the home country” (pp.2–3). Viswanathan shows that because of the existence of an educated class of Indians who already exerted considerable control over their people, and because of the policy of religious neutrality in education, which prevented the British from promoting a firmer program of moral discipline through the educational system, English literature was called into service “to perform the functions of those social institutions (such as the church) that, in England, served as the chief disseminators of value, tradition, and authority” (p.7). The development of English literature as a subject, then, was a response to the particular needs of the colonial administration in India. It was only later that this newly developed cultural curriculum of English literature, designed to develop moral and traditional views in a secular state, was imported into Britain and used to fulfill similar functions.

When Howatt (1984) opts for the European rather than the Imperial path of ELT development — after mentioning the publication of John Miller’s *The Tutor* in Bengal in 1797 — he thus lets the crucial 19th century colonial path of ELT development grow cold until he picks it up again with reference to the influential Michael West, the author of the *New Method Readers* (1927 onwards). The development of these readers was a result of an experiment also conducted in Bengal and reported in West’s (1926) *Bilingualism (with Special Reference to Bengal)*. West (1888–1973), who worked in the Indian Education Service, and many other English language educators such as Thomas Prendergast (1806–1886) before him who worked in the Indian Civil Service, were highly influential in the development of ELT. More recently, the “Bangalore Project,” or “Communicational Teaching Project,” which ran from 1979 to 1984 under the guidance of the Madras British Council Officer, N. S. Prabhu, and was an attempt to explore the belief that the development of second language competence requires not so much systematized second language input as conditions under which learners cope with communication through a “procedural syllabus” (see Prabhu, 1987), has had a significant effect on the development of task-based learning elsewhere.

While at one level it is tempting to view this project as yet another in the long line of inappropriate and self-interested British Council-brokered projects (see Rajan, 1992; Thikoo, 2001), at another level it is important to acknowledge that such examples suggest that it was ELT that spread from India rather than in some other direction. What I am therefore suggesting

here is that it is not merely the case that British colonial administrators tried out their teaching schemes in the empire rather than in Britain, nor merely that the empire was a more obvious site for developing English teaching than was Europe, but rather that the development of ELT was profoundly influenced by such contexts. Europeans have always attempted to write the colonized, and what they perceive as the periphery, out of the histories of what happened in the colonies (aside, of course, from treacheries, debaucheries, duplicities, and so forth), making all that has been deemed progressive to be only a product of European endeavor. Yet the development of English, the development of ELT, the development of English literature could not have happened without the colonial encounter. As I argue below, this has had profound and often pernicious effects on ELT.

THE NEO-COLONIAL POLITICS OF ELT

While, as I have suggested above, it is important to understand the relationships between ELT and colonialism in terms of the historical development of ELT in the colonial context, it is equally or more important to understand the ways in which relationships between ELT and colonialism continue into the present. This happens in two principal ways: the material and the cultural. By cultural relations, I mean the discursive effects of colonialism, the ways in which images of the Self and Other, the Occident and Orient, have become closely allied with the ELT project. This will be the topic of the following section. In this section, I shall look at the economic and political relations of ELT in terms of neo-colonial relations around ELT. I shall only give a brief overview of this position, however, since it has already been discussed in previous chapters.

Tollefson (2000) introduces some of the concerns about English as a neocolonial language by pointing to a paradox: "At a time when English is widely seen as a key to the economic success of nations and the economic well-being of individuals, the spread of English also contributes to significant social, political, and economic inequalities" (p.8). Thus, on the one hand some see English as fulfilling "the perceived need for one language of international communication. Through English, people worldwide gain access to science, technology, education, employment, and mass culture, while the chance of political conflict is also reduced"; on the other hand, amongst other things, "the spread of English presents

a formidable obstacle to education, employment, and other activities requiring English proficiency” (p.9). Phillipson’s (1992) book, *Linguistic Imperialism*, remains the clearest articulation of this position. As Tollefson explains:

Phillipson’s analysis places English squarely in the center of the fundamental sociopolitical processes of imperialism, neo-colonialism, and global economic restructuring. In this view, the spread of English can never be neutral but is always implicated in global inequality. Thus Phillipson, in contrast to Kachru, argues that the spread of English is a positive development for some people (primarily in core countries) and harmful to others (primarily in the periphery). The spread of English, in this view, is a result of policies adopted by core countries to bring about the worldwide hegemony of English, for the benefit of core country institutions and individuals, (p.13)

What Phillipson (1992) is arguing, then, is that English is interlinked with the continuing neo-colonial patterns of global inequality. He explains:

We live in a world characterised by inequality — of gender, nationality, race, class, income, and language. To trace and understand the linkages between English linguistic imperialism and inequality in the political and economic spheres will require us to look at the rhetoric and legitimation of ELT (for instance, at protestations that it is a ‘neutral’, ‘non-political’ activity) and relate what ELT claims to be doing to its structural functions. (pp.46–47)

Phillipson (1992) is therefore arguing that ELT plays an important role in the structure of global inequality. The notion of *imperialism* in *linguistic imperialism* thus refers not only to the imperialism of English (the ways in which English has spread around the world), but also to imperialism more generally (the ways in which some parts of the world are dominated politically, economically, and culturally by other parts of the world). It is not a coincidence, therefore, that English is the language of the great imperial power of the 19th century (Great Britain) and also of the great imperial (or neocolonial) power of the 20th (and probably 21st) century, the USA.

Phillipson (1994) convincingly shows how, for example:

A vast amount of the aid effort has ... gone into teacher education and curriculum development in and through English, and other languages have been neglected. A Western-inspired monolingual approach was adopted that ignored the multilingual reality and cultural specificity of learners in diverse

'Third World' contexts. (p.19)

He goes on to argue:

In the current global economy, English is dominant in many domains, which creates a huge instrumental demand for English. There has therefore already been a penetration of the language into most cultures and education systems. (pp.20–21)

But the challenge here is to show not only that the global spread of English can be seen as a form of imperialism that is particularly threatening to other languages and cultures, nor only that this spread of English correlates with other forms of political and economic domination and thus reflects global inequality, but rather that there is also a *causative* relationship between the promotion of English and forms of global inequality: that English helps produce and maintain inequitable global power relationships. This is of course a harder case to make on this global scale, though it is certainly possible to see, for example, how the promotion of English and the global marketing of textbooks continually reproduce a cycle of dependency.

ELT AND THE CULTURAL CONSTRUCTS OF COLONIALISM

I suggested in the first section that one of the lasting effects of ELT under colonialism was the production of images of English and of its learners. Simply put, the point here is that English, like Britain, its empire and institutions, was massively promoted as the finest and greatest medium for arts, politics, trade, and religion. At the same time, the learners of English were subjected to the imaginings of Orientalism, with its exoticized, static, and derided "Others." Thus, on the one hand, we have the cultural constructs of Orientalism — the cultures and characters of those who learn English — and on the other hand the cultural constructs of Occidentalism — the benefits and glories of the English language. As many writers on colonialism have argued (see for example, Mignolo, 2000; Singh, 1996), such discourses have continued long beyond the formal end of colonialism. Thus, not only can we see the current spread of English in terms of economic and political neo-colonial relations, but also in terms of cultural neo-colonial relations. As Bailey (1991) comments:

The linguistic ideas that evolved at the acme of empires led by Britain and the United States have not changed as economic colonialism has replaced the

direct, political management of third world nations. English is still believed to be the inevitable world language. (p.121)

It is to a brief overview of these Occidental and Orientalist images that I now turn.

The 19th century was a time of immense British confidence in their own greatness, and writing on English abounded with glorifications of English and its global spread. Guest (1838; 1882) argued that English was “rapidly becoming the great medium of civilization, the language of law and literature to the Hindoo, of commerce to the African, of religion to the scattered islands of the Pacific” (p.703). According to Read (1849, p.48):

Ours is the language of the arts and sciences, of trade and commerce, of civilization and religious liberty It is a store-house of the varied knowledge which brings a nation within the pale of civilization and Christianity Already it is the language of the Bible So prevalent is this language already become, as to betoken that it may soon become the language of international communication for the world. (Cited in Bailey, 1991, p.116)

According to George (1867):

Other languages will remain, but will remain only as the obscure Patois of the world, while English will become the grand medium for all the business of government, for commerce, for law, for science, for literature, for philosophy, and divinity. Thus it will really be a universal language for the great material and spiritual interests of mankind. (p.6)

It is not hard to see the continuity between such pronouncements and more recent rhetoric on the global spread of English: from Bryson’s (1990) statement that “more than 300 million people in the world speak English and the rest, it sometimes seems, try to” (p.1); to a dossier on *International English* (1989) for language learners that tells us that “one billion people speak English. That’s 20% of the world’s population” (p.2). Consider also the statement, “many foreign leaders speak in English to international journalists” (p.4) and the sentiments expressed in the following statements: “There are millions of Christians on every continent. It’s the world’s most international religion. But when Christian leaders from different countries meet, the language they use is English” (p.5). In newspaper articles such as Jenkins (1995), we are told:

When the Warsaw Pact was wound up it was wound up in English. When the

G7 meets, it meets in English ... English is the global computer language. It is the language of news gathering and world entertainment. The only substantial world body that struggles to keep going in a "foreign" tongue is the French-speaking European Commission in Brussels. With luck, enlargement will put an end to that.

In many such examples we can see the continuing glorification of the spread of English.

Similar arguments suggest that people are deprived if they do not speak English, that English is the language of civilization, or that Standard English is a more developed language than any other (see Bailey, 1991; Pennycook, 1998, for more examples). There are also many claims for the superiority of English itself. Thus, the Reverend James George (1867), for example, arguing that Britain had been "commissioned to teach a noble language embodying the richest scientific and literary treasures," asserted that:

As the mind grows, language grows, and adapts itself to the thinking of the people. Hence, a highly civilized race, will ever have a highly accomplished language. The English tongue, is in all senses a very noble one. I apply the term noble with a rigorous exactness. (p.4)

More recently, a similar type of argument underlies Honey's (1997) contention that because of the "elaborated vocabulary and syntax" (p.175) of Standard English, "the world has effectively decided that English is the world language" (p.249).

One of the most bizarre and common claims is that English has more words than any other language and thus is a better medium for expression or thought than any other language. Claiborne (1983), for example, asserts, "For centuries, the English-speaking peoples have plundered the world for words, even as their military and industrial empire builders have plundered it for more tangible goods." This plundering has given English:

... the largest, most variegated and most expressive vocabulary in the world. The total number of English words lies somewhere between 400,000 — the number of current entries in the largest English dictionaries — and 600,000 — the largest figure that any expert is willing to be quoted on. By comparison, the biggest French dictionaries have only about 150,000 entries, the biggest Russian ones a mere 130,000. (p.3)

The MacMillan dossier on *International English* (1989) reproduces the

same ideas for a wider audience, claiming, “There are more than 500,000 words in the *Oxford English Dictionary*. Compare that with the vocabulary of German (about 200,000) and French (100,000)” (p.2). Claiborne (1983) goes on to explain the implications of this large vocabulary:

Like the wandering minstrel in *The Mikado*, with songs for any and every occasion, English has the right word for it — whatever ‘it’ may be ... [Thus] ... It is the enormous and variegated lexicon of English, far more than the mere numbers and geographical spread of its speakers, that truly makes our native tongue marvellous — makes it, in fact, a medium for the precise, vivid and subtle expression of thought and emotion that has no equal, past or present. (p.4)

In case the implications of this are not clear, Claiborne goes on to claim that English is indeed “not merely a great language but the greatest” (p.4).

Othered Learners

These, then, are the tip of the iceberg of Occidental discourses on English. Meanwhile, the other side of the colonial coin, the Orientalist discourses on the Other, construct cultures and language learners in particular ways. There is not space here to elaborate on these multiple discourses, so I shall focus on one element, the construction of Asian learners as passive, rote, uncreative memorizers. Located in larger discourses on Asia and other colonies that viewed other cultures as static, traditional, and unchanging, the discourses on education then started to construct learners and education systems in the same way. Thus, in an article on Chinese education in *A Cyclopaedia of Education* published in 1911 (Monroe), Isaac Headland, professor in the Imperial University, Beijing, explains:

There is nothing in the Chinese course of study in the way of mathematics or science, or indeed in any line of thought, which will tend to develop the thinking faculties, such as reason or invention, and hence these faculties have lain dormant in the Chinese mind. They have never invented anything. They have stumbled upon most of the useful, practical appliances of life, and among these upon the compass, gunpowder, and printing, and, though noted for their commercial astuteness, have lacked all power to develop them into a commercial success. (p.635)

Such views on Chinese learners were, and still are, extremely common in contexts such as Hong Kong, China. As Frederick Stewart wrote in

his education report for 1865, "The Chinese have no *education* in the real sense of the word. No attempt is made at a simultaneous development of the mental powers. These are all sacrificed to the cultivation of memory" (p.138). The Rev. S. R. Brown, Headmaster of the Morrison Education Society School, wrote in a report in 1844 (cited in Sweeting, 1990) that Chinese children are usually pervaded by "a universal expression of passive inanity ... The black but staring, glassy eye, and open mouth, bespeak little more than stupid wonder gazing out of emptiness." This view is linked to Brown's view of Chinese schools, where a boy may learn "the names of written characters, that in all probability never conveyed to him one new idea from first to last" (p.21). In an article on Chinese education, Addis (1889) wrote:

In truth Chinese education is — *pace* the sinologues — no education at all. It is no 'leading out of' but a leading back to. Instead of expanding the intelligence, it contracts it; instead of broadening sympathies, it narrows them; instead of making a man honest, intelligent and brave, it has produced few who are not cunning, narrow-minded and pusillanimous. (p.206)

These derogatory views on Chinese education and the Chinese are remarkably consistent with more current stereotypes of Chinese and other Asian students. It is hard not to see the parallel between Bateson Wright's (headmaster of the Central School in Hong Kong after Stewart) comment that the average Chinese student was "incapable of sustaining an argument, starting with false premises and cheerfully pursuing a circuitous course to the point from which he started," for which he prescribed a "rigid course of geometrical study" (cited in Sweeting, 1990, p.322), and the widely popularized "cultural thought patterns" described by Kaplan (1966), in which Asian students thought and wrote in spirals, while Westerners wrote in straight lines. Susser's (1998) review of the ESL/EFL literature on Japan concluded that it contained "considerable Orientalism" (p.63). It is not just that there are occasional stereotypes or factual errors; rather "these fictions have been woven into a pervasive discourse that shapes our descriptions and then our perceptions of Japanese learners and classrooms" (p.64). Kubota (1999) makes a similar point when she shows how writing on Japanese education has:

... tended to dichotomize Western culture and Eastern culture and to draw rigid cultural boundaries between them. They have given labels such as *individualism, self-expression, critical and analytic thinking, and extending*

knowledge to Western cultures on the one hand, and *collectivism, harmony, indirection, memorization, and conserving knowledge* to Asian cultures on the other. (p.14)

As Kubota points out, such views are based on a form of cultural determinism that reproduces colonial relations of Self and Other. Distinctions such as extending knowledge versus conserving knowledge, for example, reproduce the distinction between changing, developing, and modern cultures on the one hand, and static, conservative, and traditional cultures on the other. As I have been suggesting throughout this section, such Orientalist and Occidentalist constructions were developed in, and reproduce colonial relations.

CONCLUSIONS: POSTCOLONIAL STRATEGIES FOR ELT

The sections above suggest a cycle of reproduction of colonial relations in ELT that looks virtually impossible to break out of. Yet while it is important to consider these very real relations of material and cultural neo-colonialism in ELT, it is equally important to understand how such conditions can be changed. As Canagarajah (1999; 2000) argues, from the very beginning of colonialism, there have always been acts of resistance, not necessarily large strategies of opposition but rather “simple acts of false compliance, parody, pretence, and mimicking” that served as “strategies by which the marginalized detach themselves from the ideologies of the powerful, retain a measure of critical thinking, and gain some sense of control over their life in an oppressive situation” (2000, p.122). Canagarajah (2000) suggests four strategies of resistance: *Discursive appropriation*, by which he means “transforming the sign system of English to represent a discourse alien to it” (p.125); *reinterpretation strategies*, referring to the ways in which people used dominant Western discourses (such as Christianity, liberalism, humanism) to articulate their own interests and ideologies; *accommodation strategies* through which local elites started “invoking English and its discourses to accommodate their vested interests” (p.127); and *linguistic appropriation*, where the use of different languages constructs a “system of hybrid codes” that destabilize “the integrity of the language we call English” (p.128).

But as Canagarajah points out, such strategies of appropriation and resistance always need to be understood in the context of the very real and continuing neo-colonial power of English. There is a tendency

in some domains to celebrate these processes of appropriation as if the global imperialism of English was thereby rendered irrelevant. Thus, pedagogically, we are faced with some interesting questions. How can we teach English and teach about English teaching in a way that both acknowledges the colonial and neo-colonial implications of ELT yet also allows for an understanding of the possibilities of change, resistance, and appropriation? Is it possible to teach English in such a way that we can emphasize its post-colonial possibilities without ignoring its neo-colonial limitations? Is it a contradiction to try to teach English or teach about English teaching in a way that promotes appropriation? Can we teach in order to be resisted? These are some of the dilemmas we need to confront in order to deal with the postcolonial problem of English.

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Conclusion:

Power, Politics and Critical Approaches to ELT

Introduction: power and politics in ELT

The papers collected in this volume have shown how English language teaching (ELT) is inextricably bound up with multiple power relationships. English did not spread globally as if it had a capacity to take over the world without human help. It was pushed by many forces that saw an interest in its promotion, and pulled by many who also perceived value in acquiring it. A language only spreads because people learn it, and where learning happens, teaching is often (though not always) involved. So the global spread of English, with its connections to colonial exploitation and the contemporary inequalities fostered by globalization and neoliberal ideologies, cannot be understood outside such global forces. ELT, therefore, is inescapably caught up in questions of power, and any discussion of English as a global language and its educational implications cannot “ignore the fact that far from being a solution to the dismantling of ‘unequal power’ relations in the world, English is in fact often part of the problem” (Rubdy, 2015, p.43).

As Joseph (2006) has observed, language is steeped from top to bottom in relations of power, or in other words it is profoundly political (the political here refers not so much to the tawdry battles fought out in our national parliaments but to the everyday struggles over whose version of the world will prevail). And because of its involvement in so much of what is going on in the world, English and ELT are even more so. Rather than the bland terms in which English is often understood — as a neutral medium of international communication, a language that holds out the promise of social and economic development to all those who learn it, a language of equal opportunity, a language that the world needs in order to be able to communicate — we need to understand that it is also an exclusionary class dialect, favouring particular people, countries, cultures, forms of knowledge, and possibilities of development; it is a language

which creates barriers as much as it presents possibilities.

Tollefson (2000, p.8) warns that “at a time when English is widely seen as a key to the economic success of nations and the economic well-being of individuals, the spread of English also contributes to significant social, political, and economic inequalities.” Bruthiaux (2002, pp.292–293) argues convincingly that English language education is “an outlandish irrelevance” for many of the world’s poor, and “talk of a role for English language education in facilitating the process of poverty reduction and a major allocation of public resources to that end is likely to prove misguided and wasteful.” As ELT practitioners, therefore, we cannot simply bury our heads in our classrooms and assume none of this has anything to do with us. Nor can we simply adopt individually-oriented access arguments on the basis that any improvement in a learner’s English will likely bring them benefits. There is much more at stake here. For those “who do not have access to high-quality English language education, the spread of English presents a formidable obstacle to education, employment, and other activities requiring English proficiency” (Tollefson, 2000, p.9), so ELT may have as much to do with the creation as the alleviation of inequality.

Ramanathan’s (2005, p.112) study of English and Vernacular medium education in India shows how English is a deeply divisive language, tied on the one hand to the denigration of vernacular languages, cultures, and ways of learning and teaching, and, on the other, dovetailing “with the values and aspirations of the elite Indian middle class.” While English opens doors to some, it is simultaneously a barrier to learning, development and employment for others. Ferguson (2013, p.35) explains that there is a “massive popular demand not just for English but for English-medium education” based on the reasonable assumption in the current global economy that “without English-language skills, one’s labour mobility and employment prospects are restricted”; yet at the same time, English language education has many deleterious effects, including distorting already weak primary education sectors, advantaging urban elites over rural poor, constraining the use of other languages, and diverting resources from other areas (*ibid.*).

So for those of us involved in ELT, we need to consider how all that we do in the name of English teaching is inevitably connected to power and politics. The papers in this volume address these questions in a range of different ways, a project I have been engaged in since I taught English in China in the 1980s. What are the wider implications of

promoting an English-only policy in a classroom, of choosing a textbook with glossy images of international travel, of deciding that “furnitures” is acceptable or unacceptable, of choosing to work at a private language school, of knowing or not knowing the first language(s) of our students, of choosing to hire “native speakers” at a school? In this final chapter I shall try to pull some of these threads together and point to new research directions in critical approaches to ELT. In the next section, I provide a brief overview and update of the prevailing paradigms for looking at the global spread of English — World Englishes, English as a Lingua Franca, and Linguistic Imperialism — and point to their general shortcomings for understanding power and ELT. The following section will then look at local manifestations of ELT, ways in which ELT is bound up with local economies and education systems, racial and linguistic prejudice, styles of popular culture and economies of desire. The final section of the chapter will return to the implications for the practice of ELT.

Prevailing discourses: World Englishes, ELF, and Linguistic Imperialism

Despite the evident connections, power has not always been sufficiently part of discussions of ELT. There are several reasons for this, including the lack of attention to power and politics in linguistics, applied linguistics, and educational theory, and the role ELT plays as a form of service industry to globalization (Pennycook, 1990a, Chapter 9). Discussion of the global spread of English has been dominated in recent times by the World Englishes (WE) (Kachru, 1992), and more recently English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) (Seidlhofer, 2011) frameworks. Although Kachru’s model of Three Circles — the inner circle where English is widely spoken as a first language, the outer, postcolonial circle where it is used internally as a second or additional language, and the expanding circle, where it is largely used for external, foreign language communication — has changed the ways in which we view varieties of English and norms of correctness (giving us multiple Englishes), and although the ELF program has usefully drawn attention to the ways in which English is used in daily interactions among multilingual speakers, both approaches have been criticised for eschewing questions of power and presenting instead a utopian vision of linguistic diversity (Kubota, 2015).

Kachru’s (1992) Three Circle model of world Englishes posits a new

list of standard varieties — based rather confusingly on a mixture of social, historical and geographical factors — but tends to overlook difference within regions. As Martin (2014, p.53) observes in the context of the Philippines, there are at the very least circles within circles, comprising an inner circle “of educated, elite Filipinos who have embraced the English language”, an outer circle who may be aware of Philippine English as a variety but are “either powerless to support it and/or ambivalent about its promotion” and an expanding circle for whom the language is “largely inaccessible”. Tupas (2006, p.169) points out that “the power to (re)create English ascribed to the Outer Circle is mainly reserved only for those who have been invested with such power in the first place (the educated/the rich/the creative writers, etc.)”. Thus, as Parakrama (1995, pp.25–26) argues, “the smoothing out of struggle within and without language is replicated in the homogenizing of the varieties of English on the basis of ‘upper-class’ forms. Kachru is thus able to theorize on the nature of a monolithic Indian English”. Whilst appearing, therefore, to work from an inclusionary political agenda in its attempt to have the new Englishes acknowledged as varieties of English, this approach to language is equally exclusionary. Ultimately, concludes Bruthiaux, “the Three Circles model is a 20th century construct that has outlived its usefulness” (2003, p.161).

The more recent work on English as a lingua franca (ELF) (e.g. Jenkins, 2006; Seidlhofer, 2011) is perhaps a little more promising in that it does not work with either nation-based nor class-based linguistic models (though there is still insufficient attention to what we might call “English from below” or the everyday interactions of non-elites). As O’Regan (2014, p.540) notes, however, there is a “profound disconnect between the desire to identify and promote ‘ELF’ features and functions and the practical necessity of dealing with the structural iniquities of a global capitalism which will by default always distribute economic and linguistic resources in a way which benefits the few over the many and which confers especial prestige upon selective language forms”. Thus while the ELF approach has been able to avoid some of the problems of the world Englishes focus on nation- and class-based varieties, and can open up a more flexible and mobile version of English, it has likewise never engaged adequately with questions of power. While the WE approach has framed its position as a struggle between the former colonial centre and its postcolonial offspring, the ELF approach has located its struggle between so-called native and nonnative speakers. Yet neither of these sites of struggle engages with wider

questions of power, inequality, class, ideology or access.

Phillipson's (1992, 2009) linguistic imperialism framework, by contrast, developed "to account for linguistic hierarchisation, to address issues of why some languages come to be used more and others less, what structures and ideologies facilitate such processes, and the role of language professionals" (1997, p.238), places questions of power much more squarely in the picture. There are two discernible strands to Phillipson's argument. On the one hand linguistic imperialism is concerned with the ways in which English is constantly promoted over other languages, the role played by organizations such as the British Council in the promotion and orchestration of the global spread of English (it was far from accidental), and the ways in which this inequitable position of English has become embedded in ELT dogmas such as promoting native speaker teachers of English over their non-native speaker counterparts, or suggesting that the learning of English is better started as early as possible (a trend that is continuing worldwide, with English language teaching occurring more and more at the primary and even pre-primary levels).

On the other hand, linguistic imperialism "dovetails with communicative, cultural, educational, and scientific imperialism in a rapidly evolving world in which corporate-led globalization is seeking to impose or induce a neo-imperial world order" (Phillipson, 2006, p.357), thus drawing attention to the relation between English, neo-liberalism and globalization. At stake, therefore, in this vision of English linguistic imperialism is not only the ascendancy of English in relation to other languages, but also the role English plays in much broader processes of the dominance of forms of global capital and the assumed homogenization of world culture. For Phillipson (2008, p.38), "acceptance of the status of English, and its assumed neutrality implies uncritical adherence to the dominant world disorder, unless policies to counteract neolinguistic imperialism and to resist linguistic capital dispossession are in force".

While Phillipson usefully locates English within inequitable relations of globalization, there are several limitations to this view. Park and Wee (2012) explain that a "problem of linguistic imperialism's macrosocial emphasis is that it does not leave room for more specific and ethnographically sensitive accounts of actual language use" (p.16). As Holborow (2012, p.27) puts it, in order to equate imperialism and linguistic imperialism, Phillipson has to "materialise language", a position that cannot adequately account for the ways in which English is resisted and appropriated, and

how English users “may find ways to negotiate, alter and oppose political structures, and reconstruct their languages, cultures and identities to their advantage. The intention is not to *reject* English, but to *reconstitute* it in more inclusive, ethical, and democratic terms” (Canagarajah, 1999, p.2). Phillipson’s version of linguistic imperialism assumes processes of homogenization without examining local complexities of cultural appropriation and language use (Bruthiaux, 2008; Pennycook, 2007). It is essential, as Blommaert (2010, p.20) notes, to approach the sociolinguistics of globalization in terms of a “chequered, layered complex of processes evolving simultaneously at a variety of scales and in reference to a variety of centres”.

In order to place ELT — teaching practices, curricula, materials, tests — in the wider context of the global spread of English, it is essential to understand English in relation to globalization, neoliberalism, exploitation and discrimination. But we need an understanding of language in relation to power that operates neither with a utopian vision of linguistic diversity, nor with a dystopian assumption of linguistic imperialism. While we ignore Phillipson’s warnings at our peril, it is important to develop a multifaceted understanding of the power and politics of ELT. Phillipson’s critique of the global spread of English has compelled many to reflect on global inequities in which English plays a role, but his insistence that this should be seen in terms of imperialism has also narrowed the scope of the debate. The equation of a linguistic imperialism thesis with a critical standpoint, and the frequent dismissal of this totalizing version of events on the grounds that it overstates the case, draws attention away from the necessity to evaluate the global spread of English, and the role of English language teachers as its agents, critically and carefully. What is required, then, is a more sensitive account of power, language and context, and the implications for ELT.

Locality, desire and contingency: the embeddedness of English

A theory of imperialism is not a prerequisite to look critically at questions of power and politics in ELT, but if we reject linguistic imperialism for its monologically dystopian approach to language and culture, in favour of the utopian visions of diversity in WE or ELF frameworks, we are equally poorly served. More important in relation to

the power and politics of English are close and detailed understandings of the ways in which English is embedded in local economies of desire, and the ways in which demand for English is part of a larger picture of images of change, modernization, access and longing. It is tied to the languages, cultures, styles and aesthetics of popular culture, with its particular attractions for youth, rebellion and conformity; it is enmeshed within local economies, and all the inclusions, exclusions and inequalities this may entail; it is bound up with changing modes of communication, from shifting internet uses to its role in text-messaging; it is increasingly entrenched in educational systems, bringing to the fore many concerns about knowledge, pedagogy and the curriculum. We need to understand the diversity of what English is and what it means in all these contexts, and we need to do so not with prior assumptions about globalization and its effects but with critical studies of the local embeddedness of English.

As Borjian (2013, p.166) shows, English education in post-revolutionary Iran has been a “site of struggle, in which multiple forces compete”. One major aspect of this was the state and religious (closely combined) opposition to Western forms of modernity, leading to an attempt to create “an indigenized model of English education, free from the influence of the English-speaking nations” (Borjian, 2013, p.160). It is important to understand, then, that *indigenization* of English education was not so much a local movement to make English their own, but rather a state ideology to oppose Western influence. Meanwhile, the privatization of ELT provision led to an opposing trend that tended more towards Anglo-American models of ELT. The point here, once again, is that ELT is always caught up in a range of political, religious, cultural and economic battles. In Algeria, by contrast, the growth of English education sits in a different set of complex historical and political relations, involving both French as the former colonial language as well as postcolonial processes of Arabization. English, as a “new intruder in Algeria’s sociolinguistic scenery”, suggests Benrabah (2013, p.124), may bring the benefits of helping Algerians to see both that there are other alternatives to French, and that other languages, such as Berber, have much to offer alongside Arabic. Language conflicts around English, French, Berber and Arabic in Algeria, Benrabah shows, are always bound up with the complexity of other local political struggles.

There are several implications for ELT, since these perspectives force us to reconsider what we mean by the idea of English. No longer can we assume it to be a pre-given object that we are employed to deliver; rather

it is a many-headed hydra (Rapatahuna and Bunce, 2012) enmeshed in complex local contexts of power and struggle. From the relation between English and other languages in the Pacific (Barker, 2012) to its role in countries such as Sri Lanka (Parakrama, 2012), the position of English is complex and many-sided. To understand the power and politics of ELT, then, we need detailed understandings of the role English plays in relation to local languages, politics and economies. This requires meticulous studies of English and its users, as well as theories of power that are well adapted to contextual understandings. As ELT professionals, we are never just teaching something called English but rather are involved in economic and social change, cultural renewal, people's dreams and desires.

There are therefore many Englishes, not so much in terms of language varieties as posited by the world Englishes framework, but rather in terms of different Englishes in relation to different social and economic forces. In South Korea, for example, where "English fever" has driven people to remarkable extremes (from prenatal classes and tongue surgery to sending young children overseas to do their schooling through English), English has become naturalized "as the language of global competitiveness," so that English as a neoliberal language is regarded as a "natural and neutral medium of academic excellence" (Piller & Cho, 2013, p.24). As a new destination for such English language learners, the Philippines markets itself as a place where "authentic English" (an outer circle variety) is spoken, yet its real drawcard is that its English is "cheap and affordable" (Lorente and Tupas, 2014, p.79). For the Philippines, like other countries such as Pakistan (Rahman, 2009) with low economic development but relatively strong access to English, the language becomes one of commercial opportunity, so that businesses such as call centres on the one hand open up jobs for local college-educated employees, but on the other hand distort the local economy and education system and perpetuate forms of global inequality (Friginal, 2009).

Not only does English play various roles in relation to the economy but also in relation to student motivations to learn English, which may concern more than just pragmatic goals of social and economic development (Kubota, 2011). Since English is often marketed in relation to a particular set of images of sexual desire, it is important to appreciate the gender and sexual politics involved in English language learning and the ways in which English, as advertised for language schools and presented in textbooks, "emerges as a powerful tool to construct a gendered identity

and to gain access to the romanticized West.” (Piller and Takahashi, 2006, p.69). As Motha and Lin (2014, p.332) contend “at the center of every English language learning moment lies desire: desire for the language; for the identities represented by particular accents and varieties of English; for capital, power, and images that are associated with English; for what is believed to lie beyond the doors that English unlocks.” The English language teacher, therefore, may become an object of desire, a gatekeeper, a constructor or destroyer of desires.

Like Darvin and Norton’s (2015) understanding of *investment* as the intersection between identity, ideology and capital, this notion of desire is best understood not as an internal psychological characteristic, but rather, as Takahashi (2013, p.144) explains in her exploration of Japanese women’s “desire” for English, as “constructed at the intersection between the macro-discourses of the West and foreign men and ideologies of Japanese women’s life-courses in terms of education, occupation, and heterosexuality”. Focusing on the ways in which these discourses of desire implicate White western men, Appleby (2013, p.144) shows how “an embodied hegemonic masculinity” is constructed in the Japanese ELT industry, producing as a commodity “an extroverted and eroticised White Western ideal for male teachers”. Any understanding of the motivations to learn English, therefore, has to deal with relations of power not only in economic and educational terms but also as they are tied to questions of desire, gender, sexuality (Nelson, 2009), and the marketing of English and English language teachers as products.

An appreciation of the complicities of power — the ways in which ELT is tied up not only with neoliberal economic relations but also other forms of power and prejudice — sheds light on the ways in which assumptions of native speaker authority privilege not only a particular version of language ideology but are also often tied to particular racial formations (white faces, white voices) (Ruecker, 2011; Shuck, 2006). “Both race and nativeness are elements of ‘the idealized native speaker’” (Romney, 2010, p.19). People of colour may not be accepted as native speakers (who are assumed to be white): “The problem lies in the tendency to equate the native speaker with white and the non-native speaker with non-white. These equations certainly explain discrimination against non-native professionals, many of whom are people of colour” (Kubota & Lin, 2009, p.8). Indeed, since teaching “second or foreign languages entails complex relations of power fuelled by differences created by racialization”

(Kubota & Lin, 2009, p.16), the field of ELT might be reconceptualized “with a disciplinary base that no longer revolves solely around teaching methodology and language studies but instead takes as a point of departure race and empire” (Motha, 2014, p.129).

Before any ELT practitioner considers the politics of their classroom, therefore, it is important to consider the local and contingent politics of English (Pennycook, 2010). It is often said that language and culture are closely tied together, that to learn a language is to learn a culture, yet such a proposition overlooks the contingent relations between linguistic and cultural forms, or the local uses of language. Attention has been drawn to the connections between English language teaching and Christian missionary activity. As Varghese and Johnston (2007, p.7) observe, the widespread use of English and the opportunities this provides for missionary work dressed up as English language teaching raises “profound moral questions about the professional activities and purposes of teachers and organizations in our occupation”. In a post-9/11 world and with “American foreign and domestic policy driven increasingly by imperialist goals and guided by an evangelical Christian agenda” (*ibid.*, p.6), English language education and missionary work present a contingent set of relations between language and culture.

The point here is not that to learn English is to be exposed to Christian values — as Mahboob (2009) argues, English can equally serve as an Islamic language — but that English may be called upon to do particular cultural and ideological work in particular pedagogical contexts. The promotion, use and teaching of English in contexts of economic development, military conflict, religious struggle, mobility, tertiary access, and so on have to be understood in relation to the meanings English is expected to carry, as a language of progress, democratic reform, religious change, economic development, advanced knowledge, popular culture and much more. These connections are by no means coincidental — they are a product of the roles English comes to play in the world — but they are at the same time contingent. That is to say, they are a product of the many relations of power and politics with which English is embroiled.

Power, politics and pedagogy: responses to the politics of ELT

When we talk of English today we mean many things, many of them not necessarily having to do with some core notion of language. The

question becomes not whether some monolithic thing called English is imperialistic or an escape from poverty, nor how many varieties there may be of this thing called English, but rather what kind of mobilizations underlie acts of English use or learning? Something called English is mobilized by English language industries, including ELT, with particular language effects. But something called English is also part of complex language chains, mobilized as part of multiple acts of identity and desire. It is not English — if by that we mean a certain grammar and lexicon — that is at stake here. It is the discourses around English that matter, the ways in which an idea of English is caught up in all that we do in the name of education, all the exacerbations of inequality that go under the label of globalization, all the linguistic calumnies that denigrate other ways of speaking, all the shamefully racist institutional interactions that occur in schools, hospitals, law courts, police stations, social security offices, and unemployment centres.

Whether we see English as a monster, juggernaut, bully or governess (Rapatahana and Bunce, 2012), we clearly need to do something about this pedagogically. As Gray suggests, “ideologies associated with English which take it as self-evident that it is perforce the language of economic prosperity and individual wealth are also those of the ELT industry itself” (2012, p.98). While we might, like ostriches (Pennycook, 2001), be tempted to bury our heads in the classroom and refuse to engage with these issues, we surely owe more to the educational needs of our students than to ignore the many dimensions of power and politics in ELT. One level of pedagogical response to the dominance of English is to see ELT not so much as centrally about the promotion of English, but rather as a process of working out where English can usefully sit within an ecology of languages. When we observe the growth of South East Asian economies, for example, their increased roles in the global economy, and the constant pressure to teach English earlier and younger in a region with wide linguistic diversity, there are real causes for concern that current language education policies favouring only the national language plus English will lead to Asian multilingualism being reduced to bilingualism only in the national language and English (Kirkpatrick, 2012).

As ELT professionals, therefore, we would do well to question the linguistic, educational and pedagogical ideologies behind “the one-classroom-one-language pedagogical straitjacket” (Lin, 2013, p.540) that many current ELT approaches continue to endorse, and embrace instead

a broader, multilingual approach to our classrooms. Approaches such as communicative language teaching are far from neutral pedagogical technologies (Pennycook, 1989; Chapter 1) but are rather “intimately linked to the production of a certain kind of student and worker subjectivity suitable for participating in a certain kind of political economy” (Lin, 2013, p.540). Rather than focusing so intently on English as the sole objective of our teaching, we can start to reimagine classes as part of a broader multilingual context, and indeed, following Motha (2014) to engage in a project of *provincializing English*. Such multilingualism, furthermore, needs to be understood not so much in terms of separate monolingualisms (adding English to one or more other languages) but rather in much more fluid terms.

Drawing on recent sociolinguistic approaches to *translanguaging* (García and Li Wei, 2014) and *metrolingualism* (Pennycook and Otsuji, 2015), we can start to think of ELT classrooms in terms of *principled polycentrism* (Pennycook, 2014; Chapter 8). This is not the polycentrism of a World Englishes focus, with its established norms of regional varieties of English, but a more fluid concept, based on the idea that students are developing complex repertoires of multilingual and multimodal resources. This enables us to think in terms of ELT as developing resourceful speakers who are able to use available language resources and to shift between styles, discourses, registers and genres. This brings the recent sociolinguistic emphasis on repertoires and resources into conversation with a focus on the need to learn how to negotiate and accommodate, rather than to be proficient in one variety of English. So an emerging goal of ELT may be less towards proficient native-speaker-like speakers (which has always been a confused and misguided goal), and to think instead in polycentric terms of resourceful speakers (Pennycook, 2012) who can draw on multiple linguistic and semiotic resources.

Focusing on the politics of the classroom itself, it is important to understand on the one hand the permeability of the classroom walls — that is to say that what goes on inside the classroom is always tied to what goes on outside — and the local questions of power and politics within the classroom (Pennycook, 2000; Chapter 5). Benson (1997, p.32) outlines the ways in which “we are inclined to think of the politics of language teaching in terms of language planning and educational policy while neglecting the political content of everyday language and language learning practices”. Shifting our thinking, he suggests, entails a political understanding

of the social context of education, classroom roles and relations, the nature of tasks, and the content and language of the lesson. According to Auerbach (1995, p.12), “dynamics of power and inequality show up in every aspect of classroom life, from physical setting to needs assessment, participant structures, curriculum development, lesson content, materials, instructional processes, discourse patterns, language use, and evaluation”.

Everything in the classroom — from how we teach (how we conduct ourselves as a teacher, as master, authority, facilitator, organizer), what we teach (whether we focus only on English, on grammar, on communication, on tests), how we respond to students (correcting, ignoring, cajoling, praising), how we understand language and learning (favouring noise over silence, emphasizing expression over accuracy), how we think of our classroom (as a place to have fun or a site for serious learning), to the materials we use (off-the-shelf international textbooks, materials from the local community), the ways we organize our class (in rows, pairs, tables, circles) and the way we assess the students (against what norms, in terms of what language possibilities) — needs to be seen as social and cultural practices that have broader implications than just elements of classroom interaction. The point here is not that choosing what we might consider the preferable options listed above absolves us of questions of power, but that all these choices are embedded in larger social and ideological formations.

Critical pedagogical approaches to ELT (Benesch, 2001; Crookes, 2013; Morgan, 1998; Pennycook, 1990b; Chapter 2) have sought in various ways to address many of these concerns. Critical pedagogy itself embraces a range of different approaches. For Crookes (2013, p.9) it is “teaching for social justice, in ways that support the development of active engaged citizens”, that is to say a form of critical ELT that focuses on social change through learning English. Chun’s (2015) overview of commonalities in critical literacy practices includes drawing on students’ and teachers’ historically lived experiences, viewing language as a social semiotic, focusing on power both within and outside the classroom, engaging with commonsense notions of the everyday, developing self-reflexive practice, renewing a sense of community, and maintaining a common goal. There has been considerable resistance to such critical approaches to education. The classroom should, from some perspectives, be a neutral place for language learning, and to teach critically is to impose one’s views on others. Such a view both misses the larger political context of the classroom and

also underestimates the capacity of students to resist and evaluate what is before them (Benesch, 2001). Given the power and politics of ELT, a politically acquiescent position as an English language educator is an equally political position.

Other work has sought to develop critical responses to textbooks (Gray, 2012). Gray (2010, p.3) shows how global coursebooks inscribe a set of values in English associated with “individualism, egalitarianism, cosmopolitanism, mobility and affluence”, or the very cultural and ideological formations with which English is connected in international contexts. It is important from this point of view for teachers and students to work against the ways English language classes interpellate students into particular ways of thinking, talking and being through these corporatised ELT materials. Testing is perhaps the hardest domain to struggle against, so powerful are the interests and operations of major language tests (Shohamy, 2001). The point for any of these critical approaches to pedagogy, literacy, materials or testing, is not that they provide any easy solution to the complex relations among classrooms, language and power, but that they address such questions with power always to the fore. Critical approaches to ELT view the politics of ELT as a given — not a given to be accepted but a given against which we must always struggle.

Conclusion

Discussions of ELT all too often assume that they know what the object of ELT is: this system of grammar and words called English. But clearly this is not adequate since English is many things beside. The global spread of English and the materials and practices of ELT that support it cannot be removed from questions of power and politics. But to understand these political implications we need an exhaustive understanding of relations of power. Rather than easy suppositions about domination, about some having power and others not, or assuming ELT inevitably to be a tool of neoliberalism, we need to explore the ways in which power operates in local contexts. Such an approach by no means turns its back on the broader context of globalization but rather insists that this can never be understood outside its local realizations. Since I first started writing critically about the global spread of English, and the assumptions, methods, practices, beliefs, and inequalities that went with it (1989; Chapter 1), English teaching has become an ever greater enterprise,

particularly in the context of China. The need for critical approaches to ELT has become ever greater.

Such an understanding urges us on the one hand to acknowledge that what we mean by English is always contingent on local relations of power and desire, the ways that English means many different things and is caught up in many forms of hope, longing, discrimination and inequality. It also allows us on the other hand to avoid a hopelessness faced by immovable forces of global domination, and instead to see that we can seek to change inequitable conditions of power through our small-scale actions that address local conditions of difference, desire and disparity, seeking out ELT responses through an understanding of translanguaging practices in the classroom, critical discussions of textbooks and ideological formations, questioning of the norms of ELT practices and their interests. Power and politics are ubiquitous in language and language education, but resistance and change are always possible. These are the themes that run through the papers collected in this volume for the first time, questions that I have struggled with for 30 years. I hope this volume provides people a way of engaging with and taking further the many concerns that remain.

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